

## SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - ECONOMY

16 January 2014

### Present:

Councillor Leadbetter (Chair)

Councillors Brock, Bowkett, Branston, Bull, Crew, Crow, Martin, Prowse, Robson and Wardle

### Apologies:

Councillors Bialyk and Mottram

### Also present:

Chief Executive & Growth Director, Assistant Director Economy, Assistant Director Public Realm, Economy and Tourism Manager, Museums Manager, Senior Collections Officer, Principal Accountant Service (PM), Festivals and Events Manager, Leisure Facilities Manager and Democratic Services Officer (Committees) (SLS)

### In attendance:

Councillor Rosie Denham - Portfolio Holder for Economy and Culture  
Councillor Rachel Sutton - Portfolio Holder for City Development

Jeremy Wright – General Manager, Parkwood Leisure  
Michelle Murray – Sports Development Manager, Parkwood Leisure

## 1 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2013 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as correct.

## 2 **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of discloseable pecuniary interests were made.

## 3 **Questions from Members of the Council Under Standing Order 20**

In accordance with Standing Order 20, two questions on car parks from Members were put to the Portfolio Holder for Economy and Culture - Councillor Prowse's question was in relation to car parks on Okehampton Street and also Flowerpot Lane, and Councillor Ruffle's question related to Mary Arches Street. The Portfolio Holder replied. A copy of the questions had previously been circulated to Members. The questions and the replies from the Portfolio Holder (in italics) are appended to the minutes.

## 4 **Future Workings of Scrutiny**

The Corporate Manager Democratic and Civic Support presented the report informing Members of some proposed changes to the future working of the three Scrutiny Committees in order to make the process more efficient and effective.

Some of the proposed changes that had emerged following a series of meetings between the Chairs and Deputy Chairs of the three Committees were:-

- a new style of agenda format;

- unless requested, officers would not present reports at committee;
- Members to provide officers with advance notification of questions to be asked at the meeting;
- Scrutiny Chairs to take a more active role in the Committee meeting 'pre-meet' to decide agenda content; and
- Portfolio Holder's reports to be considered prior to Council meetings rather than at Scrutiny Committees.

A Member acknowledged the work already carried out by the Task and Finish Group, but considered that a cross party decision should be taken on the approach, as there may be differing views from the individual Scrutiny Committees. It was also considered that the presentation of the Portfolio Holder reports prior to meetings of Full Council would mean an additional time commitment, particularly for working Councillors. A Member acknowledged this concern, but welcomed the opportunity to meet with all of the Portfolio Holders in a more informal setting.

Councillor Leadbetter moved the recommendation -

"That the proposals detailed in the report be trialled through the next cycle of Scrutiny meetings in March 2014, whilst the proposal concerning the Portfolio Holder reports would be trialled at the Council meeting scheduled for July 2014".

The recommendation was put to the vote and lost.

Councillor Bull moved and Councillor Bowkett seconded the following motion:-

"Scrutiny Committee - Community welcomes looking at further ways to develop the scrutiny process. However, the proposals in front of us come from the Chairs of scrutiny and has, until now, not been through a cross party process. At this stage the report may be subjected to numerous and conflicting amendments at the three individual scrutiny committees. Previous proposed changes to scrutiny were done through a cross party working group and, therefore, a precedent for an appropriate process has been established.

We therefore recommend that Executive re-establish a cross party working group to look into this report and to bring back proposals to Executive and then, subject to approval, they be put before Full Council."

The motion was put to the vote and carried.

## 5 **Reports of Portfolio Holders**

Councillor Brock declared an interest as a trader in Magdalen Road.

Councillors Sutton and Denham presented progress reports on priorities within the City Development (formerly the Sustainable Development and Transport Portfolio) and Economy and Culture Portfolio respectively. Responses to Members' comments and queries are set out below:

### City Development

- the recent examination of the application for a village green at Eastern Fields had been through a thorough process, with over 112 folders of supporting documents and feelings ran high on both sides of the discussion. There was likely to be a final decision in May or June.

- the adoption of the St James Neighbourhood Plan would help fund improvements and shape the local community. This work had helped springboard improvements in the local environment and promoted more community cohesion. Unfortunately, there was no further funding, but she thanked the officers in the City Council's City Development team as they had offered a great deal of support.
- work with neighbouring authorities in respect of the approach to infrastructure planning in the city was ongoing, particularly relating to wards such as Pinhoe on the south west side of Exeter. As the City Council had no seat on the LEP, the concern had also been raised with the Exeter and Heart of Devon Growth Board. She would respond to a question on the status of the Politmore Arms in Pinhoe, as its possible demolition could have implications for the existing highway boundary and capacity for subsequent planning development.
- Improvements to the city's public realm were ongoing, including the Central Station frontage and cooperation with the County Council to revamp the area around the library. The financial climate had delayed plans in relation to the proposed new Bus and Coach Station, but a viable scheme could now be progressed. She acknowledged the comment that some areas of the city needed improving, but the lack of available funds meant that they were now dependent on working with partners to fulfil the ambitions for the city.

#### Economy and Culture

- despite best intentions there had been a lack of progress on projects to help improve the local economy in the Heavitree District Shopping Centre. It was important to be realistic of what could be achieved, but this issue would be raised with the Leader.
- the Trail leaflets supporting independent shops was an excellent example of what could be achieved and the model would go forward for all those businesses who had signed up to the initiative. She would ask the Assistant Director Economy to contact the Member and provide more feedback and also in terms of business relocation to the city.
- the Exeter Cultural Partnerships bid to the Arts Council had been unsuccessful and an update would be provided at a later date.
- officers were working in partnership with the police to address anti-social behaviour in the city and, in particular, the increasing levels of begging in the High Street. The distress caused to local residents and also visitors was acknowledged.
- the Living Wage Forum had met and centered their discussions on a range of employment issues and support for those on low incomes within a wider forum. They would continue to engage with local businesses.
- internal work had picked up some pertinent issues relating to procurement.
- efforts had been made to create opportunities for a wide range of cultural activities during the Rugby World Cup. The dedicated Fan Zone would also be available on match free days for others to use. Every effort was being made to ensure increased rugby participation and to build on the legacy, however funding could only be used for the specified work.
- officers were about to embark on a study of the current state of the river and canal with the Council's maintenance team, amidst concerns of the need to dredge the canal. The Assistant Director Public Realm would be picking up this work.
- paying for Parking by Phone was now operational in the city's car parks.
- the Council was making every effort to contribute towards the ongoing dialogue for a Supercomputer at the Met Office.

Scrutiny Committee – Economy noted the achievements and priorities presented.

## 6 Parkwood Leisure Management Contract

The Leisure Facilities Manager presented the report, informing Members on the performance of the Parkwood Leisure Management Contract for year three of the contract, October 2012 to September 2013.

Jeremy Wright, the Exeter General Manager and Michelle Murray, the Sports Development Manager, introduced themselves. They set out the ambitions of Parkwood's leisure management contract in Exeter. They were currently in year three of a ten year agreement which was due to expire in 2020, and operated eight sites throughout the city. The contract was monitored using a number of methods including the provision of data for Key performance Indicators, regular monitoring meetings and visits to facilities. Members were also offered a regular overview through the Parkwood Leisure Working Group. Jeremy Wright outlined Parkwood's main aspirations and referred to the importance of good customer service and recognised the importance of engaging with their clientele. They understood the challenges of ensuring that there were sufficient staff who were appropriately trained and maintaining a high visual standard of the older sites.

Each of the Parkwood sites had been registered for Quest accreditation. They worked closely with the City Council to see where they could exceed the contractual requirement and go that extra mile to reach the community. The upcoming Quest reports will be used as a basis for revised improvement plans for each of the facilities. Mr Wright also referred to the work they had accomplished in developing club use and extending the opportunities for clubs to gain their club mark accreditation sports development as well as supporting the local community.

Parkwood recognised the areas in which they are under-performing and will be concentrating on these to bring about an improvement in performance.

The following responses were given to Members –

- a reporting team had been working with the Leisure Manager and Exeter Sports Development Board to develop a value added experience of sport. They have also been working with Active Devon to encourage more informal interaction with less active clients.
- further interrogation of the statistics would gather a more accurate profile of physical participation. Parkwood were keen to work with the community, particularly younger age groups, as well as more collaborative work with other organisations to make a stronger case for funding bids. They could also supply additional details on the type of accidents at individual sites, though it was stressed this was a relatively low figure over all of the sites.
- The importance of reception and front of house staff was acknowledged as well as ensuring the right staffing to manage the facility and identify any trends.
- Mr Wright gave an undertaking to look at the suggestion to encourage take up from the older age groups, and consider the current criteria in relation to the X-Card. It was agreed that this would be discussed at the next meeting of the Parkwood Leisure Working Group.

Scrutiny Committee – Economy thanked Mr Wright and Ms Murray for their presentation and noted the content of the report.

## 7 **Estimates 2014/15**

The Principal Accountant outlined the strategic framework within which the 2014/15 Estimates had been prepared, changes in accounting practices which affected all budgets and any significant changes in the Management Unit estimates, which were discussed at an informal briefing of Scrutiny Committee – Economy on 16 December 2013. The budget framework, Capital Programme and proposed new schemes for the areas covered by Scrutiny Committee - Economy and proposed 2014/15 Fees and Charges were included as an appendix.

Since the reporting of estimates to the December meeting of this Committee, the employer superannuation rates for 2014/15 had been announced, and had changed from 21% to 22.9% and resulted in an increased cost of £90,000 being reflected in the revised draft revenue estimates. A Member sought further information on the revenue for the raised tariffs in Magdalen Road. The Principal Accountant would respond to the Member.

Scrutiny Committee – Economy noted the draft Revenue Estimates, Capital Programme and proposed Fees and Charges for 2014/15 for further consideration by the Executive and Council.

## 8 **New RAMM Collections Development Policy 2014 - 2019**

The Senior Collections Officer presented a report which sought approval for the new RAMM Collections Development Policy to cover the period 2014 - 2019. This would ensure a more strategic approach to the shaping of RAMM's acquisitions and disposals, and an opportunity to examine the nature, extent sustainability and potential of its collecting activity. As funding for new acquisitions was likely to be limited between 2014 and 2019, the policy would also enable a stronger focus on targeting key acquisitions that would improve the quality of the collections and overall visitor experience. The Policy also recognised that the level of digital data had grown significantly improving access to collections, and linking to collaborative work with Exeter University. An approved Collections Development Policy was also a requirement of Museum Accreditation, a prerequisite of funding requests to the Arts Council England and other bodies. RAMM is scheduled to apply for its Accredited Museum status renewal in April.

RAMM's current collection was evidence of Exeter's historical legacy, and it was important to distinguish the high quality and character which uniquely reflected the history of the local community. The new policy builds on these existing strengths by closely managing future acquisitions. The emotional impact, particularly for members of the public hoping to secure a place for their donations was recognised. It was also important to ensure that disposals remained part of a transparent process and complied with the Museum Associations Code of Ethics.

Members acknowledged the hard work and achievement in drawing the Collections Policy together, and made the following comments -

- Whether the Museum enlisted the help of digital artists to develop its contemporary art collection? The Senior Collections Officer stated that RAMM was interested in this area of artistic practice but recognised that technological change meant that preserving digital material over the very long term had particular challenges which would effectively limit its 'life span'.
- If the Museum had any artefacts from the First World War period or planned any display in recognition of the centenary? The Senior Collections Officer advised that the Museum had a number of nurse's books containing notes by

recuperating soldiers in local hospitals and a small number of military artefacts. A series of exhibitions and events were planned to mark the commemoration.

- An acknowledgement that the current catalogue reflected aspects of the record of Exeter's social and industrial history.

Scrutiny Committee - Economy noted the report and recommended approval by Executive of the new RAMM Collections Development Policy 2014-2019.

## 9 **Storage of Archives Resulting from Developer-Funded Archaeology**

The Museums Manager presented the report, which sought Members' support for a new mechanism for dealing with storage of archaeological finds and records as a result of excavations funded by developers within the city. The demise of Exeter Archaeology had left a legacy of undeposited archives in the Council's care and the Museum's current storage arrangements had now reached their limit. A number of storage options were presented including moving the current archaeological archive into a longer term "deep-store", (using an adapted former salt-mine) to extend and make better use of two leased warehouses, and a final option for a mixed use of both using one of the warehouses and the deep-store solution.

The following responses were given to Members:-

- The Senior Collections Officer confirmed that more important material was retained as part of the Museum's collection, but other material already identified for deep-store was the responsibility of the developer. The Museums Manager advised that the cost of a storage box at the proposed Deepstore facility in Cheshire was approximately £1.20 a year. Producing a list of the material deposited at Deepstore would be the responsibility of the developer as part of the archiving process.
- Conditions of planning permission gave developers responsibility for rescuing archaeological material 'at risk' ensuring that such material was appropriately stored, and made publicly available. The Chief Executive & Growth Director added that this level of material was not of sufficient quality to retain in the Museum's store. Future technology may allow some extraction of information allowing further academic research at a later date.
- The Museums Manager explained that 47 other authorities had closed their doors to storing lower grade material. The solution proposed by the Council in this report was likely to be of interest to others in a similar position. There had been a great deal of interest in how Exeter had dealt with this issue.
- The Portfolio Holder Economy and Culture reminded Members that the Council would not wish to keep most of the material, and the developers were legally obliged to ensure ongoing funding for storage under planning conditions.

A Member also sought reassurance that, should there be any significant finds during the anticipated development of the Bus and Coach Station site, the Museum would be able to offer suitable storage. The Museums Manager stated that exceptional material would always be dealt with accordingly. Following a comment on the Ark, the Museums Manager extended an invitation to Members to see the Council's principal store of museum artefacts.

Scrutiny Committee – Economy noted the report and recommended that Executive support the new mechanism for dealing with developer-funded archaeological archives since January 2011, and also future material and agreed that Option 2, as set out in the circulated report, be pursued.

## 10 **A Commitment to Local Employment and Training**

The Assistant Director Economy presented the report as a key action within the City Council's Corporate Plan (2012 - 2014) to take advantage of the development process using planning powers to create Local Labour Agreements to give local people a chance to secure jobs arising from construction projects. Other local authorities, including Sedgemoor and Eastbourne Councils, had successfully used this approach enabling local people to gain training opportunities and employment.

A Member referred to the recent development of student accommodation in Western Way, built by a workforce, predominantly drawn from outside of the region. Although there were other benefits to the local economy, and there was no compulsion to use the local workforce, every effort should be made to encourage the building industry to use employees from the locality and contribute to creating training opportunities for young people.

Funding through Section 106 agreements could help with the necessary training and skills. A Member referred to Mulberry, who were a good example of a high end manufacturer who had made a commitment to the local workforce in Somerset through this approach.

Scrutiny Committee - Economy supported the following recommendations for consideration by Executive:-

- (1) approve the application of Local Labour Agreements to new development proposals of an appropriate scale and size, through the preparation and adoption of Planning Documents facilitated by the emerging Draft Development Delivery Development Plan Document;
- (2) the Exeter and Heart of Devon Employment and Skills Board be encouraged to promote the adoption and application of Local Labour Agreements by developers, employers, local authorities and other stakeholders within and beyond the sub-region;
- (3) this approach be promoted to the Growth Board partners and developed in partnership with them; and
- (4) an approach be established to develop and promote the supply of local goods and services to the construction industry alongside local employment, recruitment, apprenticeships and skills training.

## 11 **Support for Small Businesses**

The Economy and Tourism Manager presented the report, which provided Members with an overview of the provision of business support to traditional business and social enterprises, the contribution made by services funded by Exeter City Council. Exeter Business Support offered a range of services through a partnership consisting of Peninsula Innovations Limited, Exeter College Business School and the Fruit Tree for Business. It was acknowledged that the demand still warranted an Exeter Business Support service, and Members were asked to consider different options for service delivery. However after further discussion it was felt the most appropriate way forward should include a review of the support provided to social enterprises. A Member welcomed the opportunity for a review and felt it would be short sighted to change the current arrangement as they were already offering a solution.

Scrutiny Committee – Economy supported the following –

- (1) continuation by the City Council to fund business support for embryonic, new and existing business to provide opportunities for individuals to secure the means of improving their financial position and promoting job creation at a cost of £42,000;
- (2) that officers be authorised to negotiate service level agreements for 2014/15 with Peninsula Innovations Limited for the continued delivery of services outlined in the report under the banner of Exeter Business Support;

and an additional recommendation, which was put to the vote and carried –

- (3) that the City Council carry out a review to consider whether funding, which had enhanced support for the social enterprise sector should be extended and whether any changes should be made to the way the support was delivered.

## 12 **Update on Youth Unemployment in Exeter**

The Economy and Tourism Manager presented the report, which reviewed current data on levels of youth unemployment within the city, comparing Exeter with neighbouring local authority districts and national trends. It also provided an update on the support available for young job seekers through Job Centre Plus, and comparison of Job Seekers Allowance claimants. She provided an update on the October figures which showed a continuing downward trend; in Table 1, the comparison of all JSA claimants aged 16 to 64 had reduced to 1435; Table 2 and the seven year comparison of young JSA claimants aged 16 – to 24 level had risen by 105 claimants; and Table 3 depicting the number and duration of JSA Claimants aged 16 to 24 years was below the South West and national average.

Scrutiny Committee – Economy noted the report and supported the continued provision of a watching brief through an annual update on youth unemployment, unless there was a change in trends.

## 13 **Parking Review**

The Assistant Director Public Realm presented a report which set out the details of a review of parking in the city to enable a new Parking Strategy to be drawn up by 2015, and included a proposed terms of reference to help scope a review of parking in Exeter and Topsham. The newly adopted City Centre Strategy 2013 – 2022 had meant that a new strategic approach to parking in the city centre was needed to meet the future challenges of a successful local economy and rapidly changing shopping and leisure demands. Officers had carried out an initial consultation exercise with retailers and other interested stakeholders prior to a tender exercise to appoint a consultant from April to October to oversee the work required. It was envisaged that a final report would be made to Scrutiny Committee – Economy by December 2014.

A Member sought confirmation that the new parking places order would enable greater opportunity to offer free or reduced parking at particular times of year. The Assistant Director Public Realm advised that a new parking places order would offer greater flexibility. She also responded to a comment on the likely cost of the consultation, stating that funding was available from a sum of money set aside for the feasibility works around the redevelopment of the Bus Station site. She also responded to a Member's comment on the reliance of parking as a funding stream for the Council.

Scrutiny Committee – Economy noted the Terms of Reference for the forthcoming Parking Review.



14 **Annual Arts & Events Review**

The Festivals and Events Manager presented an update on the performance of the festivals and events portfolio, comprised of Animated Exeter, Vibraphonic, Exeter Open Studios, and Exeter Respect. These events are grant aided by the City Council and also run at arm's length by independent companies or voluntary management boards. There were many achievements in 2013, and in particular the success of the Council's Unexpected Festival, which had taken art and performance onto the street as well as using non traditional performance spaces.

She responded to a Member regarding Exeter Respect being told they would not be able to have a licensed bar at the 2014 event, and stated that this had not been the case. However, the police had raised concerns, both regarding minor alcohol related incidents in 2013 and also rising attendance figures and control of numbers at the event. The introduction of a Designated Public Places Order (DPPO) in Belmont Park would necessitate that issues around the sale of alcohol and management of the bar would need to be looked into. The arrangements for 2014 would be discussed at a forthcoming meeting with the police, licensing colleagues, and the Chair and Production Manager of Exeter Respect. A Member commented on the success of recent events by the festival and events team in encouraging and coordinating such a wide range of professionals and volunteers. The Festival and Events Manager advised that an annual review of the projects funded would be made to the meeting of Scrutiny Committee - Economy in September 2014.

Scrutiny Committee - Economy noted the report on the performance of the festivals and events portfolio in 2012/2013 and the proposed approach for both core and revenue project funding as outlined in section 4 of the circulated report.

15 **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 for the consideration of the following item on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3, of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

16 **Minutes of Exeter and Heart of Devon Growth Board**

The minutes of the Exeter and Heart of Devon Growth Board held on 16 October 2013 were circulated for Members' information, and referred to a number of issues that the City Council may need to consider and take forward as appropriate.

Scrutiny Committee – Economy noted the content of the Exeter and Heart of Devon Growth Board Minutes.

The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 9.05 pm

Chair