

CUSTOMER FOCUS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

6 February 2020

Present:

Councillor Matthew Vizard (Chair)

Councillors Mitchell, M, Begley, Foggin, Mitchell, K, Oliver, Pattison, Sheldon, Sparkes and Wardle

Apologies:

Councillors Martin, Quance and Warwick

Also present:

Director (DB), Cleansing & Fleet Manager, Deputy Chief Finance Officer and Democratic Services Officer

In attendance:

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| Councillor Amal Ghusain | - Portfolio Holder for Equalities, Diversity and Communities |
| Councillor David Harvey | - Portfolio Holder for Environment and City Management |

1 **Apologies**

These were received from Councillors Martin, Quance and Warwick.

2 **Minutes**

Subject to the inclusion of Councillor Harvey in the list of Portfolio Holders in attendance, the minutes of the meeting of Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee held on 5 December 2019 were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair as correct.

3 **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made.

4 **Questions from the Public Under Standing Order No. 19**

No questions from members of the public were received.

5 **Questions from Members of the Council Under Standing Order No. 20**

No questions from Members were received.

6 **2019/20 General Fund Capital Monitoring Statement - Quarter 2**

The Deputy Chief Finance Officer presented the report on the 2019/20 General Fund Capital Monitoring Statement setting out the current position in respect of the Council's revised annual capital programme and advised Members of the anticipated

level of deferred expenditure into future years. The report also set out amendments to the annual capital programme in order to reflect the reported variations.

The Deputy Chief Finance Officer highlighted the ongoing work on site in respect of both the Leisure Complex and Bus Station and Riverside Leisure Centre sites and the City Council loan to Exeter City Living.

The Deputy Chief Finance Officer advised that the report had been presented to the Executive on 10 December 2019 and which was before Members of this Scrutiny Committee for information.

Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee noted the report.

7 Overview of General Fund Revenue Budget 2019/20 - Quarter 2

The Deputy Chief Finance Officer presented the report which advised Members of the overall projected financial position of the General Fund Revenue Budgets for the 2019/20 financial year after six months.

The Deputy Chief Finance Officer advised that the report had been presented to the Executive on 10 December 2019 and which was before Members of this Scrutiny Committee for information. She highlighted that the projected working balance would stand at £3.75 million, which was above the minimum level of reserves.

Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee noted the report.

8 2019/20 HRA Budget Monitoring Report - Quarter 2

The Deputy Chief Finance Officer presented the report which advised Members of the overall financial position of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Revenue and Capital Budgets for the 2019/20 financial year after the first six months. The report also highlighted budgetary areas of risk for factors beyond the Council's control that may result in potential deviations from budget.

The Deputy Chief Finance Officer, referring to the detailed schedule of the capital programme for Housing and the Council Own Build programme, highlighted the removal of the HRA debt cap which had enabled the Council to invest, on a site by site basis, to bring forward housing development opportunities. She also referred to the slippage in certain refurbishment programmes.

The Deputy Chief Finance Officer advised that the report had been presented to the Executive on 10 December 2019 and was before Members of this Scrutiny Committee for information.

Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee noted the report

9 Scheduling of Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee Meetings

Referring to the time lag between the Quarter end of the budget monitoring reports, the Chair reported that he would raise the timetabling of the meetings of this Committee at the next meeting of the Scrutiny Programme Board on 19 March 2020.

10 **Kerbside Recycling Service - Presentation by the Cleansing and Fleet Manager**

The Cleansing and Fleet Manager spoke on the presentation on the kerbside recycling service set to be launched in September 2021. He provided the following details of progress to date:-

- comprehensive research had been undertaken into schemes run by other authorities including Bristol, Bath, Oxford and Cardiff as well as the more rural neighbouring authorities of Teignbridge and East Devon. The latter had provided useful information of operating in the narrow, terraced streets of Exmouth, on its communication programme and health and safety etc. matters;
- evaluation and cost analysis of vehicle options and appropriate material sorting technology as part of the upgrade to the Materials Recycling Facility (MRF);
- the methods of capture and sorting of the recycled waste both at the kerbside and within the MRF where an optical sorting equipment by means of a laser beam would distinguish differing materials. A high quality end use was sought to generate income;
- a conservative analysis by the consultant that each crew would collect from 676 properties per round; and
- staffing matters, including the involvement of the Civic Centre Customer First team, as part of a communication strategy, as the launch was likely to lead to an increase in enquiries.

He responded as follows to Members' queries:-

- the preferred method of roll out was under consideration, options including a city wide roll-out, launching in three or four areas initially or a single area pilot;
- additional staff would be required with many of those currently working at the MRF re-deployed to the vehicles for on-site sorting. In addition, an apprenticeship scheme was intended with training on loading initially and then as drivers;
- routes would be carefully planned to limit traffic congestion around rush-hours and in the city's narrower streets;
- it was anticipated that there would be a short time period when the MRF would not be operational in order for the new equipment to be installed;
- with the current national average re-cycling rate being 45% - often reflective of rural or more stable populations - Exeter's goal, which was a conservative one set by the consultant, was to increase its target from a percentage of mid 30's to 49%-50% and above. It was also noted that Exeter had one of the lowest waste production rates in the country; and
- regular meetings were held with the University where an annual "Student On The Move" scheme had been introduced to reduce associated problems of changing occupancy. The University was keen to develop its commitment to sustainable communities and, one possible student involvement scheme, could be through research into improved communication with the student population.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and City Management commented as follows:-

- a business/project plan was in place;
- with 3 to 9 February 2020 being National Apprenticeship Week, it was appropriate that the City Council was strongly committed to its apprenticeship programme and offering training opportunities to develop the talent of Exeter's young people and help address labour shortages; and

- praised the hard work, enthusiasm and commitment of the Cleansing Team and its willingness to take on additional work such as the University Campus Waste Collection contract.

Members welcomed the update on the implementation of the kerbside re-cycling service, requesting that this become a standing item on this Committee's agenda. The inclusion of the business plan in the report to the next Committee was also requested.

The Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee welcomed the report and agreed that further reports be presented to each meeting to include timelines of the scheme implementation, details of the business/project plan and the communication strategy, these details to be provided in the Committee papers prior to the meeting.

11 **Items for Consideration for Future Meetings**

The Chair advised that there would be a presentation on Community Safety by the Service Lead Environmental Health and Community Safety and Inspector Simon Arliss at the next meeting of this Committee on 2 April 2020. The presentation would focus on anti-social behaviour and drug related issues across the city's Public Realm. He also invited Members to suggest items for future consideration by the Scrutiny Committee and which would be put forward to the Scrutiny Programme Board.

The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 6.31 pm

Chair