

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - ECONOMY

30 May 2013

Present:

Councillor Leadbetter (Chair)

Councillors Brock, Bialyk, Bowkett, Branston, Bull, Crew, Pearson, Robson and Wardle

Apologies:

Councillors Crow, Mottram and Prowse

Also present:

Strategic Director (KH) Assistant Director City Development, Assistant Director Public Realm, Acting Assistant Director Finance, Economy and Tourism Manager, Senior Accountant, City Centre Manager, Museums Manager, and Democratic Services Officer (Committees) (SLS)

In attendance:

Councillor Rachel Sutton	- Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Development and Transport
Councillor Rosie Denham	- Portfolio Holder for Economy and Tourism
Janet Sinclair	- Job Centre Plus
Susan Parr	- Job Centre Plus

23 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2013 were taken as read, and signed by the Chair as correct.

24 **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of discloseable pecuniary interests were made.

25 **Portfolio Holders Priorities for the Forthcoming Year**

Councillor Sutton presented the following priorities within the Sustainable Development and Transport Portfolio for 2013/14. A copy of the report is appended to the minutes.

The following responses were given to Members' questions and comments:-

- Exeter City Council had a strong engineering function, and progress was being made to make those services available to neighbouring authorities. There were no planned changes to the City Council's in-house engineering function.
- the City Council would continue to manage the city's car parks, and although there was no detailed scheme, Pay by Phone was acknowledged as the way forward and would provide more payment choice.
- the first meeting of the Board to oversee the development of the Bus and Coach Station site had been held. It was intended that they would meet on a quarterly basis.
- Discussions are taking place with Devon County Council on the planned works to the public realm outside the Central Library. The Library was a significant public building in the heart of the cultural quarter.

- to record the appreciation of the hard work of the officers in City Development and the St James community in delivering the St James Neighbourhood Plan, which had been held up as a model of consultation.
- parking issues in Topsham were being addressed through the Topsham Parking Member Working Group and separately there were also likely to be future discussions on parking at the RD&E Hospital and car parking hotspots in the surrounding area.

The Assistant Director City Development responded to a question asked by a Member on the safeguards in place following changes to the permitted development under the Town and Country Planning (General Premises Order 1995), and in particular relating to applications for a change of use of commercial premises. This was part of a two year pilot scheme and a report on the position would be made to the next meeting of Planning Member Working Group.

Councillor Denham presented the priorities within the Economy and Tourism Portfolio for 2013/14. A copy of the report is appended to the minutes.

The following responses were given to Members' questions and comments:-

- the City Centre Manager had been working to develop a safer evening economy, and a number of initiatives had been rolled out including encouraging shops to open later into the evening to lessen the delineation between the evening and night time economy.
- efforts had already been made to occupy vacant shop units on a temporary basis. It was important to consider a strategy to set out the expectations of tenants and consider an individual approach in different parts of the city.
- contact would be made with Environmental Health to consider a suitable way to mark Worker's Memorial Day, and the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Leisure to raise participation in the Britain in Bloom event.
- a strategy for further support to the District Shopping Centres was being considered, as they were an integral part of the city's economy.
- the Festivals and Events Manager could provide information or offer support on the opportunities for financial assistance for existing or new smaller arts organisations.

Scrutiny Committee – Economy noted the achievements and priorities presented.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION BY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - ECONOMY

26 Exeter Cultural Strategy 2013 - 2018 - Progress Report

The Museums Manager presented the report, updating Members on progress with the development of the new Cultural Strategy for the city. The work to date had been led by the Exeter Cultural Partnership with volunteers from this wide membership committing to work as part of the Strategy Steering Group. The Museums Manager emphasised the critical importance of the cultural sectors' involvement in shaping and later delivering the Cultural Strategy. The value of a strategic approach to culture in the widest sense was acknowledged, as well as the importance of its role in supporting local economic development. This point had been underscored by the recently published report by the LGA and Arts Council of England 'Driving Growth through Local Government Investment in the Arts' which gave many examples of good practice.

A Member sought more detail on the consultees and secondly whether funding from community based activities could be considered to broaden the available funding streams. The Museums Manager noted the comment and also recognised the valuable contribution made by smaller groups and individuals to the consultation

process. There would be further opportunities for them to engage with the Cultural Strategy and the actions that will flow from it, as the process moves forward. Members raised the issue of retaining young creative talent in the city. It was explained that this concern had already been identified as one of the three work areas that would be pursued in parallel to the development of the full strategy document. A Member enquired if the Strategy would include other areas and take the opportunity to explore fully the meaning of culture and also drive performance outcomes in areas such as health and include sport.

It was noted that a further report would come back to update Members of the Scrutiny Committee – Economy and Executive on progress. The fact that this Strategy was being produced in collaboration with an external Partnership was noted. The development timetable needed to accommodate the joint working and wider contribution it entailed would also strengthen the strategy, when it came to deliver its agreed actions.

Scrutiny Committee – Economy noted the report and supported the direction being taken as summarised in the report to develop the Cultural Strategy for Exeter.

(Report circulated)

27 Youth Unemployment

The Partnerships and Projects Manager, Employment and Skills Board introduced the report, which provided current data on levels of youth unemployment and the nature of support available for young job seekers. The report also provided background information in preparation for a presentation from Jobcentre Plus on the support offered to young people (aged 18-24) to move into work.

Janet Sinclair and Sue Parr from Job Centre Plus gave a presentation on the efforts being made to tackle youth unemployment. They covered a range of measures including the Get Britain Working initiative and youth contracts which included a wage incentive and apprenticeship programme. An invitation was extended to Members to visit the Job Centre to see the work on training and employment opportunities for young people. Janet Sinclair referred to the work they carried out in schools and colleges to ensure students were given realistic advice about the jobs market, and to match young people to the most appropriate work experience or apprenticeship placement. Job Centre Plus provided a locally supported framework, but she paid tribute to the voluntary sector, as they also offered a wealth of knowledge and experience.

Scrutiny Committee – Economy noted the report and thanked Janet Sinclair and Sue Parr from Job Centre Plus for their presentation on the support available to help young people (age 18-24) move into work.

(Report circulated)

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE EXECUTIVE

28 Low Average Earnings in Exeter

The Tourism and Economy Manager presented the report, raising Members' attention to the potential impact of low average wages on both the local economy and citizens across Exeter. The report provided comparative data with which to gauge Exeter's current position and the degree of deviation that exists from national and other South West authority levels.

A Member sought some further information on the apparent discrepancy between the local and national analysis of full and part-time employees. The Economy and Tourism Manager acknowledged that the hourly rate had not increased at the rate of some other areas. Devon had many small employers and the retail, tourism and hospitality industries had all suffered in the current economic downturn. The report acknowledged that Exeter had failed to keep up with wage rates both nationally or regionally, but that every effort would be made to try and encourage higher wage levels.

A Member considered that an appropriate wage was important, and would be part of a virtuous circle to help stimulate the local economy. It could even reduce the reliance on social payments or boost efforts to reduce youth unemployment. He suggested that a forum of interested groups around Exeter could be a useful way forward. A Member suggested a strategy to ensure a living wage was offered for all employment. The Strategic Director (KH) considered that many Exeter businesses do pay well, with wage levels measured by work place higher than wage levels by place of residence, but a range of job opportunities should be encouraged to retain skilled and well trained employees and stem the flow of graduates leaving for employment opportunities in other areas. Members suggested setting up a task and finish group with a wide economic remit but also to improve the low wage economy and reduce youth unemployment.

Scrutiny Committee – Economy noted the contents of the report and the potential impact on citizens and the wider economy, and agreed to set up a Task and Finish Group to look at ways to address the low wage economy.

(Report circulated)

29 **Report of the Christmas Lights Task and Finish Group**

The City Centre Manager presented the report setting out key outputs from the work of the Task and Finish Group, which had been set up to look at the future funding of the City Centre Christmas Lights. The key element was the delivery of a core lighting display funded by the City Council, offering a lead for businesses to follow. This would require a core budget of £14,500 for the financial years 2013/14; 2014/15 and 2015/16. The Task and Finish Group suggested a range of activities including targeting businesses to develop and support a new partnership approach to Christmas Lights funding. It was agreed that the Portfolio Holder for Economy and Tourism should work closely with officers on developing a co-ordinated approach to securing business support for the proposed approach to lights funding.

Scrutiny Committee – Economy supported the proposals from the Task and Finish Group as set out in paragraph 3.7 of the circulated report and requested approval by the Executive for an identified £14,500 budget for 2013/14, 2014/15 and 2015/16 to provide a core display of Christmas Lights.

(Report circulated)

PERFORMANCE MONITORING

30 **Economy Scrutiny Revenue Final Accounts 2012/2013**

The Senior Accountant presented the report advising Members of the overall financial performance of the Economy and Development Directorate for the 2012/13 financial year ended 31 March 2013. The final actual outturn had now been calculated and the report highlighted the major differences by management unit from the approved annual budget after adjusting for supplementary budgets and excluding the variance on capital charges. The total variation for the year shows a surplus of

£811,033 against the budget, with a final surplus of £856,527 after accounting for transfers to and from earmarked reserves and revenue contributions to capital. The main variations by management units were detailed.

Scrutiny Committee – Economy noted the report.

(Report circulated)

31 **Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 - Exclusion of Press and Public**

RESOLVED that, under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the consideration of the following item on the grounds that it involved the likely discussion of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Act.

MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE EXECUTIVE

32 **Exeter and Heart of Devon Growth Board Minutes**

A copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Exeter and Heart of Devon Growth Board minutes held on 30 April 2013 was circulated for Members' information, and to inform them of a number of issues that the City Council will need to consider and take forward as appropriate. The Economy and Tourism Manager updated Members on the broadband position statement for Exeter. She raised a number of issues in relation to capacity, and future progress on fibre connectivity. The Chair advised that he would discuss the matter with the City Council's Portfolio Holder for Economy and Tourism and make every effort to raise the broadband issue with Devon County Council colleagues.

The Economy and Tourism Manager also raised an issue about Air Passenger Duty and a possible reform of the duty payable in an effort to support regional airports. The Chair agreed to speak to colleagues on the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership.

Scrutiny Committee – Economy noted the content of the Exeter and Heart of Devon Growth Board Minutes.

(Report circulated to Members)

The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 8.40 pm

Chair

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Portfolio Holder Priorities 2013/14 Sustainable Development & Transport

Run the Council well	
1	In partnership with the Portfolio Holder for Environment & Leisure, I will be reviewing the management arrangements for car parking assets that fall within my portfolio to explore whether a single management and enforcement regime can be introduced for all Council car parks to ensure that charging and other policies are consistently and fairly applied.
2	The management and policy framework for the River & Canal function will be reviewed to ensure that it remains democratically accountable, is fit for purpose and serves the best interests of the Council and the city. As part of this review, I will be asking officers to consider whether the longstanding Harbour Revision Order should be withdrawn.
3	The Council's in-house Engineering function will be reviewed against the backdrop of the likely future demands on this team, a declining capital programme and the scope for generating income from other internal or external sources.
4	Our City Development service has a pivotal role to play in delivering the Council's corporate vision. We will implement a systems review of City Development, including Building Control and Land Charges that will achieve our ambition of delivering good development and, in the process, generate high income levels such as through New Homes Bonus, while meeting the desire for greater community involvement.
Provide great things for me to see, do and visit	
1	Work towards a comprehensive redevelopment of the Bus and Coach Station, including retail space, new swimming pool and leisure facilities and new bus and coach station.
	<p>As Members will be aware, the area defined by Sidwell Street, Paris Street and Cheeke Street, which includes the Bus and Coach Station site, represents the most significant redevelopment opportunity in the City Centre.</p> <p>The adopted Exeter Core Strategy identifies the site as suitable for mixed use development including retail. The need for a new Bus Station is also recognised. A set of Development Principles which provide more detailed guidance for the preparation of any development scheme for this area was approved in June 2012.</p> <p>During the last two years the City Council has worked with Land Securities and the Crown Estate to thoroughly explore the feasibility and viability of a comprehensive redevelopment of the wider area. Whilst there continues to be good demand for additional retail and restaurant space in the city, some of which could be met in this location, comprehensive redevelopment of the wider area including the bus depot is proving to be challenging.</p> <p>We will continue to progress plans for the comprehensive redevelopment of the site and continue working with Land Securities and the Crown Estates to bring forward a retail and leisure development. This year the focus will be to conclude the viability work with Land Securities and to determine as land owner the way forward.</p> <p>We will continue to progress with plans to build a new leisure facility, including a swimming pool as a replacement for the existing Pyramids Centre, on the land adjacent to the Paris Street roundabout. Officers are putting in place a funding plan and pushing ahead with plans for appointing a project manager and assembling a project team for the leisure centre. One of the key tasks of the project manager will be the production of the work programme and project plan.</p>

Keep me/my environment safe and healthy

1	We will continue to work in partnership with the Environment Agency and the County Council to deliver an upgraded flood defence scheme for Exeter. We anticipate the proposed scheme being submitted for formal government project approval this Summer.
2	We will continue to drive carbon management through the Low Carbon Task Force and to explore initiatives such as the Energy Company Obligations to reduce the carbon footprint of the City Council, residents and businesses.

Deliver good development

1	<p>We will work to deliver the average of 600 homes per annum required by the Core Strategy and maintain a five year housing land supply.</p> <p>A key focus will be to bring forward outline and full planning permissions to enable the implementation of the proposed new sustainable communities at Monkerton, Newcourt and Alphington:-</p> <p><u>Monkerton:</u></p> <p>Completion of S106 agreements affecting outline applications for about 1,160 homes and agreement of first reserve matters enabling starts on site, pre-application discussions and submission of further applications by Barratt and Devon County Council, agreement of a mechanism and funding for delivery of Tithebarn Link road and a district heating scheme.</p> <p><u>Newcourt:</u></p> <p>Completion of S106 agreement on Dart land, determination of planning applications for IKEA and Newcourt rail halt, progress early delivery of primary school facilities and firm up location of proposed employment land through the proposed Development Delivery DPD.</p> <p><u>Alphington:</u></p> <p>Adoption of a development brief in partnership with the local community, for delivery of the strategic allocation of up to 500 homes and consideration of an outline planning application. Liaise with Teignbridge District Council to ensure a sustainable development of South West Exeter including an infrastructure delivery plan.</p>
2	We will adopt the St James Neighbourhood Plan following the recent referendum vote in favour.
3	When made available, we will consider the implications of the Inspector's report on the application for a town/village green at Eastern Fields.
4	We will respond to proposals from local communities for grants from the NHB Local Infrastructure Fund.
5	Environmental improvements to Cowick Street and Central Station Yard will be completed this year and we will examine ways of assisting Devon County Council on improvements to Central Library.
6	We will progress implementation of the Council's Green Infrastructure Strategy and expect to have appointed an officer to the Exeter and East Devon Growth Team to lead on green infrastructure. We will establish a governance structure for overseeing progress on green infrastructure.
7	We will implement a comprehensive approach to infrastructure planning including a decision on adoption of proposed Community Infrastructure Levy rates and maintain an

	up to date Infrastructure Delivery Plan. We will work with neighbouring authorities and Devon County Council to address the infrastructure needs of the City.
8	Viable proposals for district heating schemes are being developed focussing on the RD&E Hospital and City Centre; with a possible link to the energy from waste incinerator at Marsh Barton. We will respond to Government proposals for allowable solutions.
9	We will consider representations on the Issues & Options DMDPD and publish a Development Delivery DPD for public consultation.
Maintain the (property) assets of our city	
1	We will complete an update of records of locally important heritage assets.
Help me run a successful business	
1	We will introduce 'pay by phone' parking in all Council car parks to provide greater convenience and flexibility to customers wishing to visit and shop in the city.
2	In response to notice given by the County Council to terminate the existing Agency Agreement for civil parking enforcement, we will work with them to introduce more efficient and streamlined arrangements and, subject to financial considerations, will be looking to play a leading role in future provision to ensure that Exeter's residents and businesses continue to have effective and measured parking enforcement that balances the competing needs of the city.
3	Following recent consideration of a petition at Full Council, we will work in partnership with the County Council and representatives of the community in Topsham to explore the available options for alleviating the reported pressures on parking space.
4	We will continue to highlight the potential impact of aviation policies on Exeter Airport and draw attention to the consequences of air passenger duties on regional airlines and airports.

Councillor Rachel Sutton
Portfolio Holder Sustainable Development and Transport
May 2013

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Portfolio Holder Priorities 2013/14 Economy and Tourism

Provide great things for me to see, do and visit	
1	<p>We will continue to support the Exeter Festival of South West Food and Drink in Northernhay Gardens. This important event which attracts so many visitors to the city, provides residents with a quality event, enhances its image in terms of quality of life and acts as a showcase for Devon food producers supporting their contribution to the area economy.</p>
2	<p>Funding to all arts venues and festivals will be reviewed by the autumn to determine how and which events and organisations should be supported going forward against agreed criteria to support and enhance the cultural strength of the city.</p> <p>A new event is being planned for September which is intended to use unusual locations across the city for outdoor performances to attract people to move around and explore the city whilst being the first stage in the development of a bigger event for subsequent years. Additional funding is being sought from the Arts Council to increase the scale and scope of the event.</p>
3	<p>We will work with Exeter Cultural Partnership to prepare a Cultural Strategy to develop the breadth and quality of activity in the city. The cultural strategy has made good progress, in particular broadening the engagement of the wider range of cultural activities to be covered by the strategy. A report on progress is provided on the agenda to this Scrutiny Committee.</p>
4	<p>We will continue to build on the undoubted success of the Museum of the Year Award continuing to work on broadening the range of visitors attracted and where possible improve upon the already acclaimed experience provided. The Collections Review will be completed by the end of the year to contribute to the revision of the Museums Acquisition & Disposal Policy which is so important to managing the large existing range of collections, informing decisions about adding to or reducing the collections and assisting in resolving the problem of increasing pressure on expensive storage space.</p> <p>There will also be a programme of work to further raise RAMM's profile and highlight links with local, regional and national strategic agendas in order to keep abreast of opportunities to secure additional funding to support its high quality programme of work.</p>
Help me run a successful business in Exeter	
1	<p>We consider it important to promote the city nationally and internationally to secure investment and attract new businesses and skilled workers. We will launch a new website, promotional video and prospectus as part of a coordinated effort to promote the city's economy and work with business and the University to raise the profile and perception of the city using the message – <i>Invest in Exeter: Expect Success</i></p>
2	<p>We will continue to promote the city as a retail and visitor destination and work with business and through the Exeter and Heart of Devon Tourism Partnership to attract more visitors to the city to increase expenditure needed to sustain important businesses, attractions and jobs. We will also work with the national organisers of the RWC2015 and Visit England to promote Exeter as a visitor destination prior to, during and after the RWC2015.</p> <p>We will continue to work</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • with the Exeter Chamber of Commerce and the business community on the campaign for a Exeter BID. • to deliver improvements to the Exeter evening economy, ensuring the City Centre is an attractive and safe place in the evening for the broadest possible cross-section of the community. • to support district shopping centres in local communities to ensure they continue to be vibrant and vital. This will require attention through the planning process, and supporting targeted promotional activities. Independent businesses in district shopping centres have and will be helped by supporting their initiatives to promote trails specifically designed to encourage people to move around the city to find the variety of interesting and different retailers away from the “high street”. The successful Christmas trail is being expanded to a range of all year round trails to cover more businesses and themed to cover places to eat and drink, clothing, crafts and gifts.
3	<p>We continue to support proposals for supporting employment growth in Exeter and the wider sub region. Having finally secured the funding for the first building on the Science Park, construction should start by the end of the year with promotional effort now being stepped up including working with UK Trade and Industry (UKTI) to try and secure interest from foreign owned companies looking to invest in research and development facilities in the UK.</p> <p>We will support the developers/owners of the key strategic sites such as Matford Phase 3, Skypark and the intermodal freight facility to attract and convert investment interest.</p> <p>We shall also work with partners to develop a knowledge based economic development strategy for Exeter as the basis for the next stage in the successful growth and realignment of its economy.</p> <p>We will develop a ‘major employer programme’ within Exeter to focus on and work with existing major businesses/employers to understand the barriers for expansion and or trading, to ensure businesses do not relocate to other destinations.</p> <p>The work with providers of broadband, lobbying central government and the LEP to ensure superfast broadband is made available and included in new and existing business and residential developments within Exeter will also continue</p>
4	<p>We continue to provide free professional advice to small start up businesses and social enterprises and help existing ones to grow. We will maintain our support for measures to promote new business formation and survival through a programme of activities coordinated by Exeter Business Support which is based on a partnership with the University of Exeter Innovation Centre. Briefly our targets will be to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - provide support and advice to help 25 new start-up businesses including social enterprises to commence trading - support and track the performance of 90 recently formed businesses and social enterprises to consolidate their trading activities and where possible increase their employment numbers <p>One of the issues raised at Scrutiny has been the need to improve awareness of the support available and time and resources will be set aside to address this.</p>
5	<p>We will continue to provide a responsive and proactive commercial property and investment support service to facilitate investment and the finding of suitable accommodation. The Economy Team also acts as an honest broker of information and intelligence on the local economy, which helps businesses in their relocation and expansion decision-making. In the previous 12 months the team handled 971 new</p>

	investment enquires and it is anticipated they will handle similar numbers with the aim of converting as many as possible to investments retaining or creating new employment in the area.
Keep my city safe and looking good	
1	We work in partnership to address crime and anti-social behaviour across the city and we will extend the EBAC radio network to cover all City Centre pubs and clubs and other venues where appropriate.
Help me get back to financial independence	
1	<p>The Employment and Skills Board is now recognised as a local skills delivery partner by the Local Enterprise Partnership, supporting development of the Skills Strategy for the wider Heart of the South West area. This sits alongside its strategic link as the skills arm for the Exeter and Heart of Devon (EHOD) Growth Board.</p> <p>We will continue to work with the Exeter and Heart of Devon Employment and Skills Board to promote investment in relevant training provision for employers and progress projects which support local people to take advantage of job opportunities arising from the Exeter and East Devon New Growth Point projects. This includes establishing the centralised skills hub for the Exeter and East Devon Growth Point area, supported by two seconded officers from Job Centre Plus. The free hub service will be launched to businesses in June 2013, aiming to increase apprenticeship take-up, local employment and training outputs across new construction and business sites</p>

Cllr Rosie Denham
Portfolio Holder Economy and Tourism

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