



3. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985 -  
EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

To pass the following resolution:-

**RESOLVED** that, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of item 17 on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Act.

4. **QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC UNDER STANDING ORDER 19**

A period of up to 15 minutes will be set aside to deal with questions to the Committee from members of the public.

*Details of questions should be notified to the Assistant Chief Executive at least three working days prior to the meeting. Further information and a copy of the procedure are available from Member Services (Exeter 265115) also on the Council web site.*

<http://www.exeter.gov.uk/scrutinyquestions>

5. **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL UNDER STANDING  
ORDER 20**

To receive questions from Members of the Council to appropriate Portfolio Holders.

*Details of questions should be notified to the Assistant Chief Executive at least three working days prior to the meeting. Further information and a copy of the procedures are available from Member Services (Exeter 265115)*

**MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE EXECUTIVE**

6. **CARBON MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

To consider the report of the Head of Environmental Health Services – *report circulated.*

1 - 4

**MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION BY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - COMMUNITY**

7. **UPDATE ON NEIGHBOURHOOD ENGAGEMENT PILOT**

To consider the report of the Assistant Chief Executive - *report circulated.*

5 - 12



16. **NATIONAL PERFORMANCE INDICATOR RESULTS 2006/07 HOW  
EXETER'S RESULTS COMPARE**

To consider the report of the Director Community and Environment -  
*report circulated*

83 - 86

(Please bring the copy of Performance Indicator Results previously sent to you by  
the Policy Unit)

**MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE EXECUTIVE**

17. **RAMM STAFFING 2008/09**

To consider the report of the Head of Leisure and Museums – *report circulated.*

87 - 98

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next **Scrutiny Committee - Community** will be held on Tuesday 3 June  
2008 at 5.30 pm

**FUTURE BUSINESS**

The schedule of future business proposed for this Scrutiny Committee and  
other Committees of the Council can be viewed on the following link to the  
Council's website: <http://www.exeter.gov.uk/forwardplan>  
Councillors can view a hard copy of the schedule in the Members Room.

*Membership -*

Councillors M A Baldwin (Chair), Robson (Deputy Chair), Bond, Branston, S Brock, Choules,  
Mrs Danks, Mitchell, Moore, Newcombe, Newton, Shiel and Winterbottom

Find out more about Exeter City Council services by looking at our web site  
<http://www.exeter.gov.uk>. This will give you the dates of all future Committee meetings and tell you  
how you can ask a question at a Scrutiny Committee meeting. Alternatively, contact the Member  
Services Officer on (01392) 265115 for further information.

**Individual reports on this agenda can be produced in large print on  
request to Member Services on 01392 265111.**

## EXETER CITY COUNCIL

### SCRUTINY COMMITTEE-COMMUNITY 4 MARCH 2008

#### EXECUTIVE 18 MARCH 2008

## CARBON MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

### 1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report presents the outcomes of the Council's Carbon Management Programme and seeks Scrutiny Committee support and Executive approval for the Strategy and Implementation Plan.

### 2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Exeter City Council is one of 45 local authorities to take part in the fifth phase of the Carbon Trust's Local Authority Carbon Management Programme, which aims to provide a comprehensive programme to measure and manage the greenhouse gas emissions produced by the Council's activity. This Carbon Management Strategy and Implementation Plan is the main output from this programme and sets out a systematic approach to reducing the Council's emissions. The plan details the sources of the Council's emissions and establishes a baseline against which progress can be measured. It sets out the Council's approach towards carbon management and identifies key actions for the Council to take to meet a reduced emissions target by 2013.
- 2.2 The Carbon Management Plan will contribute to the delivery of Exeter's Climate Change Strategy 2008 - 2018 and help fulfil the commitment to tackling climate change made by signing both the Nottingham and Devon Wide Declarations on Climate Change.

### 3 EMISSIONS BASELINE AND CARBON REDUCTION TARGETS

- 3.1 The Council's carbon dioxide emissions baseline for 2006/07 is estimated to be 2,925 tonnes. Energy use from buildings accounts for almost two thirds of the Council's emissions and fleet transport nearly one third, whereas business mileage, waste and water have only a small effect on the overall footprint.
- 3.2 To achieve the Council's aims a set of carbon reduction targets are proposed, as follows:
- To reduce carbon dioxide emissions from energy, water, waste and transport by 10% by 2009/10 and 20% by 2012/13 from a baseline of 2006/07.

3.3 The main target has been broken down into individual targets for energy, transport and waste as follows:

- To reduce carbon dioxide emissions from energy use in buildings by 25% by 2012/13
- To reduce carbon dioxide emissions from transport by 10.5% by 2012/13
- To reduce carbon dioxide emissions from waste by 20% by 2012/13

3.4 A further target has been set to ensure that a significant portion of the carbon dioxide reduction target is derived from energy reduction and efficiency measures (as opposed to renewable energy measures):

- To reduce energy consumption in buildings by 15% by 2012/13

#### **4 CARBON REDUCTION ACTION PLAN**

4.1 The plan sets out key actions for the Council to work towards meeting its reduced emissions target. Projects to be undertaken in the first two years of the programme (2008/09 and 2009/10) have been identified, as summarised below:

- Establishment of an Environmental Champions scheme within the Council to raise awareness and promote behaviour change amongst staff.
- A trial of bio-diesel (sourced locally from recycled vegetable oil) in two of the refuse collection vehicles, with a view to extending across the fleet if successful, and where practicable.
- Introduction of eco-driver training for fleet drivers to reduce fuel consumption.
- Installation of an energy saving transformer at the Civic Centre, Livestock Centre and MRF to reduce the supply voltage of electricity to the minimum required.
- More energy efficient lighting projects at the Civic Centre, Livestock Centre, Civic Centre Car Park, King William St Car Park and extension.
- Upgrade of the heating controls, insulation and ventilation system at the Guildhall.
- Installation of a wood pellet boiler at the Corn Exchange.
- Introduction of time switches on vending machines and other equipment and SAVA plugs onto fridges to reduce unnecessary energy use.
- Improvements to the office recycling scheme to increase the accessibility of recycling points and reduce waste bins in Council offices.
- Initiatives to help embed carbon management within the Council for further investigation.

4.2 Potential opportunities for the remaining years of the programme are also identified for further investigation. These opportunities will be evaluated annually two years ahead of the expected implementation date and included in each year's revised action plan.

4.3 The plan sets out the predicted financial savings to the Council as a result of implementing the programme. It is estimated that the savings from the first two years of the programme will provide an 11.6% return over the capital expenditure by 2013/14. Any acceleration of energy price rises will further increase the financial benefits of the programme to the Council.

## **5 MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THE STRATEGY**

- 5.1 The Climate Change Steering Group will review the performance of the Carbon Management Programme annually and evaluate the measures taken since the last review. As part of this process, a plan of the scheme of work to be undertaken in the following two financial years will be prepared. The outcomes of the annual review will be reported to Scrutiny Committee – Community and to the Executive on an annual basis. The Steering Group will also undertake a half yearly review of progress of the programme, which will be reported to the Strategic Management Team. A full review of the Strategy and Implementation Plan, to assess the way forward once the five year programme is complete, will be undertaken in 2013.

## **6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 A budget of £100,000 pa to implement the Carbon Management Programme from 2008/09 to 2012/13 has been included in the Council's budget. The Strategy and Implementation Plan does not therefore have any additional financial implications for the Council.

## **7 RECOMMENDED**

- (1) that the Scrutiny Committee Community supports and Executive approves the Carbon Management Strategy and Implementation Plan;
- (2) that general progress towards meeting the aims of the Strategy and Implementation Plan be monitored on an annual basis and reported to Scrutiny Committee- Community;
- (3) that the action plan be revised on an annual basis;
- (4) that a commitment be made to undertaking a full review of the Strategy and Implementation Plan in five years' time (2013).

HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

S:LP/Committee/308SCC14  
21.2.08

**COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE**

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)  
Background papers used in compiling this report:

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## EXETER CITY COUNCIL

### SCRUTINY COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

4 MARCH 2008

#### UPDATE ON NEIGHBOURHOOD ENGAGEMENT PILOT

##### 1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update members of the Committee on progress in the Council's Neighbourhood Engagement Pilot

##### 2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Exeter City Council launched the Neighbourhood Engagement Pilot, "My Neighbourhood" in June 2007 aiming to increase citizenship participation at neighbourhood level in four areas in the city; Exwick, St David's, Newtown/Polsloe and Kings Heath/Clyst Heath.
- 2.2 The object of the 18-month pilot is to set up and develop *inclusive* Local Partnerships, embracing existing local community groups, as well as inviting and enabling local people not currently involved, to join the partnerships. Each partnership has the brief to identify local issues, to raise these with the agencies concerned – not just the City Council – and, being allocated an initial budget of £5000 per area, will be able to decide on the use of small local grants for local initiatives to improve the neighbourhood.
- 2.3 Exeter Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) and Exeter Community Initiatives (ECI) have allocated a part-time worker each to engage, develop and support the Local Partnerships, in addition to offering their existing services and resources to complement the project (eg funding, constitutional advice and training).
- 2.4 The City Council Community Involvement and Inclusion Officer works closely with project co-ordinators from ECI and Exeter CVS, and meets quarterly with a Steering Group comprising a range of Local Councillors, Council Officers and external agencies – particularly the Devon and Cornwall Constabulary. Local Councillors in the pilot areas have demonstrated support for the project by regularly attending partnership meetings.
- 2.5 Devon and Cornwall Police have started on a process of promoting their Community Engagement work through the launch of the PACT (Partners and Community Together). They are aiming to have quarterly meetings in each locality to invite residents to share their concerns regarding community safety and any other issues related to their community. It has been agreed that in the four pilot areas the police would work together with the city council to promote 'My Neighbourhood' and use this opportunity to collect the information they need for PACT. There were initial teething problems with PACT in some areas where the message of joint working had not reached local beat managers who were continuing to organise PACT meetings. This led to some confusion for local people about the purpose of the different meetings and for officers

involved in delivering the work. After various meetings with team leaders and Neighbourhood Beat managers this confusion seems to have been resolved and we are now able to focus on a on a positive partnership approach.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

- 3.1 As well as building the capacity of local people and partnerships, the project aims to improve statutory agencies' responses to local issues identified through the Local Partnerships. Project workers will record issues raised through the partnerships and their progress through the system monitored. This will enable tracking of the progress of issues, and allow more effective feedback to be given back to the community on the outcome or status of an issue raised.
- 3.2 Careful monitoring will underpin the project throughout and allow for learning to take place and to be disseminated, across the city, for future roll-out, and in the region through 'Every Voice Counts'. This approach is being promoted through the SHIP and the officers group who are looking at community engagement issues for the council.

### **4. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The City Council allocated a total of £71,000 to the project, which includes project staff from Exeter Community Initiatives (ECI) /Exeter CVS and a budget of £5000 allocated to each Local Partnership.

### **5 RECOMMENDED**

- (1) That the Committee notes progress in the Pilot.
- (2) That the Committee notes at Appendix 1, the review of activities in each of the Pilot areas

ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE

S:LP/Committee/308SCC11  
21.2.08

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DEPARTMENT

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

**Background papers used in compiling this report:-**

None

**MY NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTNERSHIP  
Review and planning for 2008**

**Newtown/Polsloe**

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Database quite strong (60) after doing a number of summer events to promote the project in the area.</li> <li>• Contact made with numbers of positive individuals who are committed to working together to improving the community for all.</li> <li>• Vibrant active community, most of which is focused around Belmont park.</li> <li>• Good support from Police colleagues and local councillors.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Database mostly focuses on Newtown residents, not Polsloe.</li> <li>• Lack of suitable venues for meetings in the Polsloe area.</li> <li>• Lack of community focal point – shops, as in Heavitree and Cowick, where people meet</li> </ul>
<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good links with churches, community organisations, action groups.</li> <li>• Links with student community to support community events.</li> </ul>	<p><b>THREATS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical geography/road layout of the two areas means that it will be difficult to develop one Partnership that is representative of both areas.</li> <li>• Area quite disparate in terms of community members</li> <li>• Large transitional population, mainly students, in Polsloe – hard to engage.</li> </ul>

**Action for 2008.**

1. January - planning meeting for local councillors and Neighbourhood Police Officers to plan dates and venues for partnership meetings for 2008.
2. Personal letter and leaflet to every resident in area inviting them to make suggestions for use of the £5,000 grant available for area, also to give information on main concerns and ideas for improving the area.
3. Plan the launch of the Partnership by inviting all community organisations/faith groups/action groups to attend an event on the 6<sup>th</sup> March in St. Marks Church Hall. Offer opportunity for organisations to make an application to bid for monies from the £5,000 grant.
4. Carole (ECI) to offer support to community organisations on their development and to support community campaigns. Carole to support Residents associations/Community groups to develop a Community Plan for progression through the partnership.
5. Emma (CVS) to offer structured and informal 'Speaking up in your community' support to individuals and groups.

## St. David's

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good support from Police colleagues and local councillors.</li> <li>• Strong existing community organisation – St. David's Neighbourhood Partnership (SDNP) who have established vision and action plan. Need little support from the ECC 'My Neighbourhood' initiative other than access to grants.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing SDNP potential to monopolise focus of initiative, and applications for grants.</li> <li>• Difficulty of engaging with the transitional members of the community. Organisations representing these groups have not responded to requests for input to the partnership.</li> <li>• Only 30 on data base for the whole area</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To give half of grant available to the existing SDNP to enable them to progress their action plan for the area.</li> <li>• To focus energies in the area on the other areas in St David's not covered by the existing SDNP.</li> <li>• To involve businesses in the partnership.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor turn out at open meetings that have taken place to date (outside of the launch in September at the SDNP AGM.)</li> </ul> <p>Anecdotal tales of some residents' resentment of SDNP, which could de-rail initiatives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical geography of the area – huge ward with many disparate parts; city centre, quay, residential area etc. This includes businesses/student housing/ hostels for vulnerable people with complex needs, private housing, social housing and sheltered accommodation. Will be difficult to develop one Partnership that is representative of whole area.</li> <li>• Large transitional population, students, and people in hostels. – hard to engage.</li> </ul>

### Action for 2008:

1. January - planning meeting for local councillors and Neighbourhood Police Officers/PCSO's to plan dates, venues and to confirm proposals for way forward in area for partnership meetings for 2008.
2. Dawn continue to attend SDNP meetings to keep up to date with their progress. Negotiate responsibility for awarding grants from the £2,500 with Councillor involvement in decision-making.

3. Focus on developing partnership with Shilhay residents with support from ECC housing officers.
4. Carole and Emma to support other groups in raising their concerns and contributing to action plan for area.
5. To look at potential for developing Partnership for other parts of the area not covered by SDNP. If going ahead, organise an event inviting organisations to make bids for finances from the £2,500 grant to support improvements in the area.

## Exwick

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good support from Police colleagues and local councillors.</li> <li>• 46 currently on database in area.</li> <li>• New community venue on Kinnerton way.</li> <li>• Three venues in different parts of the area suitable for meetings.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical geography of the area – huge ward with many disparate parts; will be difficult to develop one Partnership that is representative of whole area.</li> <li>• Area splits into three distinct communities; Redhills, Foxhayes and Kinnerton way.</li> <li>• Community Association at present not strong enough to attract new members and help build a Vision and action plan for the area. Needs a lot of support.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two campaign groups in the area – opportunities to engage people in the partnership.</li> <li>• To capacity build the Exwick Community Association (ECA) to enable them to represent local residents views on the Partnership.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor turn out at open meetings that have taken place to date.</li> <li>• Campaign groups could breed dissatisfaction with pilot if they feel their views are not influencing decision-making. The two campaigns are currently in opposition to council decisions re. granting of permission for charity to provide house for ex-offenders in area and against the proposals for Social Housing on St. Andrews road.</li> <li>• Poor response from housing Associations in area, therefore difficulties in making contact with the ‘hard to reach’ parts of the community.</li> <li>• History of efforts and disillusionment</li> </ul>

### Action for 2008

1. January - planning meeting for local councillors and Neighbourhood Police officers/PCSO's to plan dates, venues and to confirm proposals for way forward in area for partnership meetings for 2008.
2. Invite local organisations/faith groups etc across the Exwick ward to attend a launch event for the Exwick ‘My Neighbourhood’ Partnership. Groups to be invited to bid for grants of up to £250 (20 grants) prior to day, and make their presentation as part of the

event. Councillors, Police and community rep. to make decision on allocating grants at first Partnership meeting.

3. Carole (ECI) to support ECA in developing their capacity, and to develop proposals for action plan to present at Partnership. Emma to offer informal Speaking Up support at existing groups and with individuals.

## Kings Heath

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good support from Police colleagues and local councillors.</li> <li>• 90 + currently on database in area.</li> <li>• Three very well attended public meetings to date. (Two with 60 – 70 residents present)</li> <li>• Motivated group of residents who are contributing to the planning and organisation of the Partnership meetings.</li> <li>• Good support from partner organisations in attending public meetings: Devon Youth Service, Devon Children &amp; Family Services, RSL's, school governors, Chief Inspector of Police (attended two meetings).</li> <li>• Excellent support from Clyst Heath Primary School in providing an excellent venue for meetings, also in displaying the minutes of the partnership meeting on their web site.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary school is only infrastructure in area. Difficulty in identifying other organisations/projects to take part in the partnership as very few represented in area.</li> <li>• Although good attendance at meetings, this does tend to represent the more articulate and active members of the community.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for development of a residents association to help take the partnership forward and to ensure representation across the community.</li> <li>• Opportunity to build from new a strong community partnership with partner organisations support.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High expectations of residents who have contributed to meetings so far who will want to see action and results very quickly.</li> <li>• The difficulty of resolving some issues as some of the land is still in the ownership of developers and confusion over responsibility for some issues.</li> </ul>

## **Actions for 2008**

1. Initial meeting in January to be used to support the setting up of a Residents association (Carole)
2. Start of partnership meetings with representatives from residents association and other organisations in area. Partnership to meet at least quarterly.
3. Quarterly open meetings/events to give feedback on progress to the big group of residents who have already shown commitment to the partnership.



## EXETER CITY COUNCIL

### SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – COMMUNITY

4 MARCH 2008

#### REVIEW OF PILOT TRADE WASTE RECYCLING SERVICE

#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Members of the outcome of the city-wide pilot trade recycling service.
- 1.2 To make recommendation for the continuation of the service.

#### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council has a legal obligation to provide a trade refuse collection service, or to arrange for refuse collection, at a reasonable cost, if a trader requests this service from the Council. It also has a legal duty to ensure that this waste is pre-treated before disposal.
- 2.2 On 4 September 2007 Scrutiny - Committee Community supported the introduction of a pilot trade recycling service, and this was approved by Executive on 18 September 2007. The pilot service for the collection of paper and cardboard for a fixed fee of £3.00 per collection visit commenced in October 2007, using a hired vehicle and a temporary crew of two, and aimed at the existing 1200 trade waste clients.
- 2.3 Scrutiny – Committee Community supported and Executive also agreed, subject to the pilot proving successful, to the Head of Environmental Health Services, with the agreement of the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Leisure to purchase either:
  - a new purpose built kerb-side sorting vehicle at a capital cost of £100,000 and annual revenue cost of £50,000 (two person crew); or
  - two smaller vehicles at a total capital cost of £100,000 and an annual revenue cost of £100,000 (2 x two person crews);

dependent upon the demand from trade customers and sufficient income derived to support the option.

#### 3. PROPOSAL

- 3.1 The pilot service has proved to be very successful with 541 out of the 1200 trade waste clients opting for the service (an original target client base of 400 to 600 was assumed). Following the initial surge of clients, the take-up rate has steadied at around 10 per month, and the client base has the potential to grow to a maximum capacity of approximately 575, based upon one smaller vehicle and crew.

- 3.2 Over 6 tonnes of paper and cardboard is being collected and recycled every week, equating to over 300 tonnes of waste being diverted from landfill every year, with consequential disposal cost savings. Income is on target (see Appendix I).
- 3.3 In addition, a customer survey has been prepared and will be sent out in February 2008 to determine:
- satisfaction levels with the existing service;
  - whether there is sufficient demand for the collection of other recyclables, such as plastic, cans, glass, etc.
  - what other service improvements can be made, eg collection frequencies, collection containers, etc.
- 3.4 In the medium term, the option to procure an additional small vehicle and crew remains, should there be sufficient growth in the client base to generate the necessary income and disposal cost savings.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 A financial appraisal of the service is contained in Appendix I of this report. The Council is required to recover the costs of trade refuse services from the businesses that use them. This trial provides assurance that this can be done with the new service.

#### **5. RECOMMENDED**

that Scrutiny – Community Committee

- 1) notes the success of the pilot trade waste recycling service in terms of client base size, waste recycled and income generated; and
- 2) supports the procurement of a vehicle at a capital cost of £50,000 and appointment of a permanent crew at a revenue cost of £50,000 p.a., by the Head of Environmental Health Services in agreement with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Leisure.

HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

S:PA/LP/ Committee/308SCC1  
21.2.08

COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE

**Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)**

**Background papers used in compiling this report:**

None

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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## EXETER CITY COUNCIL

### SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - COMMUNITY

4 MARCH 2008

#### FOOD HYGIENE RATING SCHEMES

#### (SCORES ON THE DOORS)

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report describes food hygiene rating schemes, and outlines how this simple concept incorporates many of the aims of better regulation as well as promoting good standards of hygiene in food businesses.
- 1.2 The report seeks the introduction of a pilot scheme for Exeter in order to evaluate its merits, and determine the value of a longer-term scheme.

### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Food hygiene rating schemes were pioneered in the USA, and provide information to the consumer on the food hygiene score assigned to a business following a food hygiene inspection by a regulatory authority. They are often referred to as “Scores on the Doors”.
- 2.2 The new agenda for local government regulation is to improve results through efficiencies and risk-based targeted actions. The challenge facing regulatory authorities is to find innovative tools and develop appropriate partnerships to effectively and efficiently deliver services, as well as assisting businesses in compliance with regulations.
- 2.3 Rating schemes are commonplace across many industries. This is especially so in the hospitality sector where schemes such as Michelin, RAC and AA stars and more recently the Green Tourism Award seek to inform the consumer over the quality of food, the comfort of the accommodation and the environmental credentials of the business respectively. Such schemes are seen as valuable marketing tools by the businesses, which in turn strive to achieve and maintain a high-rating score.
- 2.4 There are in the region of 136 local authorities in the UK using a variety of food hygiene rating schemes. Approximately 68 of those currently use the nationally recognised service provided by Transparency Data, which is the biggest single provider.
- 2.5 Recent research conducted by Northumbria University on authorities using the service provided by Transparency Data concludes that the scheme has been directly responsible for a significant improvement in compliance with food hygiene requirements. Research on a similar food hygiene rating scheme in Los Angeles confirmed that it has been an effective tool in reducing the incidence of food poisoning.

2.6 In March 2008, The Food Standards Agency (FSA) will be recommending a suitable model standard for a food hygiene rating scheme based on the results of trials currently being conducted in a variety of councils across the country. Any scheme launched in Exeter, would conform with this standard.

### **3. PROPOSALS**

3.1 Food hygiene rating schemes work by converting the results of a food hygiene inspection, completed by the Environmental Health Officer, into a visual display such as stars. Zero stars equates to a poor food hygiene score and five stars an excellent score. This approach provides an easily understood method of informing the consumer and hence offering them the ability to use this information to make an informed choice of whether to visit the business or choose an alternative venue. Empowering the consumer is an important component of regulatory reform.

3.2 Research conducted by the FSA in the form of a large-scale business survey concluded that food safety practices are primarily driven by customer expectations, the need to avoid bad publicity and the need to secure and maintain customer confidence and business reputation. Food hygiene rating schemes tap into this very issue and the public display of food hygiene scores provides a powerful incentive to businesses to self improve and raise standards.

3.3 Such a scheme places no extra burden on the food inspection service. In fact, given the anticipated improvements in food hygiene over a period of time, it should be possible to realign the inspection service to ensure extra resources are concentrated upon the poor performing businesses. This is in accordance with the principles of better regulation.

3.4 Schemes can be implemented in the following ways:

- a. developing and administering in-house, requiring the public to access the authority's web pages and be re-routed to the appropriate site;
- b. joining an existing scheme operated by a number of local authorities;
- c. buying in to an off the peg service offered by an external provider.

3.5 Developing an in-house scheme has resource implications in terms of officer time, specialised IT input and re-configuration of the Council's existing M3 database system to allow reporting in line with proposed FSA guidance. It is likely to present future cost implications should alterations to the M3 system be required in line with new FSA guidance or legislation. For these reasons, an in-house scheme does not present itself as an attractive option when compared to the other options available.

3.6 It may be possible to join an existing scheme administered by a partnership of local authorities (eg the 'Safe2Eat' scheme operated by a number of Hampshire authorities).

3.7 The last option is for the authority to subscribe annually to an external service provider, electronically forwarding the score data to enable the scheme web pages to be updated. Such schemes offer an off-the-peg solution, which can be implemented over a short timescale.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The annual revenue cost of subscribing to the service provided by an external service provider is in the region of £3,000, although it is anticipated that a pro rata fee could be negotiated for part of a year. Additional administration costs are incurred with all schemes and include the printing and posting of certificates. Whilst this will equate to approximately 500 certificates in any given year, the activity is spread throughout the year as and when food hygiene inspections are completed. These costs can be funded from within existing budgets.

#### **5. RECOMMENDED:**

that Scrutiny - Community supports:

- 1) the implementation of a pilot Food Hygiene Rating Scheme for Exeter, initially to be funded from within existing budgets;
- 2) to implement the scheme by subscription to an existing established provider with national or regional presence;
- 3) subject to the success of a pilot Exeter Food Hygiene Rating Scheme, to report back with proposals for a permanent scheme subject to funding being available.

#### **HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

S:PA/LP/ Committee/308SCC3 v4  
21.2.08

COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE

#### **Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)**

#### **Background papers used in compiling this report:**

Northumbria University Scores on the Doors report (available in Members' Room)  
Impact of Restaurant Hygiene Grade Cards on Foodborne-Disease Hospitalizations in Los Angeles County (available in Members' Room)

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## EXETER CITY COUNCIL

### SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – COMMUNITY

4 MARCH 2008

#### CHANGES IN ARRANGEMENTS FOR RECEIVING STRAY DOGS OUT OF HOURS

##### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Members on the changes in arrangements for dealing with stray dogs out of hours, initiated by the withdrawal of provision by the Police nationally, following the forthcoming enactment of legislation.

##### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Control of Dogs Order 1992 provides that dogs must wear a collar and tag giving the name and address of the owner when in a public place. In most cases, it is expected that this will enable the owner to be identified with relative ease. Failure to comply with this direction is an offence under Animal Health Act 1981 and such dogs may be seized, even if a person is in charge of such a dog. Moreover, the 1992 Order places a duty on local authorities to enforce the requirement for dogs to wear a collar and tag in a public place.
- 2.2 Any dog found in a public place, not under the control of its owner will be regarded as a stray dog. Dogs seized by the Council's Dog Warden may be transferred to Council approved kennels (currently at Newton Abbot). Dogs seized by the Dog Warden will be returned to the owner, who must pay the cost of kennelling fees, administration and any other costs incurred as a result of the seizure. However, after seven days has elapsed without being claimed, the Council may arrange for the dog to be re-homed (usually by a third party provider) or put down. Currently, unclaimed dogs are re-homed.

*The Council recognises that the vast majority of owners wish to be re-united with their dogs as soon as they can. The dog Warden seeks to prevent dogs from going astray by encouraging the owners to tag their dogs with the owner's name, address and contact details, and in addition to micro-chip their dogs so that the owner can still be identified in instances where the dog's collar and tag have been lost. Sadly, some owners do not care for their dogs and either do little to prevent them straying or abandon them. With any dog that remains unclaimed after being seized, every effort is made to re-home the dog with a new owner through a third-party provider. Only on rare occasions will a stray dog be put down, such as when a dog is mortally wounded through a road traffic accident, is very ill and unlikely to recover, or is savage and unsuitable for re-homing.*

- 2.3 At present, both the Council and the police have legal duties in respect of stray dogs. Section 68 of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 will commence on 6 April 2008, removing from legislation references to the police seizing stray dogs and the duty to accept any brought to them. This is particularly relevant to dogs

presented as strays outside of normal office hours as currently the Council offers no service to receive strays during these times.

- 2.4 This means that from April 2008 local authorities will be solely responsible for discharging stray dog functions. In short, the minimum requirement of the extended duty is that where practicable local authorities provide a place to which dogs can be taken outside normal office hours (referred to as an ‘acceptance point’).
- 2.5 Authorities are not required to offer a round the clock call-out service to seize and detain stray dogs seen or found by the public. However, contact numbers for out of hours cover should be widely publicised to enable finders to take a dog to an acceptance point (which may include receiving the stray dog at someone’s premises).
- 2.6 There is a legal duty for any finder of a stray dog to return the dog to its owner (if the owner can be identified) or take the dog to the local authority for the area in which the dog was found. The authority must treat such a dog as though it had been seized by an officer.
- 2.7 The police retain duties with regard to dealing with dangerous dogs and dogs found to be worrying livestock. The Council and the police will maintain a working relationship so that such issues can be dealt with effectively.
- 2.8 In order to inform the public about the arrangements for stray dogs the police are expected to advertise in police stations any information given to them by local authorities such as locations where strays may be taken and any phone numbers for officers or information, with particular reference to out of office hours contact and the cover provided.

### **3. OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 3.1 Those stray dogs currently received by the Council are taken to a private kennelling facility in Newton Abbot after efforts to identify an owner and reunite the owner with the dog have failed. This particular facility has offered an out of hours receiving service for strays, but the proposed cost is extremely expensive and does not represent value for money. Authorities are expected to provide the most cost effective service possible when using external providers. For the reasons given above, this option has been discounted.
- 3.2 Other kennelling providers (both short-term and longer-term) have been approached regarding out of hours provision, but all refuse to act as an acceptance point for reasons of staff safety.
- 3.3 The Council has two holding pens, which are appropriate for the short-term kennelling of dogs, prior to moving on to an external kennelling facility. The option of using these facilities as an acceptance point has been considered and rejected because it has no reception facilities and due to the security risk posed by owners attempting to visit the facility in order to regain their pet.
- 3.4 The option of utilising existing staff to resource a restricted out of hours service, covering the anticipated times of greatest demand is the most favourable option. Due

to the difficulties in identifying an acceptance point, the stray dogs will be accepted from the home of the finder should they request a visit out of hours, otherwise it will be picked up the following day. Environmental Health Services currently have four officers fully trained in handling dogs, although there is potential to increase the number of appropriately qualified officers. The out of hours provision would need to rely on this pool of trained officers.

#### **4. PROVISIONAL ARRANGEMENTS**

- 4.1 From discussions with the police, it is apparent that there are no accurate records of the number of stray dogs received within Exeter out of hours over a meaningful time period. The records which do exist do not differentiate between dogs found outside Exeter's boundary and those from within. Consequently, there is no accurate source of reliable data to assist in modelling a service that will best suit Exeter's need.
- 4.2 In order to determine need and service provision, it is proposed to extend provision to receive stray dogs outside of office hours, from 18:00 to 21:00 hrs on weekdays, and 10:00 to 21:00 hrs on weekends. Finders with stray dogs would be directed to contact the Control Centre during these hours.
- 4.3 In cases where the owner can be identified, the finder will be assisted in contacting the owner to make arrangements for the owner to collect the dog. When the owner is not immediately identifiable, or contact is made outside of the service provision times, the finder will be asked whether they would be prepared to hold the dog for collection by a dog warden the following morning. For those dogs that cannot be held by the finder, arrangements will be made for a dog warden to collect the dog, but only if contact is made during the times of extended out of hours provision. This will mean a gap in provision to receive stray dogs after 21:00 hours until the following morning.
- 4.4 Those stray dogs picked up out of hours, will normally be temporarily kennelled in the Council's holding pens, prior to being taken to an approved kennelling facility. Other providers for temporary kennelling out of hours are currently being explored.
- 4.5 These provisional arrangements will run for a period of six months in order to gauge need and enable the Council to make any alterations for future provision over the longer term.
- 4.6 In conjunction with extending service provision as described, it will be important to work closely with the police in publicising the changes in responsibilities for stray dogs, as inevitably, the police will continue to receive requests out of hours. An important part of this will include working jointly with the police in the prevention of strays by promoting the use of dog identification tags as a legal requirement, enforcement of such, and general encouragement of responsible dog ownership. A joint publicity campaign with the police and Devon district councils is being developed to achieve this, with a proposed launch date in April 2008.

#### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 An extra £3.7million a year has been included in the revenue support grant to fund the local authority costs of the extended duty in England and Wales. However, it is not

possible to separately identify the amount payable to Exeter City Council. The 2008/09 estimates for the Environmental Protection service have been increased in respect of the costs arising as a result of these duties.

- 5.2 The Council may charge the owner all expenses incurred during the dog's detention plus a further prescribed amount (£25), although the Council has to bear the cost for unclaimed dogs. The expenses should be calculated as the per day kennel cost plus any costs involved in detaining the dog (this could include costs incurred in detaining the dog from receipt at a finder's address). Any such monies received should be used to discharge ongoing stray dog functions, and may assist in part funding the out of hours provision, as well as off-setting the cost of dealing with unclaimed dogs.
- 5.3 The proposed out of hours service to run from April to September, will be funded from the existing budget provision, and subject to negotiation with staff and the trades union.
- 5.4 The demand for out of hours provision will be monitored between April and September 2008, and a report submitted to Scrutiny Committee– Community and Executive should additional funding be necessary over and above the estimated revenue budget provision of £3,250.
- 5.5 The joint publicity campaign, which is primarily designed to prevent dogs becoming strays, will be funded from existing budget provision.

## **6. RECOMMENDED**

that Scrutiny Committee – Community notes the changes in arrangements to receive stray dogs outside of office hours.

## HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

S:PA/LP/ Committee/308SCC13 Stray Dogs Out of Hours v2  
21.2.08

COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE

**Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)**  
**Background papers used in compiling this report:**

## EXETER CITY COUNCIL

### SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – COMMUNITY 4 MARCH 2008

#### DRAFT TREE AND WOODLANDS STRATEGY

#### 1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Members of proposals to introduce a tree and woodland strategy for the city and seek approval of a draft for consultation.

#### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The following text is from the City Council's web page -

*Trees are one of the most important and impressive features of the English landscape, and here in Exeter our topography and climate encourage a wide range of species.*

*Views into and out of the city are dominated by this rich treescape, and it makes the City a green and pleasant environment in which to live and work. Amongst the many benefits of trees are their ability to alleviate noise from traffic, screen tall buildings and large industrial areas, provide shade and of course habitats for a vast number of bird, insect and animal species.*

- 2.2 In addition to recognising the wide ranging benefits trees bring to our city, as a significant land owner the Council has a duty to ensure the trees in its care are managed in a safe manner. In 2002 the Council approved a Tree Management Plan for trees in the Council's care, which framed a methodology to ensure the Council met this duty of care.
- 2.3 The Council has a wider role in influencing tree management through the Planning and Development Control process. Trees in private ownership can be protected through Tree Preservation Orders, or by being within a designated Conservation Area. Trees within new developments can also be protected by specific conditions being laid down as part of planning permission being granted.
- 2.4 The Council also brings influence to bear on landowners within the Valley Parks. As well as specific conditions and agreements being in place, the Countryside Service offers advice on the value of trees and woodlands as habitats, and how these might be enhanced.
- 2.5 Despite these measures, many of the most important tree owners fall outside the influence or legislative powers of the Council. These include many hundreds of householders with trees in their gardens; large landowners such as Devon County

Council; farmers; and bodies such as the Forestry Commission who own trees outside the city boundaries, but whose trees have a significant impact on the city.

- 2.6 Last year the Council consulted the general public and major stakeholders about trees and woodlands in Exeter, how they would like to see trees and woodland develop in Exeter, and the Council's role in this development. Over 120 individuals responded. Analysis of the responses is attached at Appendix I.
- 2.7 In general, the people of Exeter would
- like to see more trees and woodland in Exeter;
  - particularly like to see more trees on streets, in industrial areas, and on public open space,
  - like the Council to play an active role in encouraging others to plant and carefully-manage their trees,
  - support the Council acquiring land in order to plant woodland,
  - like the Council to invest resources to ensure successful tree establishment on difficult sites,
  - like to the Council to invest in sustainably re-using timber and other arisings from tree maintenance.

### **3. PROPOSALS**

- 3.1 Arising from the consultation, a draft tree and woodland strategy has been developed and is attached at Appendix I. The aim of the strategy is to determine a long-term programme to deliver specific goals. In more detail, the strategy:
- provides a framework for the management of all trees and woodlands within the city and the surrounding areas.
  - lists the key strengths and weakness of the present tree stock.
  - recognises the differing needs of the various stakeholders.
  - clarifies roles and responsibilities
  - provides a vision for the future
  - and sets out how this can be achieved through the Action Plan.
- 3.2 To achieve this, we need to determine
- Where we are now
  - Where we want to be
  - How we are going to get there
  - How do we know when we get there
- 3.3 Potential outcomes include:
- A consensus amongst stakeholders on the future management of trees and woodlands
  - A comprehensive policy framework for the protection, and enhancement of trees and woodlands within the city and its immediate surrounds

- Creation of a framework to encourage and facilitate the involvement of communities and individuals in the care of trees in their neighbourhood

3.4 To this end a working party has been convened consisting of elected members and officers from Contracts & Direct Services, Planning and Leisure & Museums. This group met initially on 28 January 2008 to agree the outline structure of the tree and woodland strategy and plan the development of the strategy.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

4.1 Those areas directly under the control of the Council are obviously relatively easy to manage, though clarity of purpose and long term goals need to be defined.

4.2 The challenge comes in engaging with and procuring the active involvement of other landowners in securing good tree and woodland management for the future. However, without a strategy in place this remains a near impossible aim.

4.3 The tree and woodlands strategy will provide a means of planning the key decisions for the long term management of what is, by necessity, a long term objective

#### **5. RECOMMENDED that**

- 1) Scrutiny Committee Community supports the proposal to produce a tree and woodlands strategy for Exeter, and
- 2) approves the draft tree and woodlands strategy attached at Appendix I as the basis for wider consultation with stakeholders; and
- 3) following consultation the final version of the tree and woodlands strategy be presented to a future meeting of this committee.

### HEAD OF CONTRACTS AND DIRECT SERVICES

S:LP/Committee/308SCC4  
21.2.08

#### COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE

#### **Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)**

#### **Background papers used in compiling this report:**

1. Exeter City Council Tree and Woodlands Strategy 2008/13 DRAFT OUTLINE
2. Tree Management Report Scrutiny Committee – Community 22 October 2002
3. Tree Management Report Scrutiny Committee December 2006
4. Biodiversity Strategy

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**TREE AND WOODLAND  
STRATEGY**

**EXETER CITY COUNCIL 2008**

# **CONTENTS**

FOREWORD

VISION

INTRODUCTION

- The Importance of Trees
- Sustainability
- Biodiversity

BACKGROUND

- History
- Scope
- Why a strategy?
- What do we get out of it?
- The Status of the strategy
- Consultation

AIMS

OBJECTIVES

STRATEGY MAP

ACHIEVING OUR GOALS

APPENDICES

## FOREWORD

To follow

## VISION

To protect, care for and enhance our trees, hedges and woodlands for the benefit of our people our wildlife our city and future generations

## INTRODUCTION

### The Importance of Trees

Trees are one of the most important and impressive features of the English landscape, and here in Exeter our topography and climate encourage a wide range of species.

Views into and out of the city are dominated by this rich treescape, and it makes the City a green and pleasant environment in which to live and work.

Trees and woodland bring many benefits to urban environments. In addition to the visual splendour provided, trees form the basis of many food chains, providing vital habitat for many bird, insect, fungal and lichen populations. Trees and woodland moderate climate. Research has shown that the urban forests of the world absorb more atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> than the Amazon rainforest, and trees filter many other pollutants and irritants that can exacerbate conditions such as Asthma and Eczema. They really are the green lungs of our city. Other research (Appendix XX) highlights the positive effect of trees and woodland on local and regional prosperity, reductions in stress and anti-social behaviour, and increases in property values.

However, growing trees and woodland in urban areas is becoming increasingly difficult. The life-span of an average urban tree is probably less than 50 years. Trees need space above ground, and good soil and irrigation below. Increasing development and re-development means that the available treespace above ground has declined, while urban soils can often be compacted, contaminated, excessively free-draining or even non-existent. Add to this the stresses of pollution, salt, vandalism, root damage resulting from groundworks and it becomes evident why in some areas trees fare poorly, or are completely absent.

These physical problems have been further compounded by a historic lack of planning for trees and woodland when developing new areas, and a lack of financing and expertise to manage existing treescapes.

The people of Exeter want more trees and woodland in the city, and better management of all our trees. The challenge facing Exeter today is to provide the right space and conditions for successful growth and establishment of new

trees, care and protection for all trees, and to ensure the continuation of tree and woodland cover in perpetuity.

### Sustainability

In 1994 the Government published “Sustainable Development – the UK Strategy”, it’s response to the 1992 UN Conference Summit in Rio de Janeiro. Arising from this was “Agenda 21”, which encourages Local Authorities to produce action plans in consultation with local communities. In recent years government departments have encouraged LAs to develop specific Tree Strategies

Trees are one of the most sustainable and long-lived aspects of the landscape. However, the suitability of a tree to its location can be compromised by changes to its immediate environment by actions such as drainage, construction, or long term changes to the climate. The choice of species of tree needs to be matched to the need or function, whether it be for forestry, where non-native mono-cultures meet commercial demands, or amenity planting of individual trees in streets or parks.

Trees do require an adequate amount of investment in purchasing, planting and aftercare. This aspect has frequently been overlooked in the past, where large numbers of small, bare root trees can be planted for a few pounds each. This approach is the only practical way to plant forests, but in urban locations the survival rate is extremely low. It is better to plant fewer, high quality trees, with a high probability of survival. For a relatively low initial investment, trees will provide a very long-term resource.

### Biodiversity

Trees and woodlands support highly diverse environments for a wide range of flora and fauna. Even a notionally monoculture commercial forest provides valuable habitats. In the urban setting the importance of trees is magnified. The average back garden is now recognised as providing the most valuable habitats for birds. Biodiversity audits of Parks and Open Spaces consistently show the high value of their biodiversity, and trees form the largest component of habitat provision.

## **BACKGROUND**

### History

- The geological structure of the Exe valley
  - Locally native species and habitats
  - Development of the landscape from farming to urban use
- (To follow)

## Scope

The City Council is one of the largest tree owners in Exeter, and the one body that the public see as the guardian of the treescape, both in its role as landowner and through planning controls. As such it is the key organisation in seeking a framework to protect and sustain the city's trees. To develop a meaningful long-term plan, it is essential that other major stakeholders are involved in the strategy development. As the influence of the City's trees extends beyond the city boundaries, so the city is influenced by trees outside its boundaries. The relative strategic importance of woodlands and green corridors is vitally important. It is not intended that this strategy controls tree management throughout the area of its influence, but provides guidance on how the actions of various designated stakeholders will influence their landscape and that of their neighbours.

## Why a strategy?

Nick Eden, director of the Arboricultural Association explains why it is important to develop a tree strategy.

*“Trees. Almost everyone has something to say about them. Perhaps more than ever before, we recognise how essential they are to our survival. But what a challenge: living things as big as houses that can't be moved. They can't speak. They are sensitive to their environment. They have the potential to outlive us – and the potential to be a source of trouble. A strategy this attempts to recognize the complex technical, scientific and human issues that arise when trees and people inhabit the same area. It provides a framework for managing these issues and this huge living resource to bring about the best possible solutions for all.”*

A planned approach to tree and woodland management will support Exeter's Vision and contribute significantly to strategic objectives. As Exeter moves towards unitary status a comprehensive tree strategy should be seen as a key part of management planning for the wider environment. To ensure that trees remain a defining feature of the city there needs to be a clear understanding of their value and a commitment from all the many landowners to retain and enhance sustainable tree cover in and around the city. A strategy that promotes and expresses that commitment and provides sound practical direction is therefore fundamental in achieving this goal.

Furthermore, in order to demonstrate that we are responsive to the needs of the community, a strategy provides a means of involving the community directly in setting the framework of the strategy, and being a part of its implementation and continuing development. A tree strategy will also benefit the “Customer First” approach adopted by the City Council, in providing easily disseminated information on management standards, events and tree and woodland projects.

The aim of the strategy should be to determine a long-term programme to deliver specific goals. In more detail, a strategy

- provides a framework for the management of all trees within the city and the surrounding areas.
- lists the key strengths and weakness of the present tree stock.
- recognizes the differing needs of the various stakeholders.
- provides a vision for the future
- and sets out how this can be achieved through the Action Plan.

To achieve this, we need to determine

- Where we are now
- Where we want to be
- How we are going to get there
- How do we know when we get there

#### What do we get out of it?

- An agreed and co-ordinated approach to tree management
- High quality, efficient tree management, with work undertaken to the highest standards of planning, planting and tree care
- A community with a greater understanding, awareness and empathy leading to a greater involvement with tree management in their locality.
- A tree population that is surveyed and mapped to improve our knowledge and ability to manage issues such as biodiversity, changing and conflicting demands, and social and economic benefits
- Improved health of the tree population resulting in a more sustainable tree stock.

#### The Status of the strategy

The strategy will have differing levels of status for the various stakeholders. Clearly for the Council it will have significant importance as it will be the framework for all aspects of tree management. For others, especially if tree management is ancillary to their main aims and objectives, eg business plans, the strategy will not have the same importance. However the value of the strategy will not be diminished.

#### Consultation

Last year the Council consulted the general public and major stakeholders about trees and woodlands in Exeter, how they would like to see trees and woodland develop in Exeter, and the Council's role in this development.

The detailed results of the consultation can be found in Appendix XX, and are summarised here. In general, the people of Exeter

1. Would like to see more trees and woodland in Exeter;

2. Would particularly like to see more trees on streets, in industrial areas, and on public open space,
3. Would like the Council to play an active role in encouraging others to plant and carefully-manage their trees,
4. Would support the Council acquiring land in order to plant woodland,
5. Would like the Council to invest resources to ensure successful tree establishment on difficult sites,
6. Would like to the Council to invest in sustainably re-using timber and other arisings from tree maintenance.

## **AIMS**

### **(STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES & OBJECTIVES)**

The Council has four key aims in producing this strategy:

- A:** To enhance the city's natural environment
- B:** To achieve a better co-ordinated approach to the management of trees, woodlands and hedgerows
- C:** To improve the overall standard of tree care and create a healthier, safer tree population
- D:** To inform and involve local people
- E:** To increase the number of street trees in line with the Exeter Vision

## **OBJECTIVES**

**(these could be policies/policy statements)**  
**These inform the action plan**

1. Influence the wider landscape in strategic terms
2. Improve management of trees in council care
3. Provide advice and education for residents and other stakeholders ("Protection through advice")
4. Clearly defined role of the Council in the management and protection of trees,
5. Recognise the differences, and the common ground, between the urban landscape and the rural landscape
- 6 Provide a long-term structure plan for the retention and enhancement of trees, woodlands and hedgerows in and around the city

## STRATEGY MAP

	<b>Question</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Action by</b>
Where we are now	What is the extent of the Council's tree stock	Council tree survey	Parks and Open Spaces (POS), Countryside Services (CS),
	Where/what are the important tree areas outside council ownership	Assessment of green corridors and other significant influences (woodlands etc)	POS, CS, Planning Services (PS)
	Who are the main stakeholders (see above)	Identify key stakeholders and invite participation	Working Party (WP) [includes Members, POS, CS, PS, others]
	What tools and measures are available to us now	Assessment of existing control and management processes within ECC	WP
	What are our strengths and weaknesses, where are the threats and opportunities	Assessment from ECC perspective, and from stakeholder group perspective	WP
Where do we want to be	How do we identify our needs	Stakeholder consultation Public consultation data	WP
	Do we agree with our vision	Discussion	WP
	How do we achieve our vision	Set policies	WP
How we are going to get there	How do we build on our strengths	Tree management guidelines	POS, CS,PS
	How do we overcome our weaknesses	Use of the action plan Timetabling	WP
	How are threats and opportunities dealt with	Set out responses in the action plan	WP



	<b>Question</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Action by</b>
	How do we achieve objectives	Identify resources required	WP
How do we know when we get there	How do we know if we are successful	Stakeholder consultation and review	WP et al
	How do we measure success or failure	Set a framework of measurable outcomes	WP

## **ACHIEVING OUR GOALS**

Having agreed the aims and objectives of the strategy, the outcomes are delivered by means of an Action Plan, reviewed annually over the five year lifespan of the strategy.

Clearly some objectives will take longer than others to achieve, and may be very long term in their implementation. The Action Plan will allow achievements and performance to be measured, and an annual review will chart progress and allow evolution of the strategy should circumstances require.

## **APPENDICES**

Details will follow the outcome of decisions by the working group

### ACTION PLAN

A published document with targets, dates and measurable outcomes.

### TREE MANAGEMENT

General Principles, Protection, Standards of work, etc

### OWNERSHIP & RESPONSIBILITY

The Responsibility for Trees by location and classification

### CONSULTATION EXERCISE

Results and outcomes of the Public Consultation undertaken in Autumn 2007

### GLOSSARY OF TERMS

An explanation of terminology and meaning

### LEGISLATION AND POLICY GUIDANCE

All the relevant legislation and policy guidance with a brief description

### TREE SPECIFIC POLICIES

A summary of policies arising from the strategy

### REFERENCES

ECC strategies

- Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2005
- Biodiversity Action Plan 2005
- Environmental Strategy 2007

Arboricultural Association

CABE Space

Newcastle City Council Tree Strategy

Norwich City Council Tree Strategy

East Devon and Exeter Fringe Green Infrastructure Strategy – Draft  
Methodology 2008

Countryside in and Around Towns. Natural England. 2008

Management of the Risk from Falling Trees. HSE Enforcement Liaison  
Committee Sept 2007

## CONTACTS

The Tree Council  
[www.treecouncil.org.uk](http://www.treecouncil.org.uk)  
T: 01767 680551

Arboricultural Association  
[www.trees.org.uk](http://www.trees.org.uk)  
T: 01794 368717

The Royal Horticultural Society (RHS)  
[www.rhs.org.uk](http://www.rhs.org.uk)  
T: 0207 834 4333

CABE Space  
<http://www.cabe.org.uk>  
T: 020 7070 6700

Greenspace  
<http://www.green-space.org.uk/>  
T: 0118 946 9060

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## EXETER CITY COUNCIL

### SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - COMMUNITY 4 MARCH 2008

#### ALLOTMENT STRATEGY REVIEW

#### **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To report to committee the progress made to date on the action plan outlined in the revised Allotment Strategy, adopted by the Council in 2007.
- 1.2 To set out further actions planned for 2008/9 (see Appendix I).

#### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The original allotment strategy was adopted in 2002, and was revised in 2007. This built on the achievements of the first strategy, and identified the significant improvements in occupation levels and meeting the needs of plotholders. Despite the conversion of a large number of full size plot to half plots, which many younger people find attractive, all but one of our 26 allotment sites have waiting lists.
- 2.2 The strategy links to others within the Authority, such as the Environmental Strategy and Leisure Strategy, and to wider aims such as health improvement plans, the Local Development Framework, and government initiatives such as the Good Practice Guide for Allotments 2001
- 2.3 Five target areas are identified within the strategy
  1. Ensuring Sufficient Allotments
  2. Promoting Allotment Gardening
  3. Encouraging Sustainability
  4. Cultivating Good Administration
  5. Maintaining Adequate Resources
- 2.4 Under these headings an action plan has been produced, with specific targets identified.

#### **3. PROGRESS IN 2007**

- 3.1 2007 saw the continuance of a number of projects that originated in the first strategy.
- 3.2 Equalities issues were addressed with further work at Marypole allotments to provide better access for those with mobility restrictions. This site was visited by the Chartermark assessor, prior to the Directorate achieving Chartermark status and received much acclaim.
- 3.3 Full size 10 rod (250m<sup>2</sup>) allotment plots were split into 5 rod plots as they became vacant on sites across the city, to further increase the opportunity for people to take on plots more suited to their means and needs. This has increased the number of plots available to 1316, from 1217 in 2002.

- 3.4 Replacement portaloos were installed at six sites. The new portaloos are disabled accessible and utilise less toxic chemicals than previously used.
- 3.5 Cowick Lane allotments boundary was layered using existing trees and vegetation to provide not only a secure boundary, but an enhanced wildlife habitat
- 3.6 Substantial works have been carried out on allotment tracks and car parks to ensure accessibility.
- 3.7 Guys/Hylton allotments security fencing was upgraded on a vulnerable boundary.
- 3.8 Guys/Hylton trading shed new roof was complemented by six water butts to serve nearby plots.
- 3.9 Areas of poor drainage identified and measures taken to prevent future flooding of plots.

#### **4. PLANNED WORK FOR 2008**

##### 4.1 Key actions are

- Maximising the current available allotment space
- Securing future additional provision
- Introducing greater sustainability awareness
- Water harvesting and other measures to reduce the use of treated water for irrigation
- Provision of two new self-composting fully accessible toilets and the re-location of the existing to replace our last two old style ones
- To provide enhanced security to sites where vulnerable areas are identified

##### 4.2 The 'Action Identified' column in Appendix I lists the works identified for the year in greater detail.

#### **5 RECOMMENDED**

That the progress be noted and future proposals supported.

#### **HEAD OF CONTRACTS AND DIRECT SERVICES**

S:LP/Committee/308SCC5  
21.2.08

COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE

**Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)**  
**Background papers used in compiling this report:**

*Exeter City Council Allotment Strategy 2005/11*

ALLOTMENT STRATEGY  
ACTION PLAN

TARGET AREA 1

1 Ensuring Sufficient Allotments

The improvements arising from the 2002 strategy have coincided with a nationwide interest in local and personal food production. As a result there are substantial waiting lists at most sites. In order to address existing and planned demand the following proposals are made.

Ref	Proposal	Targets	Actions identified
1A	<u>Safeguarding existing provision</u> Retain the level of allotments provision for Exeter.	Provide an allotment site within 1 mile radius of any residential location in Exeter, with regard to likely changes in population density arising from the Local Development Framework. This will require the active management of Planning Applications at a strategic level.	Investigate the status of temporary sites and seek change of status to permanent site where it is the wider interest to do so. Identify threats or proposals that would adversely affect allotment provision, eg causes of sudden decline in tenancy level
1B	<u>Meeting changes in demand</u> Investigate whether any local or social demand deficiencies that occur due to demographic change can be met from existing open space or via Planning proposals (LDF and Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) Aim to provide an allotment site within a one-mile radius of any residential location, with regard to likely changes in population density	Potential additional sites are being investigated where Allotments are heavily over- subscribed or there is lack of current provision.  Potential plot holders are prepared to travel across the city to secure a plot. It makes sense to reduce the need to travel by vehicle as far as possible.	A Public Open Space Audit was undertaken as part of the management of Section 106 agreements and to meet PPG17 needs.  Plot planned population density by postcodes to match to existing provision, so that localised areas of shortfall area known. This information can be used by Planners to assist in using Planning controls to secure new allotment provision.  Identify other potential sites outside the normal scope of locations. eg Royal Naval

Ref	Proposal	Targets	Actions identified
1C	<p>arising from the Local Development Framework. Where demand is demonstrated or could be calculated.</p> <p><u>Maximise the use of existing allotments</u></p> <p>Improve existing locations</p> <p>Examine alternative uses for sites or parts of sites that cannot be let</p>	<p>Reassess further car parking areas, for example existing car parks on areas of good soil are returned to cultivation, using only areas of poor ground for car parking.</p> <p>Habitats enhanced by hedge planting and infilling unused corners with planting to aid security.</p> <p>Improvements to plot condition and soil where these factors are preventing take up of plots.</p> <p>Ensure that tenants actively work their plots, and plots with large percentages of uncultivated land are reclaimed to be let to others. This approach requires careful management to ensure those who use their plots as “Leisure Gardens” (eg young mums) are not penalised</p>	<p>stores, Ide (private land), St Loyes.</p> <p>See also 1D</p> <p>List all unused areas of allotment sites to assess potential for alternative uses.</p> <p>Mincinglake Road allotments have restricted access and have a history of being poorly tenanted. Many plots were significantly overgrown. The site is in the process of being cleared and cultivated.</p> <p>Upon completion of the project an “additional” 8 plots will be available.</p> <p>With the heavy demand in the city for allotments the earlier proposal identified in the Local Plan for joint allotment / housing land at Marypole Allotments has been rescinded.</p> <p>Direct assistance to improve sites e.g. installing drainage systems, the control of pernicious weeds by such measures as the use of large scale membranes and re-soiling.</p>
1D	<p><u>Keeping options open to improve the service</u></p> <p>Consider offering alternative locations where available if tenants are in favour of moving even where</p>	<p>Ensure the wider needs for allotment provision are recognised as far as is possible within the Planning process.</p> <p>Investigate Partnership working with others, eg adjacent Local Authorities,</p>	<p>Meetings have been held with Planning officers to identify potential land use.</p> <p>The option of alternative locations is constantly under review.</p>



Ref	Proposal	Targets	Actions identified
	demand and supply are met.	other public bodies, the University, to use land for allotments on a leasing basis.	<p>When examining alternative uses to consider in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The possibility of generating income</li> <li>• The potential for temporary uses.</li> </ul>

## TARGET AREA 2

### 2 Promoting Allotment Gardening

Since the first Allotment Strategy was written in 2002 a significant change has occurred locally and nationally in that the opportunity to grow your own food fruit and vegetables is perceived as an extremely desirable and achievable benefit by a large proportion of the population. The subject has received publicity and endorsement from a wide spectrum of the news media. However, whilst the subject is receiving positive publicity in general there remains the need to provide good quality relevant information as assistance and guidance at a local level, especially for new or aspiring plot holders. The Council should be seen as a facilitator for peer and support groups. Allotment Associations have been revitalised with support from the Council, at a time when the Exeter Allotment Federation has disbanded.

Ref	Proposal	Targets	Actions identified
2A	<p><u>Communication</u></p> <p>Continue to improve on and target weaknesses in communication</p> <p>The production of easy to follow useful information, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pamphlets</li> <li>- Display boards/posters at key times/sites on a wider range of sites</li> <li>- Website information</li> <li>- Links with other promotions, eg healthy living, organic growing, traditional skills</li> </ul>	<p>Continue to use web site as prime information tool. This is easy to provide regular update link to other promotions.</p> <p>Update and reproduce the series of information posters for notice boards.</p> <p>Ensure information on allotment issues is clearly and readily accessible to the widest range of users.</p> <p>There must also be a focus on the means of keeping information updated, pointing</p>	<p>Parks web site revised, and Allotments are listed under the “Active People” section.</p> <p>Quarterly topical information posters to be produced.</p> <p>The Council’s website now contains a substantial amount of information on allotments, where to find them and how to rent one.</p> <p>Most sites are equipped with notice boards.</p>

Ref	Proposal	Targets	Actions identified
		towards e-communication, and on-site notice boards, which can also be used by associations and individuals.	Undertake user survey (see also 4D)
<b>2B</b>	<p><u>Equalities</u></p> <p>To make a wider range of plots available to suit different needs and ethics. This will include, where appropriate standard plots, half and quarter plots and group plots:</p>	<p>All sites have a percentage of smaller plots. Managers are now alert to the possibility of non-standard plots and have identified a number suited for possible splitting when they become vacant.</p> <p>Cater for those who wish for organic methods of gardening.</p> <p>Recognise the social element of allotments, particularly the benefits to those minorities for whom the cultivation of specific fruit and vegetables has particular value.</p> <p>To support tenants who have temporary disabilities caused by ill health</p>	<p>Earmark plots nearest to entrances and car parking areas as those more suited to people with mobility restrictions.</p> <p>Advertise on the website and elsewhere the availability of non-standard plots.</p> <p>Identify more segregated ‘No Chemical’ options.</p> <p>A number of ethnic and refugee groups have been encouraged to take up allotment plots. These are frequently grouped together.</p>
<b>2C</b>	<p><u>Accessibility</u></p> <p>Specific needs</p> <p>To identify and designate plots suitable for those with mobility difficulties or for organic use, where demand is indicated. This could be as part of the revitalisation of an area of vacant plots, as part of site improvement scheme or on a new allotment site.</p>	<p>Identify the potential for disabled use or demand for organic gardening at all allotment sites. By definition those with mobility difficulties drive or are driven to sites, therefore the most sensible approach at this level is to provide facilities at specific sites.</p> <p>Need to identify “lower level” disabilities so that those who have some difficulty in getting to or working their plots have some assistance.</p>	See also 1C

Ref	Proposal	Targets	Actions identified
<b>2D</b>	<p><u>Newbies</u>            Improve customer care and on site help for new or inexperienced plot holders and to reduce early drop out rates by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- use of notice boards</li> <li>- investigating the introduction of site representatives</li> <li>- encouraging better partnership</li> </ul>	<p>Site representatives are in place on most sites.            Noticeboards are on most sites.            Expand the current practice of maintaining vacant plots in reasonable condition in order to encourage letting.</p>	<p>Regular AAM meetings are held.            Set up training and induction for new representatives, and a structure of regular meetings/consultations.            Allotment Associations have been revitalised in St Thomas and Cowick. Associations or similar groups are actively encouraged as they can provide aid and assistance at a local level, and act as a focus group.            See 2A</p>
<b>2E</b>	<p><u>Appearances are important</u>            Control weed growth and reduce the spread of seed from vacant plots. This will improve the appearance of the site both for tenants and passers by. Initially this will be done by strimmer but other methods, in keeping with the Council's Environmental Strategy and sustainable practices will be considered.</p>	<p>Positive management of sites has led to an increase in the number of plots available for letting. See 1C            Contractors will be used at peak periods (when parks staff are busiest) to control vegetation on vacant plots.</p>	<p>Use of mulching mats in preference to herbicides.            The practice of keeping plots tidy has been very successful in achieving high occupancy levels, which in turn reduces maintenance costs.</p>
<b>2F</b>	<p><u>Fair distribution of facilities</u>            Prioritise available resources, in a balanced way, between maintaining promotional activity and the</p>	<p>Increase recycling options to reduce use of skips and landfill.            A database of all structures in allotments has been set up, including trading huts to plan</p>	<p>Undertake a quality assessment of all sites to ensure a balanced and equitable approach to site management. This will assist in making a value judgement on the infrastructure and facilities on allotments.</p>

Ref	Proposal	Targets	Actions identified
	maintenance and improvement of site facilities.	<p>maintenance and improvements. (Trading huts provide the focus for the Allotment Associations.)</p> <p>Toilets are seen as vital in encouraging women and those with young families onto the sites.</p> <p>Roads and tracks need to be maintained in good condition to encourage access by all.</p>	<p>Identify lifespan of structures.</p> <p>Investigate use of self composting toilets at sites where exceptional use is identified.</p>

### TARGET AREA 3

#### 3 Encouraging Sustainability

Allotment sites provide an increasingly valuable and noticeable area of green space, as gardens continue to reduce in size. However, the security needs of allotments mean that they cannot fully be a substitute for public open space.

The range of plant species on an allotment site means they are a rich habit for wildlife. Opportunities remain to develop wildlife value in hedging areas and sections that have no realistic prospect of coming back into use, but care is needed to ensure this is not to the detriment of allotment provision.

Within the cultivated area of allotments, principles of sustainable gardening are relevant. Many plot holders are very skilled and knowledgeable on issues of sustainability (it is an inherent aspect of allotmenting.) The Council has a commitment to minimise the use of pesticides (this includes insecticides, fungicides and weed killers). However this commitment will be approached by persuasion not coercion through rules and regulations, except where an area of plots is designated for 'organic' use.

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Targets</b>	<b>Actions identified</b>
<b>3A</b>	To encourage, and where possible, support good environmental practice including organic alternatives to fertilizers and pesticides.	<p>See 2A</p> <p>Provide information giving advice on good organic practice to all allotment holders There needs to be a culture of encouraging organic use and good practice that reduces the need for pesticides. As amateur pesticide use becomes more restricted, with approval for chemical formulations being withdrawn, plot holders will have to turn to other methods. The use of pesticides by plot holders will need to be more actively managed, and information made available on a regular basis, especially regarding the withdrawal of pesticides.</p> <p>Bonfires are now banned throughout summer months and timing changes made to winter permissible timings with good results in an overall reduction in need for or complaints about them.</p>	Continue the promotion of composting, no-dig techniques and similar alternative methods.
<b>3B</b>	Encourage associations to draw on the expertise already in the allotment movement both locally and nationally through links with NSALG.	The City Council should act as a mentor and conduit for relevant information and guidance from a range of sources eg RHS, Henry Doubleday Research Assoc, Soil Association.	<p>Information/updates provided for the associations at AGMs etc.</p> <p>The Allotments officer attends AGMs of the various Associations when available.</p>
<b>3C</b>	To consider opportunities that arise for improved wildlife habitats in partnership with the allotment holders and their associations i.e. wildlife groups. In particular using	Wherever practical e.g. at boundaries and car parks, plots with severe perennial weed problems or in odd corners, hedges, plantations or simply grass banks are managed to enhance biodiversity.	<p>Continue to enhance hedgerows where the opportunity arises.</p> <p>Consider willow and hazel coppicing (for use by plot holders).</p>

	natural features within the site, for example: hedging.	Reduce unnecessary maintenance eg high levels of strimming	
<b>3D</b>	<p>Continue to support the development of the allotment associations and appropriate trading to support cost effective gardening and encourage organic or sustainable gardening.</p> <p>Opportunities for associations to sell surplus fruit and vegetables produced on allotments should be investigated. These may include sale days in allotment huts or the possible use of the Farmers Market.</p>	<p>There is not yet the organisational ability or support for selling surplus vegetables and fruit on a regular basis or even at local level. (eg at the trading huts). Ad hoc selling or bartering does go on and could be actively encouraged.</p>	<p>Officers have begun to investigate the feasibility of sale at markets and to appropriate local organisations</p>
<b>3E</b>	Supply and use of water	Be more pro active in promoting and encouraging better sustainable use of water	<p>The use of rain water capture and storage is being investigated</p> <p>Composted material is made available on a regular basis from the Green Waste tip</p> <p>Timing of cropping to maximise soil water</p> <p>Use of drought resistant species and varieties promoted</p> <p>Investigate and identify the possibilities to abstract water from underground sources.</p>
<b>3F</b>	Recycling	Investigate opportunities to promote/reward recycling initiatives	Ongoing

## TARGET AREA 4

### 4 Cultivating Good Administration

The need for good records and administration is essential for the efficient running of this public service and the development of a partnership approach to management.

At present all except one site, (Trews Weir) is managed directly by the Council. This self-management scheme has been a success due to the hard work and commitment of this group. It may never be suitable for all sites or desired by all allotment holders. However potential may exist if the commitment of a group is strong enough but support from the council would also be needed.

The recent development of the allotment associations could provide a platform to encourage the optimum participation for each group, at the level with which they are comfortable.

All records are maintained on a database subject to the Data Protection Act 1998. It would be beneficial if this could be transferred to the Asset Management system. If improved and meaningful participation is to be achieved and informed decisions made it is important that the way in which information is coded and held is progressively improved.

The improvements over the lifetime of the first Allotment Strategy has shown the benefits of better on-site customer care, forward planning, financial management, promotion of sites to a wider audience and supporting the development of the associations.

Ref	Proposal	Target	Actions identified
4A	To encourage the Allotment Associations to be active in providing a useful forum for their plot holders, in particular to have healthy and appropriate trading services to reduce the costs of allotment gardening, to accurately represent the views of their members in resolving problems, prioritising any future spend and initiatives.	Associations and Allotment Groups are beneficial on a number of levels, and should be actively encouraged in areas where there are currently no Allotment Associations or similar groups. See 2D.	Existing Associations appear to be working well and in partnership with each other.

Ref	Proposal	Target	Actions identified
4B	To carry out basic essential maintenance to the infrastructure of the sites and to consult the associations in the prioritisation of available funds for improvements.	Build on successes. Identify weaknesses.	See 2F Use the lessons learnt to inform other improvement programmes. Complete the assessment of water supply. Undertake “reality checks” to check quality of repairs and improvements.
4C	Continue to improve clarity of accounting and decision-making and to investigate integrated computer system incorporating a Geographical Information System (GIS) for modern management of the service.	Make use of available IT, eg GIS, IPAQ etc	Map sites onto GIS. Work towards expanding the use of Asset Management software.
4D	Continue to improve the on site customer care for all plot holders	Site representatives are in place on most sites (see 2D)	Undertake another user survey to complement and update the 1996 data. (see also 2A)
4E	To review the tenancy agreement periodically, at least every five years. The purpose of this will be to ensure that the service continues to develop and the tenancies/leases reflect the current vision for allotments.	The New Rules and Regulations were formally adopted in 2007.	Monitor effectiveness (eg through AAM liaison meetings)
4F	To provide support and advice to groups who wish to move towards self-management either wholly or in part.	Maintain liaison with existing groups Consider self-management as part of any partnering arrangement with other bodies especially if this results in broader	



Ref	Proposal	Target	Actions identified
4G	Ensure all income is collected and banked, and all payments made within guideline timescales.	<p>allotment provision.</p> <p>Continue assistance of Audit to ensure accuracy and probity in rent collection and banking</p>	

## TARGET AREA 5

### 5 Maintaining Adequate Resources

There has been substantial investment in making improvements to site facilities, information and promotional activity.

Appendix 7 gives a summary breakdown of the budget currently provided by the Council. As at 2006/7, this is £38,850 for the year, supplemented by the budgeted rental income of £18,000, giving a total of £56,850 available for the allotment service.

Of this £16,920 is for maintenance and improvements. This part of the budget needs careful prioritisation as it is needed for both reactive and planned as well as cyclical grounds maintenance on the sites.

(Direct comparison of rents is difficult as local authorities have different discount systems. The current charges and discounts were shown in Appendix 8 of the Strategy with some comparative data from other local authorities.)

From time to time there may be opportunities to obtain some external funding through Government, European Union or Lottery Grants. Other opportunities for income generation may emerge, for example the various Lottery funding initiatives for health related promotions and community schemes. Funding has been achieved through the Council's Equalities funding.

Neither of these options is likely to provide the core funding required to maintain the service.

It may be possible to reduce the budgetary requirements of allotments by increasing rent, as demand currently exceeds supply. However, this could be seen as counter-productive in terms of community health, and would adversely affect the very people who most need allotments.

The proposals are:-

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Targets</b>	<b>Action identified</b>
5A	Prioritise improvement projects with an annually revised action plan, drawn up in consultation with the AAMs, Field representatives and allotment associations. The Council will consider the allotment priorities each year against other projects also requiring funding and the capital resources available.	Allotment infrastructure improvements targeted those issues of greatest concern to plot holders. The improved communications between field representatives, AAMs and the APEO has resulted in an understanding of prioritisation and phasing of works.	Continue the long term planning and phasing of improvement schemes.  See 2F
5B	Seek opportunities for external funding for improvement or promotional projects and apply as found appropriate.	Continue to seek out additional funding streams, with a particular focus on equalities and sustainability.	
5C	Due consideration and consultation will be given to the possibility of generating some income from the sale of non-viable sites or parts of sites.	Consideration to be given to any proposals that would be of long term overall benefit to allotment provision, eg land swaps.	
5D	The fees and charges will be reviewed from time to time, but with the value of low cost food production, healthy activity and social inclusion in mind.	Allotment rents are increased every two years in line with RPI. Continue to increase rents as appropriate. Consider the value of rent increases above inflation to fund more expensive capital improvements eg water management	

## EXETER CITY COUNCIL

### SCRUTINY COMMITTEE COMMUNITY 4 MARCH 2008

#### DEVON CHILDREN'S TRUST DRAFT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN 2008 -11

## 1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report seeks Members' views on the draft Children and Young People's Plan 2008 -11.

## 2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Devon County Council as statutory children's authority is required to publish a Children and Young People's Plan setting out how all agencies can work together through the Devon Children's Trust to deliver the Every Child Matters five outcomes:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic wellbeing

The City Council has a legal duty to cooperate on children's matters.

- 2.2 A first draft of the new plan was published shortly before Christmas and is available on the Children's Trust website at [www.devonchildrenstrust.org.uk](http://www.devonchildrenstrust.org.uk). City Council staff and Members have participated in various consultation events since then and comments on the first draft plan, agreed by the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Social Inclusion, were submitted by the deadline of 31 January 2008. These are attached as Appendix I to this report.
- 2.3 A further draft is expected before the plan is submitted to Devon County Council's Executive on 28 March 2008 and it is hoped that this will be available for discussion so that the views expressed at the City Council's scrutiny committee can be fed into the process.

## 3 RECOMMENDED

- 1) that Members' views are requested.

## DIRECTOR COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT

S:LP/Committee/308SCC6  
21.2.08

COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE

**Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)**  
**Background papers used in compiling this report:**  
None

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Our ref: HB/bja

Your ref:

24 January 2008

Dear Anne

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the first draft of the Children and Young Person's Plan 2008-2011.

I have the following comments on behalf of the City Council.

### **General**

The document is well and clearly structured and generally easy to read. Some sections are somewhat impenetrable however (e.g. 8.7.7). A single editorial hand on the final version should be able to resolve this.

The other general principal, which we would like to see enshrined within the plan, is that budget should follow need. It should be explicitly recognised that more resources will be diverted to areas of higher deprivation.

### **Introduction**

Paragraph 2.19 underplays the concern about the lack of aspiration in Devon's children and young people. The concern is a current one (the plan refers to it in the past tense) and, certainly within Exeter, is shared much more widely than among head teachers. The opportunity to work to raise aspirations is not taken elsewhere in the document. This is particularly important as raising aspirations features as a key priority in the latest draft of the LAA (outcome SCS 17). There is certainly data from Exeter which supports the need for this priority, e.g. over 11% of young people entering jobs without training and a lower number continuing in full time education. The issue of aspirations permeates a number of the themes. For example Exeter has the highest number of teenage pregnancies and the lowest proportion terminated, surely something that must be tackled through raising aspirations?

Paragraph 2.34 seems to refer to the Children's Trust Executive as the lead agency for achieving the



CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

CYPP. Surely that responsibility lays with the statutory Children's Services Authority, in this case, Devon County Council? The plan might benefit from a description of the role of the statutory Children's Services Authority.

Paragraph 2.37 does not make it clear how local partnerships will be resourced to carry out their responsibilities. If there is a real desire to tailor services to address some of the very clear locally distinctive needs then this is crucial. It is a role that could be usefully supported by the local CYPS link i.e. in Exeter's case Debbie Pritchard. There needs to be clarity about what commissioning/budgets will be devolved to a local level and what local discretion will exist. Under the previous CYPP, the Children's Trust Constitution and structure never became a reality. There is a clear risk that history will repeat itself. If there is no real intention to allow local determination of services then the CYPS should be open about this.

The role of local partnerships in delivery is not clear. In 1.10 you refer to delivery plans being the responsibility of reference groups. How will the local dimension be incorporated into delivery?

We would like some amendments to the diagram at 2.39. To whom are the local groups accountable and who steers them – the Children's Trust Board and Executive or the LSP? It will cause confusion if joint accountability is shown and the local groups may be pulled in different directions. Our view is that the LSP should take this role. The relationship of DCC as statutory body is not shown at all. In our view it is misleading to call the local groups the CTLSPs and this will give rise to confusion as to their role. We feel that Local Planning and Implementation Group, although a mouthful is a clear descriptor.

Paragraph 2.40 refers to some working across three areas with Exeter being combined with East and Mid Devon. It is widely recognised that Exeter's distinctive urban focus requires a very different approach. Insistence on working over this wider area has slowed and blocked action in the past for example around work regarding teenage pregnancy. Exeter should be treated separately to reflect its distinctive urban nature and particular challenges.

### **Being Healthy**

Paragraph 3.3 gives a rather one-sided view of things. Our past experience in Exeter was that we had a very good PCT that was responsive and effective in meeting local needs. One could equally argue that loss of local PCTs could reduce the scope for innovation; reduce the likelihood that local needs and priorities will be met; result in a slower, less responsive bureaucracy and level services downwards. Multiple IMT systems clearly existed before but how did this result in less effective outcomes for children & young people? We suggest that 3.3 is deleted and the words up to and including *opportunity* be deleted from 3.4 with this paragraph beginning *Devon PCT intends*.

Perhaps the approach should be to clearly identify the risks brought by a single PCT, some of which are listed above, and explicitly deal with how these could be mitigated?

### **Enjoy and Achieve**

This section is silent on the role of schools and colleges in raising aspirations. There has been some excellent work done already and we feel that building on this should be a key aspect of the plan.

We suggest that an additional objective be added at 5.10 along the lines of *reduce the gap between the schools with the lowest value added scores and the rest*. As you know we have had concerns about the relative performance of Exeter's young people for some time and indeed requested in our comments

on the previous plan that this be addressed. We would like more support to be made available to those schools that would like it.

### **Making a Positive Contribution**

This section is written in rather a negative way, for example, referring to reducing anti-social behaviour and unplanned pregnancy rather than talking in a positive way about what will be done to raise aspirations and allow young people to experience the pleasure that can be gained by making a positive contribution to society, opening themselves to new experiences and achieving the unexpected.

We would like to add at the end of the first sentence in 6.9 *and in the evenings*.

### **Housing**

The heading to this chapter implies that the focus is on young people only. Children and their families also need to be considered.

We are pleased to note the priority given to agreeing protocols for helping homeless children and young people. There is a desperate need for these, which we have been pressing for some years now to no avail.

8.5.3 needs an additional objective to support young people and families to sustain their accommodation. All too often we house young people or families who then, all too predictably, fail and end up as intentionally homeless. We then have no duty to house them. There is often the need for support, which goes beyond that which is appropriate from Supporting People. This also links to the need for parenting support mentioned elsewhere. This needs to be picked up in the action section as well.

### **Parenting**

In our view this is a key area and it would be good to see more tangible proposals in 8.6.5. An outcome measure we would favour would be that within the lifetime of the plan all agencies would be able to refer families who are experiencing significant difficulties to a family intervention project able to provide them with intensive support. Too often families become intentionally homeless because they lack the skills and support to sustain a tenancy.

### **Improving Provision for Children with Special Needs**

It is not clear how the indicator *reducing new statement starts in 8.7.9* will indicate a positive impact on children and young people if a statement is needed in order that a child receives appropriate support.

### **Every Child's Future Matters**

We are delighted to read in 8.9.6 that Devon is promoting access to school green spaces outside of school times and would like to see an indicator which measures progress on this including PFI schools.

### **Early Years, Childcare and Children's Centre Development**

It might be useful to mention the important work done by Surestart and others in developing parenting

skills.

## **Participation**

With reference to 9.1.5 (1), all partners are not signed up to the advanced hear by right standard as far as we are aware.

## **Risks**

In addition to those listed, without local flexibility there is a danger that innovation will be stifled.

There is also a significant risk that in trying to provide the same service across the county we will continue to fail to increase the life chances of the most disadvantaged.

Without significant movement of resources, both to the more disadvantaged areas and upstream to more preventative work at lower thresholds it is difficult to see how this plan will contribute to making significant improvements in the life chances of the most disadvantaged children and young people.

A further risk is that the structure will continue to fail to function as intended. Devon PCT and Devon County Council need to take clear decisions about how much decision making they are prepared to devolve to a local level and how much difference they will accept in service provision at a local level.

At recent consultation events we have been consulted about underpinning beliefs and principles. A key principal around equity (point 8 in the first iteration) – the most important as far as we were concerned - had disappeared in the second version of this paper. We would like to see this reinstated as a priority.

We have commented on the proposals set out in the draft plan. We are aware that there has been a subsequent move by the Children's Trust Executive to focus local working on three large areas, incorporating Exeter with East and Mid Devon. We wish to place on record our grave concerns about this approach, which we will pursue through other channels. It is absolutely vital that Exeter's distinctive urban needs are considered separately.

I hope you find these initial comments helpful.

Yours sincerely

Hazel R Ball

Hazel Ball  
Director of Community and Environment

S:LP/Hball/Letters/Whiteley 24.1.08



## EXETER CITY COUNCIL

### SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - COMMUNITY 4 MARCH 2008

#### COMMUNITY SERVICES STEWARDSHIP TO 31 DECEMBER 2007

#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report advises Members of any major differences by management unit to the revised budget.

#### 2. STEWARDSHIP TO 31 DECEMBER 2007

- 2.1 Following changes in the revenue accounting requirements for fixed assets, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) have specified that 'deferred contributions' must be released to service revenue accounts. Deferred contributions are government grants and external contributions received in respect of fixed assets. In order that this adjustment does not impact on the level of Council Tax, it is required that the value of deferred contributions released to revenue accounts are reversed out when accounting for total service cost.

- 2.2 The current forecast suggests, after adjusting for approved additional expenditure of £32,550, reductions of capital charges of £44,703, deferred AIM expenditure of £92,000, net movements to reserves of £124,640, and revenue contributions to capital of £20,000, that net expenditure for this committee will decrease from the revised budget by a total of £67,310 which represents a variation of 0.5% from the revised budget.

- 2.3 The main variations by management unit are detailed below:

	£
<b>2007-2008 REVISED ESTIMATE</b>	14,463,360

<b>1A1 ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION</b>	(44,780)
-------------------------------------	----------

Expenditure on abandoned cars is expected to be less than the budget. Additional income in respect of litter fines and funding from the Department of Health will more than offset the cost of extending the contracts of the three litter enforcement officers for the whole of the financial year. Staff vacancies in the Community Patrol service have led to reduced costs, partly offset by additional recruitment costs. NNDR (National Non-Domestic Rates) for the CCTV Control Room are expected to be less than the budget. The cost of maintaining CCTV cameras is expected to be less than the budget. A refund has been received in respect of service charges for at the Control Room for 2005/06.

<b>1A2</b>	<b>CLEANSING SERVICES</b>	<b>(37,200)</b>
	Income from the garden waste service has exceeded the budget (see attached trading account). The cost of utilities in public conveniences is expected to be less than the budget.	
	Part of the resulting saving will be used to make a revenue contribution to capital in respect of the refurbishment of a public convenience.	
	Capital charges are £1,304 less than estimated.	
<b>1A3</b>	<b>LICENSING, FOOD, HEALTH &amp; SAFETY</b>	<b>(41,350)</b>
	Staffing costs are expected to be less than the budget as a result of vacancies, partially offset by the cost of agency staff.	
	Income from premises and taxi licensing is expected to exceed the budget.	
	Capital charges are £1,124 less than estimated	
<b>1A4</b>	<b>TECHNICAL AND AGENDA 21</b>	<b>10,190</b>
	Recharges to other units and income from an external contract will be less than estimated. Costs in connection with the Climate Change strategy are expected to exceed the budget.	
	Capital charges are £2,893 less than estimated	
<b>1A5</b>	<b>WATERWAYS &amp; COUNTRYSIDE</b>	<b>3,020</b>
	Long-term sickness has resulted in additional staffing costs partially offset by additional license income.	
	Costs have arisen as a result of work towards the new harbour authority; these costs will be funded from general reserves as approved by Executive in June 2003.	
	Fleet costs are expected to exceed the budget as a result of an accident.	
	Capital charges are £1,256 less than estimated.	

<b>1A6</b>	<b>GROUNDS MAINTENANCE</b>	<b>(16,600)</b>
	There have been additional costs incurred as a result of the activities of illegal campers.	
	Additional costs have arisen as a result of vandalism in play areas.	
	An underspend is expected to arise in respect of the tree management project; this will be added to the earmarked reserve to enable the project to be completed in future years.	
	An underspend will also arise as a result of a decision not to recruit apprentices in this service until issues with the existing scheme within the Building and Electrical Service Team had been resolved. It is proposed to request a supplementary budget in 2008/09 to enable the project to commence in that year.	
	AIM costs are expected to be £6,500 less than budgeted, and a supplementary budget of £5,000 will be requested for 2008/09 to enable outstanding work to be completed.	
	Capital charges are £16,541 less than estimated.	
	<b>Action Plan</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The cost of dealing with illegal camping escalated in 2006/07 and a review was undertaken of the management of the problem. The new procedures have led to a reduction in cost in 2007/08, although still in excess of the budget. The revised procedures will however be in place for the whole of 2008/09 and the budget for that year has therefore not been increased.</li> </ul>	
<b>1A7</b>	<b>MUSEUMS SERVICE</b>	<b>(46,950)</b>
	Savings on utility costs and staffing costs are anticipated, while NNDR is expected to exceed the budget. Additional rental income is expected.	
	AIM costs are expected to be £37,700 less than budgeted, and a supplementary budget of £45,000 will be requested for 2008/09 to enable outstanding work to be completed.	
<b>1A8</b>	<b>CONTRACTED SPORTS FACILITIES</b>	<b>(5,720)</b>
	Additional costs have arisen in respect of NNDR.	
	Capital charges are £8,036 less than estimated.	
<b>1A9</b>	<b>OTHER SPORTS FACILITIES</b>	<b>40,810</b>
	Rental income in respect of Clifton Hill Golf driving range is expected to exceed the budget.	
	The replacement of the bowls carpet at the ISCA centre has resulted in additional expenditure; however this will be funded from an earmarked reserve.	

<b>1B2</b>	<b>CEMETERIES &amp; CREMATORIUM</b> Expenditure on NNDR exceeds the budget.	(48,740)
	AIM costs are expected to be £54,600 less than budgeted, and a supplementary budget of £42,000 will be requested for 2008/09 to enable outstanding work to be completed.	
	A deficit is expected to arise on the trading account (see attached)	
<b>1B3</b>	<b>PROPERTIES</b> Essential repairs at one of the properties have resulted in additional expenditure. This has been approved under delegated powers.	4,030
	Additional income has been received from community associations.	
<b>1B5</b>	<b>COMMUNITY OUTREACH</b> The Splash Scheme is expected to exceed the budget, however this overspend will be funded from an earmarked reserve.	(3,970)
	The revised Leisurecard agreement has resulted in additional income.	
<b>1B6</b>	<b>RECYCLING</b> Income from the sale of materials and associated recycling credits is expected to exceed the budget due to increased throughput and the current high level of prices available from merchants. Additional expenditure on staff partially offsets this.	(181,680)
	Additional expenditure on education and enforcement has arisen, offset by grant income and the additional income from materials.	
	Capital charges are £13,489 less than estimated.	
	<b>Action Plan</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The estimate for 2008/09 has been adjusted to allow for increased income levels.</li> </ul>	
<b>1B9</b>	<b>ADMINISTRATION SERVICE</b> A review of the service has led to reduced staffing costs. Savings on supplies and services are expected to arise. The saving in this unit will be refunded to other services in this directorate at the end of the financial year.	(5,020)
<b>1C1</b>	<b>HOME AID</b> A saving is expected in respect of the Devon care and repair contract. The saving will be used to make a Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay for Housing.	(23,000)

**1C2 ADVISORY SERVICES**

98,300

Repair costs in respect of private sector leased properties hand backs are expected to exceed the budget. The budget for housing benefits income was over stated in respect of private sector leasing properties, and staffing costs generally are also expected to exceed the budget due to the need to cover long-term sickness.

Savings are anticipated on contracted temporary accommodation costs.

Savings are anticipated on advertising, printing and employee costs in respect of the Home Choice scheme; additional income has been received in respect of the choice based lettings regional bid, this income will be transferred to a revenue reserve at year-end.

**Action Plan**

- Undertake monthly budget monitoring meetings to improve overall control and identify any potential overspend early.
- Take management action to reduce overspend where possible
- Reduce the number of private sector leased property handbacks
- The 2008/09 estimate in respect of housing benefits income has been amended

**1C3 HOUSING PARTNERSHIP**

(750)

Income will exceed the budget due to the recovery of private sector renewal grants; however this additional income will be transferred to an earmarked reserve at year-end.

Other costs in respect of Extralet are anticipated to exceed the budget.

Housing Market Assessment Survey costs will be funded from an earmarked reserve.

Costs in respect of the Empty Homes Partnership are expected to exceed the budget, however the additional costs will be transferred from an earmarked reserve.

£20,180 will be transferred into an earmarked reserve.

**1C4 PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING**

(27,540)

A shortfall in income from the licensing of houses in multiple occupation is anticipated. Savings on staffing costs partially offset this.

Improvement grants repaid during the year which are less than £10,000 have been credited to this account as they fall below the de minimis level for capital receipts.

**Action Plan**

- The 2008/09 estimate reflects these items.

**1C6 CONTRACTS AND DIRECT SERVICES**

0

The costs of this unit are fully recharged to their clients, and there is therefore no direct impact on this committee. The deficit currently represents approximately 1.7% of turnover, which is less than that reported in September 2007, and it is expected that measures taken to reduce overhead costs will continue to have a positive effect.

**2007-2008 EXPECTED FINAL OUTTURN**

**14,136,410**

**DEFERRED CONTRIBUTIONS**

**147,750**

**EXPECTED TRANSFERS TO / FROM RESERVES**

**124,640**

**AIM BUDGETS TO BE CARRIED FORWARD**

**92,000**

**EXPECTED REVENUE CONTRIBUTIONS TO**

**CAPITAL**

**43,000**

**EXPECTED TOTAL NET EXPENDITURE**

**14,543,800**

**3. RECOMMENDED**

That Scrutiny Committee – Community note this report.

DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY  
AND ENVIRONMENT

HEAD OF TREASURY SERVICES

S:LP/Committee/308SCC8  
21.2.08

**COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE  
CORPORATE SERVICES DIRECTORATE**

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)  
Background papers used in compiling this report

None

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT  
STEWARDSHIP

APRIL 2007 TO DECEMBER 2007

ANNUAL BUDGET	SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGETS AND VIREMENTS	REVISED BUDGET	CODE	CURRENT FORECAST	OUTTURN VARIANCE
£	£	£		£	£
1,255,780	0	1,255,780	1A1 ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION	1,211,000	(44,780)
3,587,680	8,200	3,595,880	1A2 CLEANSING SERVICES	3,558,680	(37,200)
565,740	0	565,740	1A3 LICENSING, FOOD, HEALTH & SAFETY	524,390	(41,350)
172,720	27,260	199,980	1A4 TECHNICAL & AGENDA 21	210,170	10,190
652,140	13,000	665,140	1A5 WATERWAYS & COUNTRYSIDE	668,160	3,020
1,910,170	6,600	1,916,770	1A6 GROUND MAINTENANCE	1,900,170	(16,600)
1,726,590	74,890	1,801,480	1A7 MUSEUMS SERVICE	1,754,530	(46,950)
1,180,690	11,600	1,192,290	1A8 CONTRACTED SPORTS FACILITIES	1,186,570	(5,720)
114,560	0	114,560	1A9 OTHER SPORTS FACILITIES	155,370	40,810
382,390	91,890	474,280	1B2 CEMETERIES & CREMATORIUM	425,540	(48,740)
29,950	3,000	32,950	1B3 PROPERTIES	36,980	4,030
483,250	90,000	573,250	1B5 COMMUNITY OUTREACH	569,280	(3,970)
713,130	0	713,130	1B6 RECYCLING	531,450	(181,680)
747,650	0	747,650	1B9 ADMINISTRATION SERVICE	742,630	(5,020)
36,350	0	36,350	1C1 HOME AID	13,350	(23,000)
638,310	0	638,310	1C2 ADVISORY SERVICES	736,610	98,300
279,020	0	279,020	1C3 HOUSING PARTNERSHIP	278,270	(750)
334,610	0	334,610	1C4 PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING	307,070	(27,540)
73,840	0	73,840	1C5 SUNDRY LANDS MAINTENANCE	73,840	0
1,287,940	0	1,287,940	1C6 CONTRACT & BUILDING SERVICES	1,287,940	0
177,620	0	177,620	1C7 DIRECTOR COMMUNITY/ENVIRONMENT	177,620	0
(2,213,210)	0	(2,213,210)	LESS: RECHARGEABLE BUDGETS	(2,213,210)	
<b>14,136,920</b>	<b>326,440</b>	<b>14,463,360</b>	<b>NET EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>14,136,410</b>	<b>(326,950)</b>
		<b>147,750</b>			
		<b>14,611,110</b>			
			DEFERRED CHARGES	147,750	
			TRANSFERS FROM EARMARKED RESERVES - 1A9	(47,060)	
			- 1B5	(9,690)	
			TRANSFERS TO EARMARKED RESERVES - 1A6	38,210	
			- 1C2	123,000	
			- 1C3	20,180	
			- 1C1	23,000	
			AIM BUDGETS CARRIED FORWARD TO 2008/09 - 1A6	5,000	
			- 1A7	45,000	
			- 1B2	42,000	
			REVENUE CONTRIBUTIONS TO CAPITAL - 1A2	20,000	
			<b>OUTTURN FORECAST AFTER ADJUSTING FOR MOVEMENTS ON RESERVES ETC</b>	<b>14,543,800</b>	
			<b>OUTTURN VARIANCE FORECAST AFTER ADJUSTING FOR MOVEMENTS ON RESERVES ETC</b>	<b>(67,310)</b>	

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## EXETER CITY COUNCIL

### SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - COMMUNITY 4 MARCH 2008

#### HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT STEWARDSHIP TO DECEMBER 2007

#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To advise Members of any major differences by management unit to the outturn forecast for the nine months of the financial year up to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2007.

#### 2. STEWARDSHIP TO 31 DECEMBER 2007

2.1 During this period the total of the variances indicate that there will be a net surplus of £114,860, which will be used to fund capital expenditure in respect of the Decent Homes Standard. The working balance at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008 will be £2,843,168.

2.2 The main variations by management unit are detailed below:

<b>2007-2008 ESTIMATED TRANSFER TO THE WORKING BALANCE</b>	£ <b>0</b>
--	---------------

#### 5A1 MANAGEMENT

There are additional costs in respect of tenants' removal and legal expenses as a consequence of the downsizing initiative.	143,590
---	---------

There is a reduction in the costs that can be offset against the capital receipts pooling as a result of the reduction in Right To Buy sales, and an increase in the allocation of some staffing costs from capital to revenue. This was identified as part of the 2006/07 accounts closing procedures.

#### 5A3 SUNDRY LANDS MAINTENANCE

There has been an increase in the contract rates in respect of assisted garden maintenance as a result of adverse weather conditions in 2007.	12,000
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#### 5A4 REPAIRS FUND CONTRIBUTION

The overall net surplus generated mainly by additional rent and investment interest will be used to increase the revenue contribution to capital expenditure.	114,860
---	---------

#### 5A6 CAPITAL CHARGES

Additional costs have been incurred in respect of the redemption of a finance lease	1,000
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**5A8 RENTS**

A reduction in the number of Right To Buy sales in 2006-07 (185,000) has resulted in an increase in the rent collectable. There is also an estimated increase in the garage rent income.

**5B1 GOVERNMENT SUBSIDY**

There has been an adjustment to the amount payable in (19,450) respect of the HRA Subsidy and Rental Constraint Allowance for 2007-2008

**5B2 INTEREST**

It is estimated that there will be additional investment (67,000) interest due to an increase in interest rates; this is offset by a reduction in the mortgage interest as a result of additional early redemptions in respect of mortgage debt.

**2007-2008 SECOND QUARTER FORECAST INCREASE IN WORKING BALANCE (£0)**

**3. ACTION PLAN**

- 3.1 The budgets, for staffing costing in respect of Right To Buy administration and allocations to capital schemes, will be amended to reflect the additional costs in 2008/09.
- 3.2 Tenants' removal and legal expenses will be funded from the additional income from housing rents resulting from the reduction in Right To Buy sales.

**4. RECOMMENDED**

That the Scrutiny Committee – Community note this report.

DIRECTOR CORPORATE SERVICES

DIRECTOR COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT

S:LP/Committee/308SCC9  
21.2.08

CORPORATE SERVICES DIRECTORATE  
COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)  
Background papers used in compiling this report:  
1. None

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT STEWARDSHIP

APRIL 07 TO DECEMBER 07

Code	Approved Annual Budget	Current Outturn Forecast	Movement
	£	£	£
5A1	Management	2,865,950	143,590
5A3	Sundry Lands Maintenance	270,910	12,000
5A4	Repairs Fund Contribution	8,101,620	114,860
5A6	Capital Charges	29,860	1,000
5A8	Rents	(14,241,110)	(185,000)
5B1	Government Subsidy	3,471,020	(19,450)
5B2	Interest	(478,800)	(67,000)
5B4	<b>Variance in Working Balance</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>Working Balance</b>	<b>2,843,168</b>	<b>2,843,168</b>

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## EXETER CITY COUNCIL

### SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - COMMUNITY 4 MARCH 2008

#### NATIONAL PERFORMANCE INDICATOR RESULTS 2006/2007 HOW EXETER'S RESULTS COMPARE

#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 A full analysis of Exeter's performance indicator results for 2006/07 has been sent to Members under a separate cover. This report provides an overview of the performance of those services covered by this committee. The other two Scrutiny Committees will receive a similar report covering services within their remit.

#### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Exeter's performance indicator results for 2006/07 were published in the Corporate Plan. The Audit Commission subsequently published audited comparative data in December 2007.
- 2.2 The graphs contained within the detailed analysis compare Exeter's results against authorities in the Council's benchmarking group and therefore provide a comparison against other broadly similar councils. (Audit Commission family grouping)
- 2.3 The graphs have been arranged so that councils with comparatively good performance are shown on the left side of each graph. Those councils with comparatively poor performance are on the right side of each graph. Exeter's results are highlighted on each.
- 2.4 The Audit Commission uses national upper and lower quartile figures as benchmarks against which to judge service performance. The detailed analysis also shows quartile figures for all English district councils against each graph. Services should generally be aiming to be in the top quartile (i.e. the best performing 25% of councils in the country).

#### 3. RESULTS OVERVIEW

- 3.1 Exeter is in the top quartile for 20 indicators out of a total of 65 where comparisons are possible (31%), compared to 25 out of 67 (37%) last year. It is in the bottom quartile for 9 indicators, compared with 11 last year.
- 3.2 This year has seen improvement in 41 indicators with 8 of these achieving a higher quartile rating than last year. However, 29 indicators show a lower performance than last year, with 13 achieving a lower quartile rating than last year. Out of the 47 indicators that fall within the remit of this Scrutiny Committee, 16 have poorer performance. These are BVPI 64, 66a, 66b, 66c, 66d, 184b, 202, 214, 86, 218a, 170a, 170b, 170c, 126, 127b and 128 (See below).

### **Empty Homes**

- 3.3 The number of private sector vacant dwellings that are returned into occupation (BVPI 64) was 31 in 2006/07, compared with 53 in 2005/06. Exeter has dropped from the top to the second national quartile for this indicator. Carlisle was top of the benchmarking group with 246. Past work and the state of the market has reduced opportunities. The team are now dealing with smaller units on the whole which are as time consuming with fewer units of accommodation resulting.

### **Council Housing**

- 3.4 In respect of rent collected (BVPI 66a), the Council maintains its position in the top quartile despite a fall in performance from 99.24% in 2005/06 to 98.83% in 2006/07. This is a minor fluctuation and performance is expected to be better again this year.
- 3.5 4.06% of local authority tenants had more than seven weeks of gross rent arrears (BVPI 66b), compared with 3.09% in 2005/06. Exeter dropped from the top to the second national quartile. Also, the percentage of local authority tenants in arrears who have had Notices Seeking Possession served (BVPI 66c) increased from 27.5% to 32.83%, placing Exeter in the bottom national quartile. The percentage of local authority tenants evicted as a result of rent arrears (BVPI 66d) was 0.24%, an increase from 0% in 2005/06. The excellent rent collection figures are partially attributable to this strong enforcement action.
- 3.6 The percentage change in the proportion of non-decent homes (BVPI 184b) fell from 28.4% in 2005/06 to 26.7% in 2006/07, maintaining Exeter's position in the second national quartile. This is as planned in our progress towards fully meeting the decent homes standard by December 2010.

### **Homelessness**

- 3.7 The number of people sleeping rough on a single night (BVPI 202) in Exeter fell from 9 to 6 in 2006/07. Exeter is still in the bottom national quartile. The best performing councils in the benchmarking group are Chester, Ipswich, Lancaster and Lincoln, reporting 0.
- 3.8 The proportion of households that were accepted as statutorily homeless who were accepted as statutorily homeless by the same authority within the last two years (BVPI 214) increased from 1.78% in 2005/06 to 2.76% in 2006/07. This figure represents a difference of one household – there were 4 in 2005/6 and 5 in 2006/7. This placed Exeter in the bottom national quartile and 12<sup>th</sup> in the benchmarking group.

### **Environmental Health**

- 3.9 Councils report two sets of waste collection costs per capita to DEFRA; revenue only, and revenue & capital combined.



- 3.10 Exeter figures for 2005/06 *excluded* capital costs whereas the 2006/07 figures provided by DEFRA to the Audit Commission *included* capital costs (£49.43). This produced distorted year on year comparative figures. In real terms Exeter revenue costs of collection per head have decreased year on year by 3% from £40.90 in 2005/06 to £39.79 in 2006/07. This would place Exeter 7<sup>th</sup> in the benchmarking group and in the top national quartile.
- 3.11 Exeter investigated 93.1% of new reports of abandoned vehicles within 24 hours (BVPI 218a), falling from 100% in 2005/06. However, this figure under-reports the true picture as desk top investigations have not been accounted for in the response target. An increasing number of reports of abandoned vehicles are now being forwarded via the website, these do not always have all the required information so therefore additional work has to be done to collect this which delays the process of visiting the vehicle and starting the procedure. The percentage of abandoned vehicles removed within 24 hours from the point at which the authority is legally entitled to remove the vehicle rose from 96.03% in 2005/06 to 97.65% in 2006/07. Both these indicators place the council in the second national quartile.

### **Culture**

- 3.12 With regard to museum visits, Exeter continues to perform well, being within the top quartile for all related indicators. The number of visits in person (BVPI 170b) fell slightly from 2161 in 2005/06 to 2041 per 1000 population in 2006/07. The total number of visits per 1000 population (BVPI 170a) dropped from 2493 in 2005/06 to 2371 in 2006/07. The actual number of visits to the museum increased. Because the population of the City increased, the indicator figure went down.
- 3.13 The number of pupils in organised school trips visiting museums & galleries (BVPI 170c) also fell from 20,043 in 2005/06 to 15617 in 2006/07, placing Exeter 3<sup>rd</sup> in the benchmarking group. This occurred because a risk assessment led to us reducing the total number of children who could be seen in a day.

### **Community Safety**

- 3.14 The City Council is a Responsible Authority agency within the Community Safety Partnership (Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership). The measurement of performance of CDRPs is by comparison with family groups, but the family group for Exeter CDRP is different from the family group for Exeter City Council BVPIs. The accompanying graph booklet therefore shows comparison with both family groups.
- 3.15 The number of domestic burglaries per 1,000 household (BVPI 126) rose from 9.4 to 11.8, placing Exeter 11<sup>th</sup> in the benchmarking group and in the bottom national quartile. Exeter CDRP currently sits 6<sup>th</sup> in its family group (out of 15).
- 3.16 There were 0.7 robberies per 1000 population (BVPI 127b) in Exeter, a slight increase from 0.6 in 2005/06. This maintained Exeter's position in the third national quartile. Exeter CDRP currently sits top of its family group.

- 3.17 Vehicle crime per 1000 population (BVPI 128) rose from 12.6 in 2005/06 to 13.3 in 2006/07. Exeter remained in the bottom national quartile. Exeter CDRP currently sits 3<sup>rd</sup> in its family group.
- 3.18 In low-crime areas, figures can be adversely affected by a few extra offences (e.g. robbery) or by a spree by a prolific offender. For overall crime, Exeter CDRP has been top of its family group for several years. Exeter CDRP has never been in the bottom quartile of CDRPs. When the 2005 - 2008 Community Safety strategy was finalised, the Exeter CDRP was set the challenging target by GOSW of reducing crime by 17.5% in order to contribute to a South West target figure of 15%. The latest figures indicate that the CDRP is on track to achieve a reduction of around 17%, which is a significant achievement in an already low-crime area.

#### **4. RECOMMENDED**

- (1) That Members consider the report and indicate whether they wish to receive any further information on any particular issue(s).

#### **DIRECTOR COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT**

S:LP/Committee/308SCC7v3  
21.2.08

#### **COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE**

#### **Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)**

#### **Background Papers used in compiling the report:**

- 1) National Performance Indicator Results - December 2007

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