

EXECUTIVE

Tuesday 24 June 2014

Present:

Councillor Edwards (Chair)
Councillors Denham, Fullam, Hannaford, Leadbetter, Owen and Pearson

Apologies:

Councillor Sutton

Also present:

Chief Executive & Growth Director, Deputy Chief Executive, Assistant Director Environment, Assistant Director Customer Access, Assistant Director Public Realm, Housing Enabling Manager, Environmental Health Manager, Benefits Training Officer and Democratic Services Manager (Committees)

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MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 18 March and 1 April 2014 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as correct.

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DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest were made.

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EXETER CITY COUNCIL'S LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME FOR 2015/16

The report of the Assistant Director Customer Access was submitted, seeking Members' views on the local Council Tax Support (CTS) Scheme for working age residents for 2015/16. The local CTS scheme started in April 2013 and Members were required to agree the Scheme rules annually. It was highlighted that Members had the option of retaining the current scheme for 2015/16 or to make changes to the Scheme as outlined in the report.

The Assistant Director Customer Access highlighted the work that was being done to support those residents, who were experiencing difficulties with their payments, including proactive work to make contact with those likely to be affected as well as working with those residents who had multiple debts with the Council.

It was noted that the introduction of the Local CTS had not affected the Council's collection rates significantly.

In response to a Member's question, the Benefits Training Officer clarified that all the major precepting authorities contributed to the Council Tax Support Exceptional Hardship Fund. Last year the fund had been underspent but in the first quarter of this year, payments from the fund had sharply increased. In response to a question from a Member, it was confirmed that The Council Tax Support Scheme did support low income working households.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Customer Access emphasised the need to encourage local employers to pay the living wage and expressed concerns regarding the hardship that the unreasonably high cost of private rents in the city caused some families on low incomes.

RECOMMENDED that Council approves the continuation of the current 2014/15 CTS scheme for working age customers for 2015/2016.

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RESOURCING ENFORCEMENT SERVICES

The report of the Assistant Director Public Realm was submitted, seeking Member approval to create an Enforcement Team for off street parking, illegal encampments, litter and dogs from existing staff resources.

Two Members expressed serious concerns regarding the cut in resources and the subsequent consequence of a reduction in the Enforcement Team. They stated that they could not support this proposal.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment, Health and Wellbeing endorsed the recommendation stating that, in light of the budget position, the proposal enabled a cohesive approach to enforcement issues to maintain the standard of community safety whilst protecting important revenue streams.

Scrutiny Committee – Community considered the report at its meeting on 17 June 2014 and the comments of the Members were noted.

RESOLVED that the creation of an Enforcement Team of five Full Time Employees from the current four Community Patrollers and the Environmental Enforcement resource to focus on statutory and business critical enforcement work be approved.

(In accordance with Standing Order no.43, Councillor Fullam and Leadbetter requested that their vote against this recommendation be recorded)

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ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND LICENSING STATUTORY SERVICES PLAN - 2015/16

The report of the Assistant Director Environment was submitted, seeking approval for the adoption of the Environmental Health and Licensing Statutory Service Plan 2014/15. The Statutory Service Plan sets out the Council's regulatory function in respect of food safety, health and safety, licensing, Environmental Permitting and other statutory functions over the forthcoming year.

The Assistant Director Environment clarified that there was no reduction in the overall functions in respect of the activities within the Statutory Service Plan.

Scrutiny Committee – Community considered the report at its meeting on 17 June 2014 and the comments of the Members were noted.

RESOLVED that the:-

(1) Statutory Service Plan 2014/15 be approved; and

(2) Assistant Director Environment be authorised to change the Statutory Service Plan in the light of centrally issued guidance and/or to meet operational needs.

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ADDITIONAL LICENSING FOR CERTAIN TYPES OF HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION (HMOS) THROUGHOUT EXETER

The report of the Assistant Director Housing was submitted, seeking Members approval to enter into a 10 week consultation period with relevant stakeholders on a proposal to extend the principles of Mandatory Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Licensing, currently operated by Exeter City Council, through the introduction of an Additional Licensing Scheme covering specific types of HMOs. The results of the consultation would be brought back to Scrutiny Committee – Community and Executive later in the year.

In response to a Member's question, the Environmental Health Manager stated that this proposal would generate income which would cover the resource costs to administer this scheme.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Customer Access welcomed this proposal to work with landlords to protect Exeter's most vulnerable tenants.

Scrutiny Committee – Community considered the report at its meeting on 17 June 2014 and the comments of the Members were noted.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) a formal 10 week consultation period be entered into with relevant stakeholders, particularly landlords, tenants, partner agencies and the public at large; and
- (2) the outcome of the consultation with any recommendations as to whether or not Additional Licensing should be progressed be the subject of a further report to Scrutiny Committee – Community and Executive in November 2014.

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FLOODING IN TOPSHAM - RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

The report of the Assistant Director Public Realm was submitted, detailing the assessment, funding and repair of flood damage at Topsham following the severe storms earlier this year.

Members were advised that the impact to the Council had been approximately £26,000 but the Council had now received confirmation that it had been allocated £20,000 from the Severe Weather Recovery Scheme towards the costs associated with the works.

Executive recognised and commended council staff for their contribution and quick response to the flooding in Topsham.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) the Council recognises and commends the response of the residents, community associations, voluntary and private sector organisations, statutory partners and council staff for their contribution to emergency flood response and flood recovery works at Topsham this year;
- (2) the Council engages with the Environment Agency and other agencies to promote a revised flood risk study to ensure that the community is adequately protected, identify future funding and clarify future responsibility for estuarine defences; and
- (3) a contribution of £5,000 be made to Devon County Council for the repair of the Goat Walk, Topsham, provided that there is sufficient money included in the allocation made available to the City Council from the Environment Agency for Flood Risk Management grant funding.

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SW EXETER DEVELOPMENT BRIEF

The report of the Assistant Director City Development was submitted briefing Members on the results of public consultation on a draft South West Exeter development brief and representations received. The recommendation was for the adoption of an amended development brief as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The adoption of a development brief as an SPD should provide more certainty on Council requirements at the planning application stage for the developer and public. There had been extensive consultation on the draft brief with local residents and the Alphington Forum and the proposed amendments were covered in Appendix two. The Planning Member Working Group had supported the brief with amendments.

During discussion, Members raised the issues of community facilities; the education provision in the area and all-through schools; car parking provision; broadband and health care facilities.

The Assistant Director City Development advised on community facilities within the Alphington Area. He would investigate broadband provision; the brief safeguarded a site for a Healthcare facility on the development unless one was delivered in SW Exeter.

RESOLVED that the:-

- (1) proposed amended development brief at Appendix two be approved; and
- (2) Assistant Director City Development be delegated to make any further necessary editorial corrections before publication.

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APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES

The schedule of representatives on outside bodies was circulated.

RESOLVED that the appointment to Outside Bodies be delegated to the Corporate Manager Democratic and Civic Support to agree in consultation with the Group Leaders.

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

RESOLVED that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Act.

EXPENDITURE PROPERTY ACQUISITION

The report of the Assistant Director Housing was submitted, requesting the allocation of funding for a property acquisition.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) funds be allocated from the Housing Revenue Account for a property acquisition;
- (2) the Corporate Manager Property be authorised to acquire the property; and
- (3) the property be let out as temporary accommodation (not for housing the homeless) until the redevelopment of the wider site is undertaken.

(The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 6.43 pm)

Chair

The decisions indicated will normally come into force 5 working days after publication of the Statement of Decisions unless called in by a Scrutiny Committee. Where the matter in question is urgent, the decision will come into force immediately. Decisions regarding the policy framework or corporate objectives or otherwise outside the remit of the Executive will be considered by Council on 29 Council 2014.