

EXETER CITY COUNCIL
EXECUTIVE

Statement of Decisions

Tuesday 18 September 2007

Present:-

Councillor Peter Edwards (Chair)
Councillors D Baldwin, Dixon, Mrs Henson, Mrs Morrish, Sheldon and Shepherd

Also Present

Assistant Chief Executive, Director Community and Environment, Director Economy and Development, Head of Housing Services (Minute 103) and Member Services Manager

Minutes of Previous Meeting (Min 101)

The minutes of the meetings of Executive held on 19 June and 3 July 2007 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

Declarations of Interest (Min 102)

The following declaration of interest was made:-

COUNCILLOR	MINUTE
D. Baldwin	112 (wife of proposed Alderman)

Housing Strategy 2007/12 (Min 103)

The report of the Head of Housing Services was submitted, seeking Members' views on the content of the revised Housing Strategy 2007 – 2012 and briefing Members on the results of the Exeter and Torbay Housing Market Assessment.

Scrutiny Committee – Community considered the report at their meeting on 4 September 2007 and the support and comments of members were noted.

The Head of Housing Services reported on Exeter's excellent record on the provision of affordable housing and the particular success of incentive schemes in encouraging tenants who were under-occupying properties to move to smaller homes. He reported that certain statistics within the report were subject to clarification pending the signing-off of the Exeter and Torbay Housing Market Assessment. When finalised, the Assessment would be circulated to Members.

Executive members welcomed the useful and comprehensive information presented in the report. They were pleased to note the undertaking given by the Prime Minister that Councils

would be enabled to build their own housing stock and requested that clarification be sought on the Government's proposals for the relaxation of current restrictions.

Executive recommended that:-

- (1) the revised Housing Strategy document 2007 – 2012 be adopted;
- (2) an annual report is submitted outlining progress against the Strategy's action plan; and
- (3) the Head of Housing Services be requested to seek clarification from the Government on their proposals for enabling Councils to build their own housing stock.

New Inclusive Play Area at King George V Playing Field (Min 104)

The report of the Head of Leisure and Museums was submitted, seeking in principal approval for Exeter Mencap to create a new inclusive play area at King George V Playing Field (KGV) in Countess Wear and to agree to a temporary disposal at less than best consideration to facilitate the scheme.

Scrutiny Committee – Community considered the report at their meeting on 4 September 2007 and the support and comments of members were noted.

The Director Community and Environment reported that whilst the play area would be designed particularly for the benefit of autistic children, all children would be able to use the facility. She reported that the Council would support Mencap as much as possible with the proposal though the exact terms would be dependent on the management and maintenance arrangements required by the Big Lottery Fund.

Members welcomed the proposed play area and requested that, in due course, consideration be given to introducing similar facilities in other areas of the city.

Noting the options available and for the reasons stated in the report, Executive resolved that:-

- (1) the principle be approved of leasing approximately the area shown on the plan attached to the report to Exeter Mencap for a period of 10 years at a peppercorn rental (representing an undervalue of £1,500 per annum), and the Council offers to maintain the play area during that period;
- (2) if Exeter Mencap's lottery application is successful, the Council seeks the necessary consents for the disposal to go ahead and, if necessary, funds the cost of maintaining the play area; and
- (3) any representations arising from the public consultation on disposal be considered and if necessary addressed by the Heads of Leisure and Museums and Estates in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Environment & Leisure and for Economy & Tourism.

Trade Waste Recycling Collections (Min 105)

The report of the Head of Environmental Health Services was submitted, seeking approval to provide a trade waste recycling collection service in order to meet legal and customer requirements.

Scrutiny Committee – Community considered the report at their meeting on 4 September 2007 and the support and comments of members were noted. Executive endorsed the Committee’s recognition of the valuable service provided by Paperchain in the collection of waste paper and cardboard and their hope that this proposal would have no adverse effect on their service. The Director Community and Environment reported that this service complemented that provided by Paperchain and Paperchain would be promoted by the Council alongside the new scheme. She also confirmed that traders would be able to choose the frequency of their recycling collection.

Executive members welcomed the proposed recycling collections and supported the proposal to initially run the scheme as a pilot to gauge the likely take-up of the facility. They were disappointed that recycling credits were not available for trade waste as they were for domestic waste but requested that records be maintained of the tonnage dealt with nevertheless.

Noting the options available and for the reasons stated in the report, Executive resolved that:-

- (1) the provision of a separate recycling collection service to trade customers be approved as part of a six month pilot commencing in October 2007; initially, the service will include the weekly collection of paper and cardboard only, but if successful, the service may be expanded to include other recyclables;
- (2) the hire of a vehicle for six months and the appointment of two temporary crew members for a six month period be approved;
- (3) a provisional charge of £3.00 per week per customer be approved as an across-the-board fixed fee for the collection of recyclables once a week, with every additional collection charged at the same rate for the purposes of the pilot scheme;
- (4) during the pilot, the provisional charge may be altered by agreement by the Head of Service and Portfolio Holder for Environment and Leisure;
- (5) on the pilot proving successful following review in Quarter 4, 2007/08, and subject to approval of a suitable budget, the Head of Environmental Health Services, with the agreement of the Portfolio Holders for Environment and Leisure and Business Transformation and Human Resources, purchases either:
 - a new purpose built kerbside sorting vehicle at a capital cost of £100,000 and annual revenue cost of £50,000 (two person crew); or
 - purchases two smaller vehicles at a total capital cost of £100,000 and an annual revenue cost of £100,000 (2 x two person crew);dependant upon the demand from trade customers and sufficient income derived to support the option;
- (6) the appointment of a temporary admin support office (Grade 3 – subject to job evaluation) be approved for a six month period to input necessary data changes to trade customer records at a cost of £10,112; and
- (7) records be kept of the additional recycling tonnage collected through the scheme.

St Andrews Road Affordable Housing Development (Min 106)

The report of the Head of Housing Services was submitted, seeking a declaration that a parcel of Council owned land off St Andrews Road, Exwick, is surplus and to obtain approval for the disposal of the land to Sanctuary Housing Association (SHA), at less than best value, any capital receipt to be ring-fenced to grant aid an affordable housing scheme on the site and to cover the cost of enabling works both on and off site.

Scrutiny Committee – Community considered the report at their meeting on 4 September 2007 and the support and comments of members were noted. Executive was assured that consideration would be given to safety around the access, as requested by Councillor Hannaford, and requested that he seek the support of Devon County Council in bringing forward the cycle route and footpath as these were the responsibility of that authority.

Noting the options available and for the reasons stated in the report, Executive resolved that:-

- (1) the land be declared surplus;
- (2) delegated powers be granted to the Head of Estates Services, in consultation with the Leader, the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Social Inclusion, the Portfolio Holder for Community and Environment, and the Heads of Service for Treasury, Housing, and Contracts and Direct Services, to dispose of the land to Sanctuary Housing Association by way of a 125-year lease, at or below market value for affordable housing, subject to 100% nomination rights being granted to the City Council in perpetuity; and
- (3) any capital receipts be ring-fenced for use in grant aiding affordable housing and for the acquisition of the Environment Agency land, the Head of Treasury Services to allocate the receipt within the capital programme.

Housing Assistant Post (CE06101) (Min 107)

The report of the Head of Housing Services was submitted, recommending that the post of Housing Assistant within the Housing Services Unit be made permanent.

Executive resolved that the post of Housing Assistant (CE06101) be made permanent with effect from 25 September 2007.

Devon County Council Proposal to fund Royal Albert Memorial Museum Development (Min 108)

The report of the Head of Leisure and Museums was submitted, informing Members of the changed circumstances relating to Devon County Council's libraries policy, and its offer to make a financial contribution to the Royal Albert Memorial Museum (RAMM) Development Project.

Whilst disappointed that the permanent library facility at Heavitree had been closed, Executive members were pleased to note that it was planned that Pinhoe Library would remain open. Executive welcomed the contribution of Devon County Council to the Museum Development Project and requested that in due course their funding be attributed to a specific aspect of the scheme or exhibit.

Executive resolved that:-

- (1) the decision of the Chief Executive and Director Community and Environment, in consultation with the Leader and Portfolio Holder, that the conditions for acceptance of the contribution had been met and to accept the offer be noted;
- (2) the County Council be thanked for its contribution to a project of county-wide significance, and also congratulated on its decision to strengthen the library service in the city;
- (3) in due course, the contribution of Devon County Council be recognised by attributing their funding to a specific aspect of the scheme or exhibit.

Regional Spatial Strategy Proposals for Gypsy and Traveller Pitch Provision (Min 109)

The report of the Head of Planning Services was submitted, seeking to agree a response to a consultation by the Regional Assembly on proposed levels of gypsy and traveller pitch provision for Exeter to be included in a partial review of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS).

Executive welcomed the proposal which they considered provided the most logical way forward for the provision of gypsy and traveller pitches. Whilst acknowledging that the requirement to identify sites through the Council's Local Development Framework would not be easy, members recognised the considerable benefits of permanent well-managed and integrated sites.

The Director Economy and Development undertook to confirm the position with regard to allocations within the Dartmoor National Park boundary which fell within the boundaries of relevant district councils.

Executive resolved that officers respond to the consultation accepting the proposed requirement for pitches in Exeter, recommend that the Regional Spatial Strategy propose indicative figures for the longer term and refer to the Council's strong commitment to deliver pitches through the Local Development Framework process.

Draft Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (Min 110)

The report of the Head of Planning Services was submitted, seeking agreement to consultation on a draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) prepared to amplify existing and proposed future policy on the provision of affordable housing.

Executive members acknowledged the extent of the housing crisis and the substantial increase required in the supply of affordable housing and supported the draft Supplementary Planning Document.

Executive resolved that the draft Supplementary Planning Document – Affordable Housing be approved as the basis for public consultation.

(In accordance with Standing Order 43, Councillor Mrs Henson requested that her name be recorded as having voted against the resolution.)

Government's Proposed Approach to Implementing Unitary Councils (Min 111)

The report of the Chief Executive was submitted, providing a summary of the Government's proposed approach to implementing unitary Councils and seeking Members' views on the response by the Council.

The Assistant Chief Executive circulated the proposed response to the discussion paper "Councils' Proposals for Unitary Local Government: An Approach to Implementation" together with a map of the proposed implementation structures.

She reported that discussions between Exeter City and Devon County Councils had already commenced on appropriate, representative structural arrangements and terms of reference, which would be subject to consultation.

Members were pleased to note that the Chief Executives of Exeter City Council and Devon County Council together with senior staff had already met as a shadow Joint Implementation Team to begin preparatory work on the framework for its role. Executive endorsed the Council's strong preference for elections in May 2009, as set out in the business case, and welcomed the inclusion of this option in the Implementation Paper. The Leader expressed his wish that all political groups on this Council would continue to work together in the development of proposals for the new authority.

Executive generally supported the proposals contained within the discussion paper, subject to clarification on certain technical issues, and endorsed the proposed response.

Executive noted the contents of the Government's Discussion Paper and delegated authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council to finalise and send the response to the Government along the lines indicated in the circulated paper.

Honorary Aldermen (Min 112)

Councillor Dilys Baldwin declared a personal interest in this item as the wife of one of the proposed Aldermen.

Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 empowers the Council to confer the title of Honorary Alderman on persons who have, in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent service to the Council as a past member. An Honorary Alderman is invited to participate in those Civic ceremonies which the Lord Mayor attends In State, and to which it is usual to invite Past Mayors/Lord Mayors.

Council on 17 July 2007, on the recommendation of Executive, approved the amendment of the eligibility criteria for considering the bestowal of the title "Honorary Alderman" on a past member to require that person to have served a total of at least twelve years as a City Councillor. It is not required for this to be a continuous period.

Former Councillors are eligible to have the title of Honorary Alderman conferred upon them should the Council so decide, and three applications have been received from previous Councillors who fulfil the criteria.

Executive recommended that:-

- (1) the title of Honorary Alderman be conferred on:-

Mr Roy Hill
 Mr Mark Granville Baldwin
 Mr Barry Thomas McNamara

- (2) the Right Worshipful the Lord Mayor be requested to convene an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council to be held prior to the Ordinary Meeting on 16 October 2007, for the purpose of passing the appropriate resolution under Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Appointments to Outside Bodies (Min 113)

Executive resolved that the following appointments be made:-

BODY	REPRESENTATIVE
Court of the University of Exeter	Cllr Shiel (to replace Cllr MA Baldwin)
Devon and Exeter Rail Project Working Party	Cllr D Morrish
Devon Historic Buildings Trust	Cllr Wadham
Exe Estuary Joint Advisory Committee	Cllr Boyle (as Portfolio Holder Environment and Leisure)
Social Health and Inclusion Partnership	Cllr Prowse (to replace Cllr Dixon)
Topsham River Commissioners Under the Exeter Port Dues Act 1840	Cllr Sheldon (to replace former Cllr MG Baldwin)

Executive recommended that nominations to the following vacancies be made at Council:-

COUNCILLOR	TERM OF OFFICE	REPRESENTATIVE
Alphington United Charities	4	Alderman Long (resigned)
Devon and Exeter Rail Project Working Party		Cllr Shepherd and Cllr D Morrish appointed – further nomination sought
Exeter Dispensary and Aid in Sickness Fund	4	Mr T Doble (retired)
Montgomery Combined School (Community Governor)	4	Vacancy. A representative from west of the River is sought.
Relate		Vacancy – Cllr Choules (resigned)
St Edmunds and St Mary Major, Exeter	4	Miss Holding Mr Dunsford (resigned)

(The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 7.25 pm)

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 16 October 2007.