

EXECUTIVE

Tuesday 27 June 2023

Present:

Councillor Bialyk (Chair)

Councillors Wright, Denning, Foale, Morse, Parkhouse, Pearce, Williams and Wood

Also present:

Councillor Jobson (as an opposition group Leader)

Councillor K. Mitchell (as an opposition group Leader)

Apologies:

Councillor D. Moore (as an opposition group Leader).

Also present:

Director of City Development, Director of Culture, Leisure and Tourism, Deputy Chief Finance Officer, Benefits & Welfare Lead, Asset Management Lead and Democratic Services Manager

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MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 June 2023, were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

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DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests were made.

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QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC UNDER STANDING ORDER NO. 19

No questions from members of the public were received.

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OVERVIEW OF GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2022/23

The Executive received the report which advised Members of the overall financial position of the General Fund Revenue Budgets for the 2022/23 financial year. The report also sought approval for the General Fund working balance, a number of supplementary budgets and the creation of new earmarked reserves.

Members noted the difficult cost pressures to the Council during the financial year, which included higher energy costs and the Staff Pay Award. Members were referred to the Section 151 comments in the report and noted that the Council had balanced the budget for 2022/23 and it was possible to transfer £629,000 to the General Fund working balance at year end.

There were several supplementary budgets requested for the following financial year which totalled £6.4 million, which most had funding already in place. However, £1.807 million would be required to be met from the General Fund working balance. Although, there would be no significant impact on the Medium Term Financial Plan, it was forecast that reserves would be reduced to the minimal level by 2024/25.

Members were advised that the minimal level for the General Fund working balance, the Council had agreed to maintain a balance of no less than £3 million as

a contingency against financial risks. The largest area of risk related to income under budgeted levels, notably for car park and business rate income, which would require close monitoring.

The Deputy Chief Finance Officer, in responding to the Leader's question, advised that the £6.4 million supplementary budgets requested predominantly represented underspends in the 2022/23 financial year, which could include unspent grant funding or approved revenue budgets, many of which would go into earmarked reserves, and could be used to support the supplementary funding requests.

Councillor Jobson, as an opposition group leader, had submitted questions, which were tabled at the meeting and appended to the minutes.

Councillor M. Mitchell, as an opposition group leader, spoke on this item and enquired to what extent was this a typical or non-typical financial year for the Council?

In response to the question, the Deputy Chief Finance Officer advised that it had been a difficult year financially and would like to say it was exceptional, but unfortunately there were likely to be continued funding pressures for 2023/24 such as the pay award. However, any issues arising would be reported to Members as part of the quarterly monitoring reports.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes and approves (where applicable):-

- 1) the net transfer of £12,346,956 from Earmarked Reserves as detailed in paragraph 8.11 of the report;
- 2) the supplementary budgets of £6,447,320 and budget transfers as detailed in paragraph 8.13 of the report;;
- 3) the Earmarked Reserves at 31 March 2023;
- 4) the Council Tax account and collection rate;
- 5) the outstanding sundry debt, aged debt analysis and debt write-off figures;
- 6) the creditors payments performance;
- 7) the General Fund working balance at 31 March 2023 at £6,151,289, having taken into account the overall financial position of the Council; and
- 8) the One Exeter programme update.

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GENERAL FUND CAPITAL MONITORING 2022/23 AND REVISED CAPITAL PROGRAMME FOR 2023/24 AND FUTURE YEARS

The Executive received the report on the overall financial performance of the Council for the 2022/23 financial year in respect of the annual capital programme. The report also sought approval of the 2023/24 revised capital programme, which included the commitments carried forward from 2022/23.

Members noted that at the start of the last financial year, a Capital Programme of £131 million had been approved by Council. The total outturn spend was £59 million which included £44 million for the acquisition of the Guildhall Shopping Centre.

Particular reference was made to:-

- delivering the Capital Programme had been challenging, due to wider economic conditions and issues related to contractor availability, labour shortages and higher tender prices;
- much of the Capital programme had been requested to be carried forward and would be financed from borrowing;

- there would be a challenge going forward due to interest rates rising, resulting in additional borrowing costs. Short term borrowing may be required during the year depending on how much of the Capital Programme is spent;
- several play areas had now received enhancements, which were set out in the report; and
- a number of additional Capital budgets had been requested for 2023/24, which were fully funded and did not require any borrowing.

Councillor Jobson, as an opposition group leader, had submitted questions, which were tabled at the meeting and appended to the minutes.

Councillor M. Mitchell, as an opposition group leader, spoke on this item. He welcomed the £6.3 million for carbonisation at the RAMM and Riverside Leisure Centre and enquired whether it was a fixed amount and if there was a risk for long term closure?

The Director of Culture, Leisure and Tourism advised that a bid had been successful and the process going forward was to look at the financial implications and operational options for both buildings. A working group would address these issues and a report would be brought to the Executive in due course.

RECOMMENDED that Council approves:-

- (1) the overall financial position for the 2022/23 Annual Capital Programme; and
- (2) the amendments and further funding requests to the Council's Annual Capital Programme for 2023/24.

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2022/23 HRA BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - OUTTURN

The Executive received the report which advised on the major differences, by management unit, between the approved budget and the outturn for the financial year up to 31 March 2023 in respect of the Housing Revenue Account and the Council's new build schemes.

Although the HRA had faced similar reported financial challenges relating to the Pay Award and higher energy and inflation costs, there had been an improved financial position for the HRA, relating to the higher interest rate earned from the HRA balances. The balances included the HRA working balance, the major repairs reserve balance and HRA capital receipts balance.

Particular reference was made to

- the HRA Capital Programme, which had spent £13.6 million with £10.3 million spent for improvement to existing housing stock and £3.3 million for new housing projects;
- higher interest rates were a challenge for future project viability, and new build projects were likely to struggle to cover borrowing costs
- at year end, the HRA had a balanced budget and maintained its working balance of £4 million as a contingency against financial risk.

Councillor Jobson, as an opposition group leader, had submitted questions, which were tabled at the meeting and appended to the minutes.

The Portfolio Holder for Council Housing Development and Support Services welcomed the report and noted the new funding for decarbonisation. She also

highlighted that the Council had won two awards for the South West Landlord of the year and for the best Decarbonisation project in the South West.

The Leader also welcomed the awards and advised on the recent awards received for Edwards Court and St. Sidwell's Point.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes and approves (where applicable):-

- 1) the supplementary budget of £300,000 as detailed in paragraph 8.5 of the report;
- 2) the HRA financial position for 2022/23 financial year;
- 3) the revision of the HRA Capital Programme to reflect the reported variations detailed in Appendix 3 of the report; and
- 4) the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund capital project as detailed in paragraph 8.14 of the report.

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TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2022/23

The Executive received the statutory report on the current Treasury Management performance for the 2022/23 financial year and the position regarding investments and borrowings at 31 March 2023.

Particular reference was made to:-

- lower levels of required borrowing and in-year Capital Expenditure, meant that the Council had paid significantly less interest than was expected;
- due to the higher interest rates, the Council had earned more interest from investments; and
- a Section 114 notice had been issued by Woking Borough Council and the £5 million invested with them had been refunded back to Exeter City Council.

Councillor M. Mitchell, as an opposition group leader, spoke on this item and enquired on how flexible could the Council be in regards to borrowing and investing with increased market rates.

In responding, the Deputy Chief Finance Officer advised that Treasury Management practices are managed in accordance with the Prudential Code for Capital Finance, which provides a level of flexibility for the Council but we need to consider security, liquidity and then yield.

RECOMMENDED that Council note the content of this report.

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THE HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND - SCHEME 4

The Executive received the report which sought Members' agreement for the dispersal of funding for the fourth Household Support Fund scheme, which was funded from the Department for Work and Pensions. The fourth scheme covered a 12 month period which allowed for a longer timeframe to provide more support to low income households during the cost of living crisis.

Particular reference was made to the three project approach outlined in the report:-

- to provide one-off support targeted at households identified through Council Tax Support records;

- running an application based scheme to reach customers identified as having a priority need where they could be individually identified from existing records; and
- providing a flexible scheme to allow any unspent funding to be allocated to individuals or groups needing extra support between January and March 2024.

Councillor M. Mitchell, as an opposition group leader, spoke on this item and enquired on the certainty that those in need would receive financial support?

In response to questions from Members, the Benefits & Welfare Lead advised:-

- the modelling for financial support was based on an extract from the Council Tax support case load and the figures were estimates based on the data held and could be subject to change;
- the scheme was modelled on a full spend by the end September 2023, and if there were no claims withdrawn, the 45% spending agreement with Devon County Council would be met;
- there were several agencies, who the Council worked with, which included various internal departments, who would support advertising the scheme. Engagement would also be undertaken with various charities, the food bank, and Devon County Councils networks; and
- the Council provided different payment methods to address different scenarios, which included vouchers which could be redeemed for cash at a Post Office, and using organisations which could provide shopping vouchers.

RECOMMENDED that Council approves the adoption of the proposed Household Support Fund – scheme 4 (HSF4), consisting of the following three projects:-

- (1) one-off support targeted at households identified through Council Tax Support records. Awards to be paid by cash voucher posted to customers by the end of September 2023, as detailed in paragraph 8.9 of the report;
- (2) an application based scheme for people with characteristics identified as having a priority need where households cannot be individually identified from existing records. Applications to open from October 2023 as detailed in paragraph 8.18 of the report; and
- (3) a flexible scheme allowing unspent funding to be allocated to individuals or groups needing extra support between January and March 2024.

ECONOMIC VULNERABILITY FUND

The Executive received the report which sought Member agreement for the dispersal of funding from the Economic Vulnerability Fund, which would operate in support with the Household Support Fund to provide additional care to low-income households where additional unmet needs were identified.

Particular reference was made to the use of redistributed underspent Covid wellbeing money, which had been returned from Devon County Council and would be used to support Household Support Fund scheme until March 2024. The priority groups for support were outlined in the report presented at the meeting.

During the discussion the Members welcomed the report and highlighted the importance in supporting residents who might have been missed in previous schemes. Members also welcomed advertising the fund to ensure residents were aware of it.

In response to a question from a Member, the Benefits & Welfare Lead confirmed that an application route would be communicated as soon as it was available.

The Portfolio Holder for Council Housing Development and Support Services expressed her thanks to the officers for the work that had been undertaken on bringing the Economic Vulnerability Fund forward.

RECOMMENDED that Council approves the adoption of the proposed Economic Vulnerability Fund scheme to provide crisis support to low income residents through to the end of March 2024.

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REVIEW OF THE CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

The Executive received the report which advised Members of the Council's progress in delivering a new, updated Corporate Risk Register, which was linked to the Council's Strategic Priorities. A quarterly report would be presented to the Executive, but the Audit & Governance Committee would continue to ensure that there was a proper process to adequately manage the risks.

Particular reference was made to the work that would take place over the summer period. Directors would be consulting with their relevant Portfolio Holder's to refine the risks to ensure that the register was complete. The updated register would then be presented to the Executive in September 2023 and reported back on a quarterly basis.

RECOMMENDED that Council note the progress made in producing the new Corporate Risk Register.

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REVISED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME 2023

The Executive received the report on the revised Local Development Scheme which provided a scope and timetable for the preparation of Council planning policy documents, which included the emerging Exeter Plan (the new Local Plan) and other documents. Since the Local Development Scheme was approved in June 2021, work had been progressed and in keeping with statutory requirements, updates were being presented to Members.

Particular reference was made to:-

- the good progress that had been made in several key areas, which included the Exeter Local Plan, in which the first milestones of the plan had been achieved;
- the local plan engagement undertaken in late 2022, had exceeded all expectations of local planning policy, and had set a high standard for future consultation;
- work had been undertaken on the new Article 4 Direction, as well as a full review of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL);
- a new design code was being developed for the Water Lane area, which was a key priority for the Liveable Exeter initiative;
- the original budget and resources agreed in 2020 for the Local Plan did not include the broader range of new work being delivered;
- there was now a better understanding of complexity in delivering on the Brownfield sites and a report on resources for delivering on the key sites would be brought back the Executive in due course; and
- additional bench marking work on the Exeter Plan would be undertaken through joint working with other local authorities and partners.

Councillor M. Mitchell, as an opposition group leader, spoke on this item and enquired on when the Local Plan and Article 4 Directive documents would be brought back to Executive following consultation?

In response to a Members question, the Director of City Development advised that following consultation each item would be presented back to the Executive for consideration and the Local Plan would be presented to Council for adoption.

During the discussion the following points were made:-

- the consultation had been highly effective and demonstrated how the Council listened to residents and led to a lot of work being undertaken;
- the local plan was about defending green spaces and the challenge for identifying and freeing Brownfield sites was noted; and
- did the work on Water Lane cause any complications in relation to the redevelopment scheme?

The Portfolio Holder for City Development commented on the hard work of the planning policy team who were still finding solutions to issues with limited resources and noted that there were still areas of the Local Plan were being worked on. She also advised that the Article 4 Direction had been presented at an Executive Committee, earlier in the year.

RESOLVED that the revised Local Development Scheme (Appendix A of the report) be approved as the basis for preparing local planning policy.

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WATER LANE COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER

The Executive received the report on the residential led redevelopment of the Water Lane area as one of the Liveable Exeter aspirations. Exeter City Council had been approached by the Water Lane Development Management Company as one of the major land promoters in the area to consider using a Compulsory Purchase Order Indemnity Agreement (CPOIA) to assemble two strategic land parcels needed for accessing the Water Lane site to enable redevelopment for a residential led mixed use waterside development which aligned with Liveable Exeter principles.

The report requested CPO powers to acquire and simultaneously dispose of land and properties to the land promoter on regeneration grounds, whilst also agreeing the principle of dedicating to Highways or disposing the northern tip of the Council's Exton Road Depot Material Recycling Facility.

Particular reference was made to:-

- the report was seeking approval to potentially use CPO powers to dedicate a small piece of land with limited operational value to assist in the regeneration of Water Lane;
- the Council was working with the Water Lane Development Management Company to deliver new infrastructure to create a new access solution to the area centred around a reduced car neighbourhood;
- the disposal of the land, would create a new access route into the regeneration area, including improvements to the Willeys Avenue/ Water Lane junction, re-alignment of Tan Lane and the creation of a new service road. This would also enable Water Lane being converted into a pedestrian boulevard; and

- Water Lane was a complex site and was one of the Council's tools to work with the developer to open the site, which required a strategic approach, with limited financial or legal risk to the Council.

The Leader referred to the Equality Impact Assessment in relation to use of the CPO for Casting House, and what assurance could be provided, that discussions with tenants would take place and that there would be no forced removal.

The Director of City Development advised that the use of the CPO would be a last resort and due care would be taken throughout the process to ensure that Water Lane Development Management were doing everything possible to protect tenants, ensuring they were well informed and dealt with in a considered way.

Councillor Jobson, as an opposition group leader, had submitted questions, which were tabled at the meeting and appended to the minutes.

During the discussion the following points were made:-

- It was important to have due diligence in regards to the tenants and Housing and Lettings Officers could provide support to the tenants in finding new accommodation; and
- the report showed that the Council was not buying the whole site and were only facilitating a section of the land for the regeneration work.

In response to a Member's question, the Director of City Development explained that the land would be dedicated to Devon County Council (DCC) to become a highway. Consultation work with DCC Highways had been taken throughout the process and they were fully supportive of the proposed plans for the site, but there was a contingency in place should DCC not proceed.

The Leader moved and was seconded by Councillor Wright, to amend to recommendation 2.3 to read as follows:-

- subject to the S151 Officer, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, being satisfied as to the financial standing of the party/parties providing the indemnity, delegate authority to the Director of City Development to enter into a Compulsory Purchase Order Indemnity Agreement ("CPOIA") and if necessary, a development agreement with the land promoter (and any other relevant third party) prior to undertaking any preparatory works in respect of a Compulsory Purchase Order to acquire the third-party proprietary interests identified in Appendix 1.

It was explained that the reason for the amendment was to ensure that the Leader was consulted prior to any Compulsory Purchase Order Indemnity Agreement being entered into.

RECOMMENDED that Council approve:-

- (1) that the City Surveyor, in consultation with the Leader, Director of City Development and the Director Finance (Section 151 Officer) be granted delegated authority to dedicate part of the Exton Road Depot Material Recycling Facility, as shown on the site boundary plan in Appendix 2 of the report, to Devon County Council for Highways use. Or, if necessary, and subject to the provisions of the subsidy Control Act 2022, dispose of the land (conditional on the underpass improvements works being commenced to adoptable standards) to the Water Lane Development Management Company

(or the relevant corporate vehicle), at less than best consideration but at a cost that covers the relocation of stored materials on the disposal site and the construction of an appropriate boundary treatment on the revised boundary line.

- (2) that in the event of a proposed less than best disposal, that the City Surveyor, in consultation with the Leader, (Section 151 Officer) and Director of City Development, be granted delegated authority to assess and, subject to compliance with relevant statutory provisions, agree an undervalue.

RESOLVED that:-

- (3) subject to the S151 Officer, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, being satisfied as to the financial standing of the party/parties providing the indemnity, that the Director of City Development be granted delegated authority to enter into a Compulsory Purchase Order Indemnity Agreement (CPOIA) and if necessary, a development agreement with the land promoter (and any other relevant third party) prior to undertaking any preparatory works in respect of a Compulsory Purchase Order to acquire the third-party proprietary interests identified in Appendix 1 of the report;
- (4) subject to resolution (3), that the Director of City Development be granted authorisation to take all necessary steps to secure the making, submission, confirmation and implementation of a Compulsory Purchase Order to acquire the third-party proprietary interests identified in Appendix 1 of the report;
- (5) the Director of City Development be granted authorisation to issue all relevant notices and certificates in connection with the making, confirmation and implementation of any Compulsory Purchase Order;
- (6) the City Surveyor be granted authorisation to acquire third party proprietary interests by private treaty negotiation;
- (7) the City Surveyor be granted authorisation to dispose of any third party proprietary interest acquired pursuant to the Compulsory Purchase Order to WLDMC (or the relevant corporate vehicle) in accordance with terms to be agreed and subject to compliance with relevant statutory provisions;
- (8) the Director of City Development be granted authorisation to make General Vesting Declarations (GVDs) under the Compulsory Purchase (Vesting Declarations) Act 1981 and/or serve notices to treat and notices of entry (if required) following confirmation of a Compulsory Purchase Order by the Secretary of State;
- (9) the Director of City Development be granted authorisation to issue and serve any warrants to obtain possession of property acquired by the Council following the execution of a General Vesting Declarations or service of a notice of entry if it was considered appropriate to do so; and
- (10) the City Surveyor be granted delegated authority to agree the final terms for the disposal of the strip of land at Exton Depot and the final terms of the Compulsory Purchase Order Indemnity Agreement, subject to compliance with relevant statutory provisions.

The Executive received the proposal to offer the position of Honorary Alderman of the City to Mrs Yolonda Henson in recognition of her outstanding service to the Council.

Members noted that the term of office for Mrs Henson amounted to 39 years, and therefore met the necessary length of service criteria. Mrs Henson has also held a number of positions, including that of Lord Mayor of the City and had provided exceptional service during her terms of office.

The Leader advised on the nomination criteria, and highlighted that group leaders would be requested to submit any nominations, for the position of Honorary Alderman of the City, in which they considered met the criteria for nomination.

RECOMMENDED that in accordance with Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Right Worshipful the Lord Mayor be requested to convene an Extraordinary meeting of the Council, on the rising of the Ordinary meeting of the Council on 18 July 2023, to consider granting the position of Honorary Alderman of the City to Mrs Yolonda Henson.

76 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985 - EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph's 1,2 and 3 of Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Act.

77 **VAUGHAN ROAD DEVELOPMENT SITE**

The Executive received the report on the Vaughan Road development site to develop 91 homes. The first phase (phase A) of the scheme was approved at Executive on 7 February 2023 and was underway to deliver the first 35 homes. In order to address ongoing viability challenges for the final 2 phases of the scheme commercial work had been undertaken to consider the cost for phases B & C, in delivering 56 new homes.

Particular reference was made to:-

- the first phase of the development had received a budget allocation of Right to Buy receipts and the requested allocation would come from HRA right to buy receipts;
- modelling had been based on current interest rates, and financial markets would be considered to minimise borrowing and refresh the viability model; and
- work was being undertaken with contractors on reducing costs and timing was critical to move the project forward.

Councillor Jobson, as an opposition group leader, had submitted questions, which were tabled at the meeting and appended to the minutes.

Councillor M. Mitchell, as an opposition group leader, spoke on this item, he enquired on the potential of the project not breaking even over a 50 year period, if interest rates rise.

Members welcomed the report and noted the risks related to cost rises impacting on the financial modelling, but acknowledged delays would impact on the development of the new homes.

RECOMMENDED that Council:-

- (1) note the content of the report and the funding arrangements to deliver phases B and C of the scheme;
- (2) approve a Capital Budget of £22 million to deliver phases B and C;
- (3) grant delegated authority to the Director Finance (Section 151 Officer) and the Director City Development in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Council Housing Development and Support Services and the Leader of the Council, to finalise the most advantageous combination of borrowing, Homes England grant and Housing Revenue Account capital to successfully deliver the scheme; and
- (4) approve that notice be given to Exeter City Living Limited in accordance with the Development Agreement between Exeter City Council and Exeter City Living Limited to carry out and complete phases B and C of Development.

78

SOCIAL HOUSING DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES REPORT

The Executive received the report which brought together a number of development projects requiring funding for progression. Each project was outlined in the report with all projects requiring additional funding beyond that previously agreed in order to deliver completed schemes.

Members were advised that there were six projects and the first project outlined in the report was seeking additional funding for completion. The remaining projects were in development and waiting implementation.

Councillor Jobson, as an opposition group leader, had submitted questions, which were tabled at the meeting and appended to the minutes.

The Leader requested, going forward, that a means of redacting reports be undertaken, to ensure the projects were presented in the public domain to make residents aware of the work being carried out.

The Leader moved and was seconded by Councillor Wright, to amend recommendation 2.4 in the report to read as follows:-

That the decision is delegated to the Director Finance (S151 Officer), and the Director City Development in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to finalise the most advantageous combination of borrowing, capital and S106 commuted sums and allow for the capital borrowing to be undertaken at the most beneficial moment for the Council.

RECOMMENDED that Council:-

- (1) note the content of the report and the funding arrangements to move the various schemes forward;
- (2) approve a budget totalling £2.5 million to deliver the final phase of the Laings project, including the purchase of one privately owned property;
- (3) approve a budget totalling £1,250,000 to progress the schemes (Chestnut Avenue, Lower Wear Road, Clifford Close and Build Up) to the next work stage as reported at the meeting;
- (4) agrees that the repurposing of the Rennes House refurbishment budget be used for the redevelopment design and site investigations work for Rennes House, as approved at Council on 22 February 2022; and

- (5) grant delegated authority to the Director Finance (Section 151 Officer) and the Director City Development in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to finalise the most advantageous combination of borrowing, capital and S106 commuted sums and allow for the capital borrowing to be undertaken at the most beneficial moment for the Council.

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PROPOSALS REGARDING STAFFING AT RAMM

The Executive received the report the proposals regarding staffing at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum and Art Gallery (RAMM). This followed work undertaken on making savings from Exeter City Council's revenue contribution, whilst maintaining an outstanding service and delivering its business plan. The report set out a restructure at RAMM in order to make the required savings whilst maintaining the National Portfolio Organisation delivery plan.

Particular reference was made to the requirement to make a saving at the RAMM, whilst still maintaining its high level of service. The RAMM also received an annual grant of £618,000 per annum from Arts Council England, a result of its National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) status. The proposed restructure would make the required savings with the best chance of maintaining the NPO delivery plan and allowing the museum to remain one of the most valued city museums in the country.

Councillor M. Mitchell, as an opposition group leader, spoke on this item and enquired if the Unions had been consulted as part of the consultation?

The Director of Culture, Leisure and Tourism advised that process had been undertaken in line with the Council's Organisational Change Management policy.

Members welcomed the report and highlighted the good work and reputation of the RAMM and reputation of the staff.

The Portfolio Holder for Culture and City Centre Strategy clarified that the report was addressing a restructure of staffing at the RAMM and was not making redundancies.

RECOMMENDED that Council, on the grounds of service efficiency approve the redundancy and pension strain related to the restructure at the RAMM.

(The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 6.55 pm)

Chair

The decisions indicated will normally come into force 5 working days after publication of the Statement of Decisions unless called in by a Scrutiny Committee. Where the matter in question is urgent, the decision will come into force immediately. Decisions regarding the policy framework or corporate objectives or otherwise outside the remit of the Executive will be considered by Council on 18 July 2023.

Questions and Responses received from Cllr A. Jobson to Executive Tuesday 27 June 2023

Agenda Item 6 – Overview of General Fund Revenue Budget 2022/23

1) Page 14 – Leisure and Sport

The reduction in hours has severely impacted groups such as indoor bowls who play matches in the evening and will be unable to do so. Will there be a review as to the provision of these facilities on a case by case basis to consider options that will enable these sports to continue.

Response

The leisure team had been working tirelessly our user groups to mitigate the impact of the budget. The Council had been able to accommodate changes so matches could continue and thanks were given to the staff and the clubs. Isca was investing in a new bowling carpet for users to improve the matches that were taking place.

2) Page 28 – proposed supplemental budgets Appendix 4

Is there a more detailed breakdown of what the £808,000 from Earmarked reserves for the Exeter Development fund is for?

Response

This funding builds on OPE funded work which resulted in an outline business case and allowed continued progress to a full business case. The engagement process involves Scrutiny and progress would be reported regularly throughout the year.

Agenda Item 7 – General Fund Capital Monitoring 2022/23 and Revised Capital Programme for 2023/24 and Future Years

1) Page 37/40- Schemes to be deferred to 2023/24 - Play areas

When is it likely that the Mulberry Close Play area will have their much needed make-over – it does not appear to be on the list of works undertaken in 2022/23?

Response

Mulberry close junior multi-play unit would be refurbished in 2023-24, with all timbers replaced and coated. All other items in the play area were still in a fit condition for use and would be monitored and replaced as and when required.

Agenda Item 8 – 2022/23 HRA Budget Monitoring Report – Outturn

1) Page 55 – HRA Final Accounts

Is the figure of £1,511,160 for tenancy services the sum collected by way of service charges from tenants? Are the sums received by way of service charges spent generally over the estate or on the individual properties (eg the

blocks of flats and green space available to each block) and are there any accounts available that provide a more detailed breakdown of expenditure?

Response

The figure of £1,511,160 on page 55, represented the approved budget for delivery of the Tenancy Services function within the HRA. This included administration of the RTB scheme, lettings, tenancy management and rent collection costs and was not therefore the sum collected by way of service charges.

With regards to service charges, the Council was only permitted to recover the actual costs of providing rechargeable services to tenants and leaseholder flat owners (e.g. emergency lighting, door entry systems, communal area repairs, landlord water supplies etc). Records must therefore be maintained to support the setting of service charges in order to ensure they were fairly apportioned. Officers would be able to provide more detailed information, which would be arranged.

Agenda Item 14 – Water Lane Compulsory Purchase Order

- 1) Is it possible to have a members' briefing on these proposals that can include information about Water Lane DMC Ltd; what negotiations have been held with the occupants of the 4 residential properties that might be subject to a CPO?**

Response

A Members Briefing on the Water Lane Design Code was being organised and would make reference to these proposals.

Agenda Item 16 – Vaughan Road Development Site

- 1) Para 5.2 Interest rates are now 5% and there are predictions that they could rise to 6% or higher and not reduce as fast as had been anticipated. Is it possible to quantify the financial position in those circumstances?**

Response

The modelling was at 3.5% and indicated that each 0.5% interest rate rise added a requirement for circa £1.3million - £1.5million of additional capital to make the scheme viable over 50 years.

- 2) Para 10.3 – when will the result of the bid to Homes England be known. If the bid is rejected I assume that this will be known before any contract/pre-contract spending has taken place.**

Response

The engagement with Homes England had been ongoing for well over a year and we have been looking at a number of scenarios with them for the Vaughan Road scheme. Once we have finalised costs for phases B & C a bid will be submitted to Homes England and the Council would not enter into contract for the entirety of phases B & C of the scheme until the scheme was fully funded.

Agenda Item 17 – Social Housing Development Opportunities Report

1) When will the re-analysis of the HRA be available as referred to at Para 5.1

Response

HRA analysis would occur as a next step to ensure the viability of the continuing development programme, but there was no exact timescale for that work.

The approval sought for build-up, was to allow for a more detailed modelling and financial feasibility assessment.

2) Are the financial requirements set out in paras 8.3.2.5; 8.3.3.4; 8.3.4.5 and 8.3.6.5 inflation proofed or are they at today's costs?

Response

These costs were an indication of cost based on current tender returns to give Members an indication of the order of costs for each of the schemes. These costs would be presented in more detail once the schemes were fully designed and were able to cost the scheme in more detail.

3) There is no budget figure for completion of Build-up – it would be helpful to have such in addition to the allocation set out at 8.4

Response

Build-up was a complex project, and at this time it was not known what the potential delivery for the project was. The funding requested would allow the team to explore the options, designs and suitability of block typologies. The team would be able to report in more detail around numbers and potential costs in due course.

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