

**EXETER CITY COUNCIL
REPORT TO: SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – ECONOMY AND EXECUTIVE
DATE OF MEETING: 5 MARCH 2015 AND 17 MARCH 2015
REPORT OF: ASSISTANT DIRECTOR PUBLIC REALM
TITLE: WATERWAYS REVIEW – TOWARDS A WATERWAYS STRATEGY**

Is this a Key Decision?

Yes

One that affects finances over £1m or significantly affects two or more wards. If this is a key decision then the item must be on the appropriate forward plan of key decisions.

Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Executive

1 What is the report about?

- 1.1 The proposed development of a strategic framework for the development of Exeter's river and canal and associated assets in order to guide the future operation and management of the asset and support economic growth.

2 Recommendations:

- 2.1 That the proposed scope and timetable for the Waterways review be noted;
- 2.2 That a partnership of key stakeholders in Exeter's river and canal be established to develop and deliver a Waterways Strategy for Exeter;
- 2.3 That the potential for the Canal and River Trust to be engaged in the development of Exeter's waterways and their future delivery be explored.

3 Reasons for the recommendations:

- 3.1 To provide a strategic framework for the development of Exeter's river and canal and associated assets in order to guide the further operation and management of the assets and support economic growth.

4 What are the resource implications including non financial resources.

- 4.1 None. The recommendations can be achieved within existing resources.
- 4.2 It is likely that further resources will be required to deliver the Strategy in due course. However, this will be addressed when the Strategy is presented for adoption. It is hoped that the Strategy will be developed and owned by the waterways stakeholders in partnership and that they will have some capacity to take it forward in conjunction with the Council.

5 Section 151 Officer comments:

- 5.1 There are no financial implications contained within the report. Any funding requirements arising out of the Strategy will be considered when they have been quantified.

6 What are the legal aspects?

- 6.1 Significant legal advice will be required to develop the strategy due to the complex nature of the law around the regulation and management of the waterways and the ownership of various rights and sites on Exeter's waterways.

7 Monitoring Officer's comments:

7.1 This report raises no issues for the Monitoring Officer.

8 WATERWAYS REVIEW

8.1 In June last year, in the light of the decision not to pursue the unresolved Harbour Revision Order, the Council resolved to undertake a review of the options open to the Council in respect of the future operation and management of the Estuary, Quay, Basin and Canal.

8.2 In addition to operational issues, the review will consider how the river and canal can be used to support Exeter's economy and reduce the council's subsidy to the service. A strategic approach to the area and the services offered also needs to be developed.

8.3 In November, a series of meetings were held with key stakeholders associated with the river and canal. While a variety of opinions were expressed, a great deal of consensus emerged. This feedback has been used to scope the Waterways review which is attached at Appendix 1.

8.4 In summary, the review scope sets out what needs to be considered in order to work towards a new approach to the City's waterways assets which will meet the Council's strategic purposes of providing great things to see and do, generating economic growth and meeting our financial objectives,

8.5 The review will be used to guide further work on the existing services offered by the Council which will be done in-house initially over a period of time as capacity permits. Early discussions with the national Canal and Rivers Trust have been promising and it is hoped that the Council will be able to engage their expertise in conducting the review. A senior representative of the Trust will be making a presentation to the next meeting of this Committee. The review should be concluded in December 2015 and will be used to inform a new Waterways Strategy for Exeter in 2016. Local engagement will be key to the development and delivery of a new approach to the waterways and it is hoped that waterways stakeholders will come together in a new partnership to do this, possibly under the umbrella of the Exeter Cultural Partnership. A comprehensive consultation exercise will be undertaken as part of the development of the Strategy.

9 How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan?

- Provide great things for me to see, do and visit
- Keep my city safe and looking good
- A well run Council

10 What risks are there and how can they be reduced?

10.1 The risks in putting undertaking the review and putting together a strategy are minimal.

11 What is the impact of the decision on equality and diversity; health and wellbeing; safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults, community safety and the environment?

11.1 None at this point. A consultation exercise is planned and will seek to identify and address the impact of any future proposals on equality and diversity.

12 Are there any other options?

12.1 Not applicable.

Sarah Ward, Assistant Director Public Realm

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

None

Contact for enquires:

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