

EXECUTIVE

Tuesday 1 April 2014

Present:

Councillor Sutton (Chair)
Councillors Denham, Fullam, Hannaford, Mrs Henson, Owen and Pearson

Apologies:

Councillor Edwards

Also present:

Chief Executive & Growth Director, Deputy Chief Executive, Assistant Director Finance, Assistant Director City Development, Assistant Director Economy, Corporate Manager Property and Democratic Services Manager (Committees)

40

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest were made.

41

STANDING ORDERS - RECORDING VOTES FOR BUDGET MEETINGS

The report of the Corporate Manager Democratic and Civic Support was submitted, informing Members of the new Standing Orders Regulations and the resulting requirement to amend the Council's Constitution in line with the Government's expectation that all authorities would take recorded votes at their budget meetings.

RECOMMENDED to Council that the:-

- (1) Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 be noted; and
- (2) the Constitution be updated in accordance with the new legislative requirements.

42

OVERVIEW OF REVENUE BUDGET

The report of the Assistant Director Finance was submitted, advising Members of the overall projected financial position of the General Fund Revenue Account after nine months, for the 2013/14 financial year.

The Assistant Director Finance advised of the revenue position with regards to the General Fund, the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Council Own Build. Members were advised that the Service Committees showed a forecast overspend of £388,370 and that the variances included a forecast overspend in the SHS – Advisory Services, Planning Services and Unapportionable Overheads and a underspend in Housing Benefits.

The Assistant Director Finance commented that:-

- a full review of sundry debt was to be undertaken

- it was anticipated that there would be an increase in the car park revenue to that originally budgeted
- the unapportionable overheads overspend was due to the strain payments into the pension fund due to staff accessing their pensions early and that the employers past service contributions had been under recovered. From 2014/15 the Council would pay 14.1% for future benefits and £1.2 million fixed amount relating to the past service deficit.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Customer Access clarified in relation to the kitchen replacement programme that each kitchen was assessed on its condition and its need for part or whole replacement. Two inspections per year would now be undertaken of all the housing stock and he suggested that the maintenance of the stock could be reviewed by a joint working group comprising of Members from Scrutiny Committees - Community and Resources.

Scrutiny Committee – Resources considered the report at its meeting on 19 March 2014 and the support and comments of the Members were noted.

RECOMMENDED that Council approve the:-

- (1) General Fund forecast financial position for the 2013/14 financial year;
- (2) HRA forecast financial position for 2013/14 financial year;
- (3) outstanding Sundry Debt position as at December 2013; and
- (4) creditors' payments performance.

43

CAPITAL MONITORING STATEMENT TO 31 DECEMBER 2013

The report of the Assistant Director Finance was submitted, reporting on the current position in respect of the Council's revised annual capital programme and to advise Members of the anticipated level of deferred expenditure into future years, and seeking Member approval to amend the annual capital programme in order to reflect the reported variations.

Members were advised that the revised capital programme for the current financial year was £16.265 million. During the first nine months of the year the Council spent £8.190 million on the programme, which equated to 50.4% of the revised programme. This compared with £11.119 million (55.3%) being spent in the first nine months of 2012/13.

The Assistant Director Finance commented on the expenditure variances of the underspend on Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Electrical Rewiring and Boiler Replacement Programme and the achievements which included the Central Station Environmental Works.

The Deputy Chief Executive advised that a report would be presented to Scrutiny Committee – Resources detailing the sums and to whom the New Homes Bonus funds had been awarded to.

The Portfolio Holder for City Development referred to the joint working between Devon County Council, Network Rail and the City Council on the Central Station Enhancements. As the project had come in slightly under budget the remaining funds would be spent on the restoration of the station building canopy.

Scrutiny Committee – Resources considered the report at its meeting on 19 March 2014 and the support and comments of the Members were noted.

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes and approves the current position in respect of the annual capital programme.

44

AN ENERGY NEUTRAL COUNCIL - A RENEWABLES AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAMME

Councillor Bialyk, Member Champion for Commercialisation of the Council, presented the report to support a programme of renewable and energy saving initiatives that would assist in the delivery of corporate priorities around improving the environment and maintaining the assets of the city as well as providing essential income and long term savings to the Council. One of the key benefits was to reduce consumption and energy costs. Members were updated on the phased programme, the implementation and the financial and resource implications.

Members paid tribute to the staff on the innovative work achieved. They supported the programme of renewable and energy saving initiatives which would provide significant long term savings and, ultimately, an income for the Council.

The Corporate Manager Property commented that, in general, the pay-back period was between five to seven years on the majority of projects.

Scrutiny Committee – Resources considered the report at its meeting on 19 March 2014 and the support and comments of the Members were noted.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) progress made to date in delivering renewable and energy efficient initiatives be noted;
- (2) proposed new initiatives, included in Phase I and II as set out in the report be endorsed;
- (3) the Corporate Manager Property, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder Enabling Services, Deputy Chief Executive and Assistant Director Finance be authorised to approve delivery of further energy saving projects within the Capital Programme funding allocation; and
- (4) progress and outcomes of the programme be reported to Scrutiny Committee – Resources on a regular basis.

45

MEMBERS IT PROVISION

The report of the Deputy Chief Executive was submitted, providing information and feedback from the recent pilot with Leader and Portfolio Holders using iPad devices to access council emails, agendas and reports, and seeking approval to proceed with the provision of iPads to all Members following the Local Elections on 22 May 2014.

Members welcomed the way forward and those Members that had taken part in the pilot spoke of their positive experience and thanked the Council's ICT Services for their support.

Scrutiny Committee – Resources considered the report at its meeting on 19 March 2014 and the support and comments of the Members were noted.

RECOMMENDED to Council that:-

- (1) the current PC/Laptop solution be replaced with an iPad for all elected Members following the elections on 22 May 2014;
- (2) all Council ICT equipment currently used by Members to be returned to ICT Services;
- (3) Members' current broadband allowance of £7.50pm be removed, in favour of a 3G connection;
- (4) BlackBerry devices provided to the Leader and Portfolio holders be replaced with a standard phone;
- (5) training for the use of the iPads be provided to all Members;
- (6) the publishing paper copies of meetings cease (only copies of the agendas will be provided at each meeting), subject to the appropriate legislation being in place;
- (7) existing PC and printing facilities located in the Members' Room in the Civic Centre be maintained; and
- (8) additional capital funding of £17,460 and an additional revenue budget of £2,225 to cover the additional costs be approved.

46

CITY DEVELOPMENT REDESIGN MEMBER ENGAGEMENT ISSUES

The report of the Assistant Director City Development was submitted, looking to identify and consider proposals for amendments to Member engagement in the planning process as a result of the redesign of the service and to recommend to Council resulting amendments to the Constitution.

The Assistant Director City Development advised that the amendments included the replacement of the Area Working Parties with fortnightly delegated briefings and four weekly Planning Member Working Group meetings.

Members welcomed the proposed changes and the introduction of delegated briefing meetings although there was discussion regarding the timings of the meetings.

In response to Members, the Assistant Director City Development confirmed that the delegated lists would be produced by Wards and that the timing of the delegated briefings would be reviewed at the end of the three month trial.

RECOMMENDED to Council that the proposed amended roles for Planning Committee, Planning Member Working Group and the replacement of Area Working Parties with Delegation Briefings be approved and, with effect from 4 June 2014, the Constitution be amended as set out in Appendix two.

**REVISED AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND PLANNING OBLIGATIONS
SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT**

The report of the Assistant Director City Development was submitted, seeking Members' approval of the revised Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPD) and Planning Obligations SPD at (Appendices A and C of the report) for adoption. Main revisions to the existing, adopted documents responded to planning system changes and introduction of Exeter's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Both documents had been approved by Executive for public consultation in 2013.

The Assistant Director City Development advised that the Affordable Housing SPD had been amended principally in response to the comments of the CIL Examiner that 'policies in SPD must not conflict with the adopted development plan' and 'there was nothing in the Core Strategy to say that 25% affordable housing would be generally acceptable'. The SPD had been redrafted to reflect the Core Strategy and provide for 35% affordable housing on development sites of three or more dwellings.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Customer Access commented that the change from 35% to 25% had been in response to the recession to help ensure that development came forward and now, given the economic upturn, it was considered that 35% Affordable Housing was viable.

Members welcomed the 35% Affordable Housing contribution which would provide for a robust Affordable Housing Policy and further support the development of the city.

RESOLVED that the:-

- (1) revised Planning Obligations and Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Documents at Appendices A and C be approved and adopted; and
- (2) the Assistant Director City Development be authorised to make any minor modifications as may be necessary.

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES

The schedule of appointments to outside bodies was circulated.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) the following appointment be agreed:-

St Sidwell's Parish Lands and Other Charities – Councillor Spackman; and

RECOMMENDED that the appointments to the Exeter Dispensary and in Sickness Fund School and Exeter Municipal Charities be agreed by Council.

**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 item on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 and 6 of Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Act.

BUS AND COACH STATION SITE

The joint report of the Chief Executive & Growth Director and Corporate Manager Property was submitted, updating Members on the current position regarding the redevelopment project for the Bus and Coach Station site.

The Corporate Manager Property updated Members on the background, the Leisure Centre and Stagecoach Bus facilities, Leisure Complex Project Management and the resource implications.

Members supported the way forward to progress the relocation of the Stagecoach Bus facilities and to move forward the Leisure Centre Complex.

RESOLVED that the: -

- (1) current position as regards the redevelopment of the Exeter Bus and Coach Station site, be noted;
- (2) the Corporate Manager Property, in consultation with the Chief Executive & Growth Director, be authorised to negotiate terms for an Exclusivity Agreement with Stagecoach permitting them to bring forward a Development Scheme for a new depot and bus park;
- (3) the Corporate Manager Property be authorised to negotiate the termination of leases and other property agreements in order to facilitate the depot and bus park;
- (4) the Corporate Manager Property be authorised to arrange service of the necessary break notices to secure vacant possession of the Leisure Complex site; and

RECOMMENDED that Council approve:-

- (5) additional funding of £370,000 to undertake preparatory work for the new leisure complex including to determine the most appropriate way to procure the construction and operation of the facility, and its capital cost, funding options to be brought back to Members for final approval.

(The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 7.15 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 8 April 2014.