

PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday 6 September 2018

Present:

Councillor
Councillors Holland, Owen, Pattison, Pierce, Robson, Vizard N and Wright

Apologies:

Councillors Wardle, Foale and Foggin

Also present:

Chief Executive & Growth Director, Housing Lead - Tenancy Services, Principal Accountant Corporate, Technical Accounting Manager and Democratic Services Officer

In Attendance:

Councillor Philip Bialyk	- Exeter City Council
Councillor Emma Morse	- Portfolio Holder for People
Councillor Hannah Packham	- Portfolio Holder for Housing Revenue Account

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CHAIR

In the absence of the Chair, Councillor Wardle, the meeting was chaired by Councillor Owen.

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MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of People Scrutiny Committee held on 7 June 2018 were approved and signed by the Chair as correct.

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DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest were made.

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QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC UNDER STANDING ORDER 19

None.

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QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL UNDER STANDING ORDER 20

None.

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PORTFOLIO HOLDERS REPORT 2017/18 - YEAR END REPORT

The Portfolio Holders presented the year-end report for 2017/18.

The Portfolio Holder for People (Councillor Morse) highlighted the following areas:-

- purchase of 25 Queens Road for temporary accommodation;
- progress on implementing the action plan for the Homelessness Strategy;
- high percentage of Integrated Care Exeter clients in temporary accommodation with tenancies maintained through work of new complex needs accommodation support team; and
- seeking to mitigate the impact of Welfare Reform on residents.

In respect of the latter, she informed Members that the rollout of Universal Credit had commenced in September and was currently applied in respect of those with changed circumstances such as employment status and that the impact would be clearer when all claimants moved across in March/April 2019. She also stated that the Council was working with Citizens Advice Bureau and the Foodbank on mitigating the impact.

The Portfolio Holder for the Housing Revenue Account (Councillor Packham) highlighted the following areas:-

- continued work on benchmarking performance with comparative housing providers to improve the effectiveness of the housing function;
- a Better Homes Document created as a template for improved tenant liaison;
- a memorandum of understanding agreed with the Development Company - Exeter Living - to protect tenant and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) interests. The setting up of a HRA Management Board was progressing;
- Chester Long Court opened and tenants aware of downsizing opportunities and work shortly to start on the St Loyes Extra Care Scheme;
- stock condition survey completed to inform the Asset Management Strategy; and
- a model for supporting residents of older persons' accommodation with three Older Persons Property Support Officers directly liaising with older tenants had been in place for 18 months.

The Portfolio Holder and the Housing Lead Tenancy Services advised that the Government was inviting authorities to bid for additional HRA borrowing above the existing cap. The 7 September 2018 deadline for submissions to the Department of Communities and Local Government had been extended by three weeks with £500 million to be made available over three years for authorities outside London. The Council bid would be in respect of 11 HRA sites. It was hoped it would be successful in two or three with potentially up to 400 new affordable homes being provided. There could be scope to use the skills of Exeter City Living to bring forward these schemes if successful.

The Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing, Communities and Sport (Councillor Bialyk) highlighted the following areas:-

- commenced review of community grants with consultants Red Quadrant. Improving the health and wellbeing of communities was seen as one area where grant support could be directed;
- Kier had commenced de-risking works on the bus station site and tendering preparation works continued to proceed with regard to the procurement of the operator for St Sidwell's Point. The leisure offer would seek to appeal to the whole family;
- review of Community Safety Partnership completed with the Portfolio Holder now a member of the Partnership

- the successful bid to Sport England for Local Delivery Pilot status was being developed with projects including work with the Whipton and Pinhoe Football Club and the Exeter Cycle Speedway Team;
- two main elements of Wellbeing Exeter programme - community connectors operating in conjunction with GP surgeries and community builders helping develop community projects such as the Friends of Merrivale being rolled out across the City; and
- working with Fairtrade Exeter to renew Fairtrade City Status due again in November 2018. During Fairtrade Fortnight the Portfolio Holder held a Twitter competition encouraging the public to see how many Fairtrade products they could purchase.

The Portfolio Holder provided further information regarding on-going works to both the Pyramids and Riverside Leisure Centres. Works to the former were necessary to keep the pool in operation pending construction of St Sidwell's Point and there had been a regrettable delay on the refurbishment of the latter following the fire. Both he and the Chief Executive & Growth Director explained the technical background and the shared frustrations of the contractors on the Riverside site.

People - Scrutiny Committee noted the reports of the Portfolio Holders.

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HRA 2018/19 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - QUARTER 1

The Technical Accounting Manager advised Members of any major differences, by management unit between the approved budget and the outturn forecast for the first three months of the financial year up to 30 June 2018 in respect of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and the Council's new build schemes. An outturn update in respect of the HRA Capital Programme was also incorporated in the report in order to help provide a comprehensive financial update in respect of the Housing Revenue Account.

During this period, the total budget variances indicated that there would be a net deficit of £3,977,827 in 2018/19. This represented a movement of £119,318 compared to the revised budgeted deficit of £4,097,145 for 2018/19.

The total amount of HRA capital expenditure for 2018/19 showed a total forecast spend of £17,327,852 compared to the £19,168,652 approved programme, a decrease of £1,840,800.

It was noted that the Government had announced in August that it would not bring the Higher Value Assets Levy into effect. The £4million HRA contingency would therefore be reviewed as part of the 2019/20 estimates process, as it had been increased from £3million in 2016/17 to help mitigate against the risk of the new levy.

Responding to a Member, the Service Lead - Tenancy Services explained that the delay on the commencement of the St Loyes Extra Care Scheme had been caused by the original contractor chosen withdrawing and extended negotiations with the contactor subsequently appointed.

People Scrutiny Committee noted the report.

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PEOPLE 2018/19 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - QUARTER 1

The Principal Accountant advised Members of any material differences, by management unit between the approved budget the outturn forecast for the first three months of the financial year up to 30 June 2018 in respect of People

Services. An outturn update in respect of the People Capital Programme was also incorporated in the report in order to help provide a comprehensive financial update in respect of the People Services budget.

The programme showed a total spend of £93,392 in the first three months of 2018/19.

The 2018/19 Capital Programme, including commitments brought forward from 2017/18, was £1,192,660, as set out in the report.

People Scrutiny Committee noted the report.

37 **PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY PARTNERSHIP - MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 16 APRIL AND 21 MAY 2018**

The Portfolio Holder for the HRA advised that the Performance Scrutiny Partnership sought to enhance tenant engagement and, through the Better Homes Document, was encouraging greater involvement. A review was to be undertaken of the approach to resident involvement and community development and the resources needed to deliver a modern approach.

People - Scrutiny Committee noted the minutes of the meetings of the Performance Scrutiny Partnership of 16 April and 21 May 2018.

38 **EXETER COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD - MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10 JULY 2018**

People - Scrutiny Committee noted the minutes of the meeting of the Exeter Health and Wellbeing Board of 10 July 2018.

(The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 6.24 pm)

Chair