

PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

10 November 2016

Present:

Councillor Brimble (Chair)

Councillors Lyons, Foggin, D Henson, Keen, Prowse, Robson, Wardle and Wood

Apologies:

Councillor Mitchell

Also present:

Assistant Director Environment, Cleansing and Fleet Manager, Inward Investment Manager, Principal Accountant Service (PM and MH) and Democratic Services Officer (Committees) (SLS)

In attendance:

Councillor Rachel Sutton	- Portfolio Holder City Development
Councillor Rosie Denham	- Portfolio Holder Economy and Culture
Councillor Philip Bialyk	- Portfolio Holder Sport and Health and Wellbeing

40 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2016 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as correct.

41 **Declaration of Interests**

No declarations of disclosable interest were made.

42 **Questions from Members of the Council under Standing Order 20**

In accordance with Standing Order No 20, a number of questions, were put by Councillor Prowse in relation to the funding arrangements in connection with the operation of the bus services and enabling works, including advertising of Traffic Regulation Orders (including revocations), street furniture alterations and associated works during the interim period whilst the city's Bus Station is closed. A copy of the questions had been previously circulated to Members, and this, together with the reply from Councillor Bialyk, Portfolio Holder Sport and Health and Wellbeing were appended to the minutes.

43 **Budget Monitoring Quarter 2**

The Principal Accountants (PM and MH) presented the report which advised Members of any major differences, by management unit between the approved budget and the outturn for the first six months in the financial year up to 30 September 2016 in respect of Place Scrutiny Committee. The current forecast suggested that net expenditure for the Committee would increase from the approved budget by a total of £408,210 after transfers from reserves and revenue contributions to capital. This represented a variation of 4.35% from the revised budget and included a supplementary budget of £692,370, already agreed by Council.

The Principal Accountant (MH) stated that the report also included an outturn update in respect of the Place Capital Programme, and she confirmed a total spend of £1,878,805 in 2016/17 with £10,430 of the programme potentially accelerated from 2017/18. A sum of £2,817,175 was available to spend in the two remaining quarters of the financial year.

The Principal Accountant (PM) responded to a Member's question seeking a breakdown of the legal expenditure and the anticipated expenditure to year end associated with planning appeals and also in respect of legal work related to the redevelopment of the Bus Station and agreed to forward the details to him. The Deputy Chief Executive also responded to a Member's question stating that a delay in the installation of the solar panels at the Matford Centre had resulted in a shortfall in the level of income anticipated in the current financial year. A Member enquired what the City Council was doing to encourage all those who either did not currently recycle or continually failed to recycle their waste correctly. He suggested that the services of a dedicated enforcement officer would be useful to help instruct students and local residents alike.

Place Scrutiny Committee noted the report.

44 **Update on City Centre Strategy**

The Inward Investment Manager updated Members on the significant progress made on each action within the City Centre Strategy 2013 – 2022 (Building on a Decade of Change – Delivering a Competitive and Attractive City Centre), and requested consideration of the future ownership of actions, and to seek a way forward for managing the wider city centre. The long term management of the city centre remained a priority for the City Council, but it was acknowledged that it was no longer managed in a holistic way. The report set out a number of proposals to be brought forward in relation to the overall management of the city centre. Following consultation with city centre business groups and networks, a number of options would be taken forward including:-

- retention of the current structures and networks to manage the wider city centre (outside of the Exeter Business Improvement District (BID) boundary)
- that Exeter BID be the main city centre organisation to manage the wider city centre
- introduction of a city wide group (of interested parties) to proactively manage the wider city centre to improve the city centre experience and offer

The Inward Investment Manager responded to a number of Members' comments including looking at ways to develop the offer further and sustain the local economy after 5pm into the evening. A Member suggested that any changes to the opening hours of city centre shops would have a direct impact on staff and he queried whether there was sufficient capacity to expand the local economy. The Deputy Chief Executive welcomed the efforts to widen Exeter's offer, and certainly the new restaurants as part of the Guildhall Shopping Centre redevelopment, the forthcoming Bus Station and Leisure Centre development and also looking to the future and drawn up of a masterplan at South Street to revitalise even more of the city. The current spend was surprisingly less than other similarly profiled cities, so it was important to ensure that Exeter remained attractive and efforts were made to continue to develop the experience for visitors and local residents alike.

The Inward Investment Manager was pleased to confirm that a new member of staff (Project Officer), would be joining the team and part of their role would be to move

this work forward, and the Members' comment made this evening and of course any future comments would be picked up as part of the impending consultation.

A Member also commented on the dichotomy between the growing number of street homelessness and the efforts to develop the night time economy, and ensure there was a suitable environment in which the new retail and restaurant ventures could flourish. He also referred to the future visitor coach parking provision at Haven Banks and in South Street, and suggested that coaches may choose to go to other towns and cities where there was a greater opportunity or more convenient parking arrangement. The Deputy Chief Executive stated that visitor coach parking in the city was included as part of the interim Bus Station arrangements, as well as consideration of a longer term solution, and discussed regularly at the Leisure Complex and Bus Station Programme Board meetings.

Place Scrutiny Committee noted the review of the completed and on-going actions from the City Centre Strategy 2013 – 2022 and endorsed the consultation exercise due to take place over the next six months with key city centre stakeholders, business groups and networks as a way forward.

45 **Recycling Plan Review**

The Cleansing and Fleet Manager and Assistant Director Environment updated Members on the current performance in waste reduction and recycling, and the reasons for current trends. The report provided an update on progress on the annual Recycling Plan, and sought ongoing support and suggestions from Scrutiny for recycling initiatives.

The Cleansing and Fleet Manager gave a presentation and referred to Exeter's recycling rate of 33.3%, (48.4% when Exeter's recycling rate from Exeter's 2 Recycling Centres was included) against the aspiration to reach a UK recycling target of 50% by 2020. He provided a breakdown of the categorised waste for Exeter as well as comparison with other Devon District Council for 2015/16, and the previous year. His team were continually making efforts to educate the public on recycling and used a range of social marketing techniques, including articles in the Council's newspaper, 'The Exeter Citizen', (e.g. the next feature includes recycling tips through the festive period). The income derived from recycling could fluctuate weekly and market prices per tonne could be obtained for a range of recyclable materials including plastic, steel cans, aluminium cans, clear, green and brown glass, paper, card and scrap metal. Income from material sales and recycling credits exceeds the operating cost of the Council's Materials Reclamation Facility, so recycling generates a net income. He confirmed that a separate food waste collection was being examined, and this would significantly contribute towards the city's recycling rate. The consultant's report would be completed by the end of December, with a business case presented to Members for consideration in the New Year.

Exeter's challenges to encourage recycling included:-

- the transient population living in flats or in Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO). Often there can be a lack of ownership for the management of household waste, with many of the grey bins containing material that could have been recycled. The team worked hard to educate communities, e.g. working with the University and Guild to visit student properties at the beginning of term to ensure that tenanted households were equipped with the correct facilities and knowledge to recycle. The team also continued to target the worst or persistent problem areas and, when required, worked within an enforcement regime; and

- the urban nature of Exeter, which resulted in a smaller garden waste collection tonnage compared to more rural areas - but more positively, brown bin waste still made up 7% of the recycling rate, with over 300 brown bin customers being added to the current 8500 each year;
- the current lack of a food waste collection. Food waste makes up 36% of the waste currently sent for disposal. The Council has expressed a preference for introducing food waste collection and a business case is being prepared, due for completion in December 2016.

The Cleansing and Fleet Manager also responded to Members' questions:-

- the implementation of a food waste collection would include a combination of a standard caddy to hold the daily food waste and larger receptacle for a weekly food collection. The rigid plastic caddies had lockable lids, and were more resistant to seagulls or other animals. The scheme could also include food waste being disposed of in its original plastic packaging or contained in an inner plastic bag for transfer to the larger collection box. The scheme would be costed against the waste disposal savings formula as part of a supporting business case.
- it was planned to run a series of workshops with key stakeholders and involve Exeter Food Network to promote more recycling and food waste reduction.
- currently, clothing cannot be recycled in the green bins, but Salvation Army bring-banks provided a mutually useful opportunity to recycle clothes. The Salvation Army collected the clothes to sell and were able to use our sites, but the figure did contribute towards the City's recycling rate. The Salvation Army has indicated a willingness to increase the number of textile banks.
- to install recycling banks in a particular ward, constraints included being on a particular gradient, not too close to residential properties, accessible for the collection lorry, and being able to obtain the necessary permission from the Local Highways Authority to site the bank on pavements.
- the new post of the recycling officer had been filled and the officer would start very shortly.
- there were 61 permanent waste and recycling collection staff and, on a typical day, the average number of agency staff required to cover for sickness, was three, with half of any absences covered by permanent staff. The sickness rate and subsequent use of agency staff, had reduced significantly. The Assistant Director Environment added that, by the very nature, any agency staff used for sickness cover had to be arranged at short notice. Two additional permanent posts had been secured to alleviate the need for agency staff. He made an open invitation for Members to visit the Materials Reclamation Facility (MRF), or go out with the waste collection crew or meet them on route within their ward.

The Chair suggested it would be helpful to break down the recycling rate by ward and look at areas where there were low levels of recycling. The Cleansing and Fleet Manager confirmed that they were due to introduce new software to monitor the Weighbridge operation at Exton Road. It will more easily record an accurate breakdown of waste and recycling loads per round drilling down into the figures and

enabling the team to specifically target areas of the city. Responding to a Member's question, he stated that the weighbridge was accurate within a 20 kilo margin.

Place Scrutiny Committee noted the current trends on waste reduction and recycling, and supports the ongoing actions planned for 2016/17 that are described in this report.

46 South East Devon Joint Habitat Regulations Executive Committee Minutes

The minutes of the South East Devon Habitats Regulations Partnership held on 22 September 2016 were circulated for information.

Place Scrutiny Committee noted the minutes.

47 Legacy Leisure Working Group Minutes

The minutes of Legacy Leisure Working Group held on the 12 September 2016 were circulated for information.

Place Scrutiny Committee noted the minutes.

48 Exeter Cycling Campaign Charter

Councillor Denham presented the details of the Exeter Cycling Charter, which had been drawn up as a statement of support for cycling, as the means of helping to make Exeter a better city, and ensure that cyclists have a voice in the city. The Charter would enable both individuals and organisations across the city to express their support for cycling, show that cycling could be good for business, health, as well as the economy.

Councillor Denham confirmed that the City Council had made a statement of intent to join the growing number of Charter signatories and demonstrate the City Council's support for cycling and principle of enabling cycling through further investment in cycling infrastructure. She confirmed that Exeter City Council was working in partnership with Devon's local authorities, as well as Devon County Council to create a strategic plan for the Greater Exeter area, and look at the wider transport needs of the city

A Member welcomed the laudable aims of the Charter and any opportunity to improve communication between organisations in the effort to facilitate cycling throughout the city. A Member also welcomed this pledge, which was a meaningful aspiration and provided a useful benchmark.

Place Scrutiny Committee noted the Statement of Intent by Exeter City Council to sign the Exeter Cycling Campaign Charter.

The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 7.15 pm

Chair