

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - ECONOMY

16 January 2014

Present:

Councillor Leadbetter (Chair)

Councillors Brock, Bowkett, Branston, Bull, Crew, Crow, Martin, Prowse, Robson and Wardle

Apologies:

Councillors Bialyk and Mottram

Also present:

Chief Executive & Growth Director, Assistant Director Economy, Assistant Director Public Realm, Economy and Tourism Manager, Museums Manager, Senior Collections Officer, Principal Accountant Service (PM), Festivals and Events Manager, Leisure Facilities Manager and Democratic Services Officer (Committees) (SLS)

In attendance:

Councillor Rosie Denham - Portfolio Holder for Economy and Culture

Councillor Rachel Sutton - Portfolio Holder for City Development

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Jeremy Wright – General Manager, Parkwood Leisure

Michelle Murray – Sports Development Manager, Parkwood Leisure

1 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2013 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as correct.

2 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of discloseable pecuniary interests were made.

3 Questions from Members of the Council Under Standing Order 20

In accordance with Standing Order 20, two questions on car parks from Members were put to the Portfolio Holder for Economy and Culture - Councillor Prowse's question was in relation to car parks on Okehampton Street and also Flowerpot Lane, and Councillor Ruffle's question related to Mary Arches Street. The Portfolio Holder replied. A copy of the questions had previously been circulated to Members. The questions and the replies from the Portfolio Holder (in italics) are appended to the minutes.

4 Future Workings of Scrutiny

The Corporate Manager Democratic and Civic Support presented the report informing Members of some proposed changes to the future working of the three Scrutiny Committees in order to make the process more efficient and effective.

Some of the proposed changes that had emerged following a series of meetings between the Chairs and Deputy Chairs of the three Committees were:-

- a new style of agenda format;

- unless requested, officers would not present reports at committee;
- Members to provide officers with advance notification of questions to be asked at the meeting;
- Scrutiny Chairs to take a more active role in the Committee meeting 'pre-meet' to decide agenda content; and
- Portfolio Holder's reports to be considered prior to Council meetings rather than at Scrutiny Committees.

A Member acknowledged the work already carried out by the Task and Finish Group, but considered that a cross party decision should be taken on the approach, as there may be differing views from the individual Scrutiny Committees. It was also considered that the presentation of the Portfolio Holder reports prior to meetings of Full Council would mean an additional time commitment, particularly for working Councillors. A Member acknowledged this concern, but welcomed the opportunity to meet with all of the Portfolio Holders in a more informal setting.

Councillor Leadbetter moved the recommendation -

"That the proposals detailed in the report be trialled through the next cycle of Scrutiny meetings in March 2014, whilst the proposal concerning the Portfolio Holder reports would be trialled at the Council meeting scheduled for July 2014".

The recommendation was put to the vote and lost.

Councillor Bull moved and Councillor Bowkett seconded the following motion:-

"Scrutiny Committee - Community welcomes looking at further ways to develop the scrutiny process. However, the proposals in front of us come from the Chairs of scrutiny and has, until now, not been through a cross party process. At this stage the report may be subjected to numerous and conflicting amendments at the three individual scrutiny committees. Previous proposed changes to scrutiny were done through a cross party working group and, therefore, a precedent for an appropriate process has been established.

We therefore recommend that Executive re-establish a cross party working group to look into this report and to bring back proposals to Executive and then, subject to approval, they be put before Full Council."

The motion was put to the vote and carried.

5 **Reports of Portfolio Holders**

Councillor Brock declared an interest as a trader in Magdalen Road.

Councillors Sutton and Denham presented progress reports on priorities within the City Development (formerly the Sustainable Development and Transport Portfolio) and Economy and Culture Portfolio respectively. Responses to Members' comments and queries are set out below:

City Development

- the recent examination of the application for a village green at Eastern Fields had been through a thorough process, with over 112 folders of supporting documents and feelings ran high on both sides of the discussion. There was likely to be a final decision in May or June.

- the adoption of the St James Neighbourhood Plan would help fund improvements and shape the local community. This work had helped springboard improvements in the local environment and promoted more community cohesion. Unfortunately, there was no further funding, but she thanked the officers in the City Council's City Development team as they had offered a great deal of support.
- work with neighbouring authorities in respect of the approach to infrastructure planning in the city was ongoing, particularly relating to wards such as Pinhoe on the south west side of Exeter. As the City Council had no seat on the LEP, the concern had also been raised with the Exeter and Heart of Devon Growth Board. She would respond to a question on the status of the Politmore Arms in Pinhoe, as its possible demolition could have implications for the existing highway boundary and capacity for subsequent planning development.
- Improvements to the city's public realm were ongoing, including the Central Station frontage and cooperation with the County Council to revamp the area around the library. The financial climate had delayed plans in relation to the proposed new Bus and Coach Station, but a viable scheme could now be progressed. She acknowledged the comment that some areas of the city needed improving, but the lack of available funds meant that they were now dependent on working with partners to fulfil the ambitions for the city.

Economy and Culture

- despite best intentions there had been a lack of progress on projects to help improve the local economy in the Heavitree District Shopping Centre. It was important to be realistic of what could be achieved, but this issue would be raised with the Leader.
- the Trail leaflets supporting independent shops was an excellent example of what could be achieved and the model would go forward for all those businesses who had signed up to the initiative. She would ask the Assistant Director Economy to contact the Member and provide more feedback and also in terms of business relocation to the city.
- the Exeter Cultural Partnerships bid to the Arts Council had been unsuccessful and an update would be provided at a later date.
- officers were working in partnership with the police to address anti-social behaviour in the city and, in particular, the increasing levels of begging in the High Street. The distress caused to local residents and also visitors was acknowledged.
- the Living Wage Forum had met and centered their discussions on a range of employment issues and support for those on low incomes within a wider forum. They would continue to engage with local businesses.
- internal work had picked up some pertinent issues relating to procurement.
- efforts had been made to create opportunities for a wide range of cultural activities during the Rugby World Cup. The dedicated Fan Zone would also be available on match free days for others to use. Every effort was being made to ensure increased rugby participation and to build on the legacy, however funding could only be used for the specified work.
- officers were about to embark on a study of the current state of the river and canal with the Council's maintenance team, amidst concerns of the need to dredge the canal. The Assistant Director Public Realm would be picking up this work.
- paying for Parking by Phone was now operational in the city's car parks.
- the Council was making every effort to contribute towards the ongoing dialogue for a Supercomputer at the Met Office.

Scrutiny Committee – Economy noted the achievements and priorities presented.

6 Parkwood Leisure Management Contract

The Leisure Facilities Manager presented the report, informing Members on the performance of the Parkwood Leisure Management Contract for year three of the contract, October 2012 to September 2013.

Jeremy Wright, the Exeter General Manager and Michelle Murray, the Sports Development Manager, introduced themselves. They set out the ambitions of Parkwood's leisure management contract in Exeter. They were currently in year three of a ten year agreement which was due to expire in 2020, and operated eight sites throughout the city. The contract was monitored using a number of methods including the provision of data for Key performance Indicators, regular monitoring meetings and visits to facilities. Members were also offered a regular overview through the Parkwood Leisure Working Group. Jeremy Wright outlined Parkwood's main aspirations and referred to the importance of good customer service and recognised the importance of engaging with their clientele. They understood the challenges of ensuring that there were sufficient staff who were appropriately trained and maintaining a high visual standard of the older sites.

Each of the Parkwood sites had been registered for Quest accreditation. They worked closely with the City Council to see where they could exceed the contractual requirement and go that extra mile to reach the community. The upcoming Quest reports will be used as a basis for revised improvement plans for each of the facilities. Mr Wright also referred to the work they had accomplished in developing club use and extending the opportunities for clubs to gain their club mark accreditation sports development as well as supporting the local community.

Parkwood recognised the areas in which they are under-performing and will be concentrating on these to bring about an improvement in performance.

The following responses were given to Members –

- a reporting team had been working with the Leisure Manager and Exeter Sports Development Board to develop a value added experience of sport. They have also been working with Active Devon to encourage more informal interaction with less active clients.
- further interrogation of the statistics would gather a more accurate profile of physical participation. Parkwood were keen to work with the community, particularly younger age groups, as well as more collaborative work with other organisations to make a stronger case for funding bids. They could also supply additional details on the type of accidents at individual sites, though it was stressed this was a relatively low figure over all of the sites.
- The importance of reception and front of house staff was acknowledged as well as ensuring the right staffing to manage the facility and identify any trends.
- Mr Wright gave an undertaking to look at the suggestion to encourage take up from the older age groups, and consider the current criteria in relation to the X-Card. It was agreed that this would be discussed at the next meeting of the Parkwood Leisure Working Group.

Scrutiny Committee – Economy thanked Mr Wright and Ms Murray for their presentation and noted the content of the report.

7 **Estimates 2014/15**

The Principal Accountant outlined the strategic framework within which the 2014/15 Estimates had been prepared, changes in accounting practices which affected all budgets and any significant changes in the Management Unit estimates, which were discussed at an informal briefing of Scrutiny Committee – Economy on 16 December 2013. The budget framework, Capital Programme and proposed new schemes for the areas covered by Scrutiny Committee - Economy and proposed 2014/15 Fees and Charges were included as an appendix.

Since the reporting of estimates to the December meeting of this Committee, the employer superannuation rates for 2014/15 had been announced, and had changed from 21% to 22.9% and resulted in an increased cost of £90,000 being reflected in the revised draft revenue estimates. A Member sought further information on the revenue for the raised tariffs in Magdalen Road. The Principal Accountant would respond to the Member.

Scrutiny Committee – Economy noted the draft Revenue Estimates, Capital Programme and proposed Fees and Charges for 2014/15 for further consideration by the Executive and Council.

8 **New RAMM Collections Development Policy 2014 - 2019**

The Senior Collections Officer presented a report which sought approval for the new RAMM Collections Development Policy to cover the period 2014 - 2019. This would ensure a more strategic approach to the shaping of RAMM's acquisitions and disposals, and an opportunity to examine the nature, extent sustainability and potential of its collecting activity. As funding for new acquisitions was likely to be limited between 2014 and 2019, the policy would also enable a stronger focus on targeting key acquisitions that would improve the quality of the collections and overall visitor experience. The Policy also recognised that the level of digital data had grown significantly improving access to collections, and linking to collaborative work with Exeter University. An approved Collections Development Policy was also a requirement of Museum Accreditation, a prerequisite of funding requests to the Arts Council England and other bodies. RAMM is scheduled to apply for its Accredited Museum status renewal in April.

RAMM's current collection was evidence of Exeter's historical legacy, and it was important to distinguish the high quality and character which uniquely reflected the history of the local community. The new policy builds on these existing strengths by closely managing future acquisitions. The emotional impact, particularly for members of the public hoping to secure a place for their donations was recognised. It was also important to ensure that disposals remained part of a transparent process and complied with the Museum Associations Code of Ethics.

Members acknowledged the hard work and achievement in drawing the Collections Policy together, and made the following comments -

- Whether the Museum enlisted the help of digital artists to develop its contemporary art collection? The Senior Collections Officer stated that RAMM was interested in this area of artistic practice but recognised that technological change meant that preserving digital material over the very long term had particular challenges which would effectively limit its 'life span'.
- If the Museum had any artefacts from the First World War period or planned any display in recognition of the centenary? The Senior Collections Officer advised that the Museum had a number of nurse's books containing notes by

recuperating soldiers in local hospitals and a small number of military artefacts. A series of exhibitions and events were planned to mark the commemoration.

- An acknowledgement that the current catalogue reflected aspects of the record of Exeter's social and industrial history.

Scrutiny Committee - Economy noted the report and recommended approval by Executive of the new RAMM Collections Development Policy 2014-2019.

9 **Storage of Archives Resulting from Developer-Funded Archaeology**

The Museums Manager presented the report, which sought Members' support for a new mechanism for dealing with storage of archaeological finds and records as a result of excavations funded by developers within the city. The demise of Exeter Archaeology had left a legacy of undeposited archives in the Council's care and the Museum's current storage arrangements had now reached their limit. A number of storage options were presented including moving the current archaeological archive into a longer term "deep-store", (using an adapted former salt-mine) to extend and make better use of two leased warehouses, and a final option for a mixed use of both using one of the warehouses and the deep-store solution.

The following responses were given to Members:-

- The Senior Collections Officer confirmed that more important material was retained as part of the Museum's collection, but other material already identified for deep-store was the responsibility of the developer. The Museums Manager advised that the cost of a storage box at the proposed Deepstore facility in Cheshire was approximately £1.20 a year. Producing a list of the material deposited at Deepstore would be the responsibility of the developer as part of the archiving process.
- Conditions of planning permission gave developers responsibility for rescuing archaeological material 'at risk' ensuring that such material was appropriately stored, and made publicly available. The Chief Executive & Growth Director added that this level of material was not of sufficient quality to retain in the Museum's store. Future technology may allow some extraction of information allowing further academic research at a later date.
- The Museums Manager explained that 47 other authorities had closed their doors to storing lower grade material. The solution proposed by the Council in this report was likely to be of interest to others in a similar position. There had been a great deal of interest in how Exeter had dealt with this issue.
- The Portfolio Holder Economy and Culture reminded Members that the Council would not wish to keep most of the material, and the developers were legally obliged to ensure ongoing funding for storage under planning conditions.

A Member also sought reassurance that, should there be any significant finds during the anticipated development of the Bus and Coach Station site, the Museum would be able to offer suitable storage. The Museums Manager stated that exceptional material would always be dealt with accordingly. Following a comment on the Ark, the Museums Manager extended an invitation to Members to see the Council's principal store of museum artefacts.

Scrutiny Committee – Economy noted the report and recommended that Executive support the new mechanism for dealing with developer-funded archaeological archives since January 2011, and also future material and agreed that Option 2, as set out in the circulated report, be pursued.

10 **A Commitment to Local Employment and Training**

The Assistant Director Economy presented the report as a key action within the City Council's Corporate Plan (2012 - 2014) to take advantage of the development process using planning powers to create Local Labour Agreements to give local people a chance to secure jobs arising from construction projects. Other local authorities, including Sedgemoor and Eastbourne Councils, had successfully used this approach enabling local people to gain training opportunities and employment.

A Member referred to the recent development of student accommodation in Western Way, built by a workforce, predominantly drawn from outside of the region. Although there were other benefits to the local economy, and there was no compulsion to use the local workforce, every effort should be made to encourage the building industry to use employees from the locality and contribute to creating training opportunities for young people.

Funding through Section 106 agreements could help with the necessary training and skills. A Member referred to Mulberry, who were a good example of a high end manufacturer who had made a commitment to the local workforce in Somerset through this approach.

Scrutiny Committee - Economy supported the following recommendations for consideration by Executive:-

- (1) approve the application of Local Labour Agreements to new development proposals of an appropriate scale and size, through the preparation and adoption of Planning Documents facilitated by the emerging Draft Development Delivery Development Plan Document;
- (2) the Exeter and Heart of Devon Employment and Skills Board be encouraged to promote the adoption and application of Local Labour Agreements by developers, employers, local authorities and other stakeholders within and beyond the sub-region;
- (3) this approach be promoted to the Growth Board partners and developed in partnership with them; and
- (4) an approach be established to develop and promote the supply of local goods and services to the construction industry alongside local employment, recruitment, apprenticeships and skills training.

11 **Support for Small Businesses**

The Economy and Tourism Manager presented the report, which provided Members with an overview of the provision of business support to traditional business and social enterprises, the contribution made by services funded by Exeter City Council. Exeter Business Support offered a range of services through a partnership consisting of Peninsula Innovations Limited, Exeter College Business School and the Fruit Tree for Business. It was acknowledged that the demand still warranted an Exeter Business Support service, and Members were asked to consider different options for service delivery. However after further discussion it was felt the most appropriate way forward should include a review of the support provided to social enterprises. A Member welcomed the opportunity for a review and felt it would be short sighted to change the current arrangement as they were already offering a solution.

Scrutiny Committee – Economy supported the following –

- (1) continuation by the City Council to fund business support for embryonic, new and existing business to provide opportunities for individuals to secure the means of improving their financial position and promoting job creation at a cost of £42,000;
- (2) that officers be authorised to negotiate service level agreements for 2014/15 with Peninsula Innovations Limited for the continued delivery of services outlined in the report under the banner of Exeter Business Support;

and an additional recommendation, which was put to the vote and carried –

- (3) that the City Council carry out a review to consider whether funding, which had enhanced support for the social enterprise sector should be extended and whether any changes should be made to the way the support was delivered.

12 **Update on Youth Unemployment in Exeter**

The Economy and Tourism Manager presented the report, which reviewed current data on levels of youth unemployment within the city, comparing Exeter with neighbouring local authority districts and national trends. It also provided an update on the support available for young job seekers through Job Centre Plus, and comparison of Job Seekers Allowance claimants. She provided an update on the October figures which showed a continuing downward trend; in Table 1, the comparison of all JSA claimants aged 16 to 64 had reduced to 1435; Table 2 and the seven year comparison of young JSA claimants aged 16 – to 24 level had risen by 105 claimants; and Table 3 depicting the number and duration of JSA Claimants aged 16 to 24 years was below the South West and national average.

Scrutiny Committee – Economy noted the report and supported the continued provision of a watching brief through an annual update on youth unemployment, unless there was a change in trends.

13 **Parking Review**

The Assistant Director Public Realm presented a report which set out the details of a review of parking in the city to enable a new Parking Strategy to be drawn up by 2015, and included a proposed terms of reference to help scope a review of parking in Exeter and Topsham. The newly adopted City Centre Strategy 2013 – 2022 had meant that a new strategic approach to parking in the city centre was needed to meet the future challenges of a successful local economy and rapidly changing shopping and leisure demands. Officers had carried out an initial consultation exercise with retailers and other interested stakeholders prior to a tender exercise to appoint a consultant from April to October to oversee the work required. It was envisaged that a final report would be made to Scrutiny Committee – Economy by December 2014.

A Member sought confirmation that the new parking places order would enable greater opportunity to offer free or reduced parking at particular times of year. The Assistant Director Public Realm advised that a new parking places order would offer greater flexibility. She also responded to a comment on the likely cost of the consultation, stating that funding was available from a sum of money set aside for the feasibility works around the redevelopment of the Bus Station site. She also responded to a Member's comment on the reliance of parking as a funding stream for the Council.

Scrutiny Committee – Economy noted the Terms of Reference for the forthcoming Parking Review.

14 **Annual Arts & Events Review**

The Festivals and Events Manager presented an update on the performance of the festivals and events portfolio, comprised of Animated Exeter, Vibraphonic, Exeter Open Studios, and Exeter Respect. These events are grant aided by the City Council and also run at arm's length by independent companies or voluntary management boards. There were many achievements in 2013, and in particular the success of the Council's Unexpected Festival, which had taken art and performance onto the street as well as using non traditional performance spaces.

She responded to a Member regarding Exeter Respect being told they would not be able to have a licensed bar at the 2014 event, and stated that this had not been the case. However, the police had raised concerns, both regarding minor alcohol related incidents in 2013 and also rising attendance figures and control of numbers at the event. The introduction of a Designated Public Places Order (DPPO) in Belmont Park would necessitate that issues around the sale of alcohol and management of the bar would need to be looked into. The arrangements for 2014 would be discussed at a forthcoming meeting with the police, licensing colleagues, and the Chair and Production Manager of Exeter Respect. A Member commented on the success of recent events by the festival and events team in encouraging and coordinating such a wide range of professionals and volunteers. The Festival and Events Manager advised that an annual review of the projects funded would be made to the meeting of Scrutiny Committee - Economy in September 2014.

Scrutiny Committee - Economy noted the report on the performance of the festivals and events portfolio in 2012/2013 and the proposed approach for both core and revenue project funding as outlined in section 4 of the circulated report.

15 **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 for the 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 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

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

The minutes of the Exeter and Heart of Devon Growth Board held on 16 October 2013 were circulated for Members' information, and referred to a number of issues that the City Council may need to consider and take forward as appropriate.

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

The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 9.05 pm

Chair

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SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – ECONOMY
16 JANUARY 2014

MEMBER QUESTION UNDER STANDING ORDER 20

Questions from Councillor Prowse

In February 2013, I discovered that this Council had chosen to lease a small car park to a private parking company. I have now found that this was not the only car park. The second car park, which has received the same disposal, is at Flowerpot Lane. This car park holds 62 cars. The daily charge set by the Private Parking Company (PPC) is £2. A modest charge. However, it is worth noting that adjacent to this car park is Okehampton Street car park which we still control. The daily charge is £1.80. Its capacity is 84 spaces. The Portfolio Holder will agree that if at full capacity both car parks on a daily basis would take the same revenue.

1. Who took this bizarre decision?

Reply: At the Executive meeting held on 8th February 2011, alternative parking enforcement arrangements were considered for Council-owned sites not covered by the parking order. Executive resolved not to transfer responsibility for enforcement to the parking service. Land-holding services were able to carry on managing parking on these sites by way of a range of prohibition and enforcement regimes. Parks & Open Spaces were faced with a situation where this car park was being used as free parking to the detriment of the nearby Okehampton Street Pay and Display car park. In consultation with the Estates team, a business lease of the premises was granted under which the tenant occupier had to install and operate pay and display machines and share the income with the City Council on an equal basis.

2. Did any Councillor on this entire Council become involved in any part of the decision making involving this situation?

Reply: The decision not to extend the remit of the parking service was taken by Executive. In light of that decision, the management of the land is the responsibility of the land-holding service who, on advice from Estates agreed to a lease solution in this case. The power to agree terms and enter into leases is set out in the delegated powers in the City Council's Constitution.

3. Are there any other parks that have received the same disposal attention?

Reply: The car park in Station Road, Exwick is also covered by a lease, but they have a charging regime designed to discourage long staying customers, so that it can be available to recreational users of the Valley Park. Consideration of similar arrangements was given for a number of other sites but it was not felt appropriate in those cases.

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SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – ECONOMY
16 JANUARY 2014
MEMBER QUESTION UNDER STANDING ORDER 20

Questions from Councillor Ruffle

I understand that since we last looked at the non collection of car parking fees from this car park at the previous Scrutiny Committee, a security company was employed for two weeks to cover the car park until midnight but this has now been reduced to two days a week.

Reply: This was correct

- 1) Is the Portfolio Holder aware that on those days when security has been used the extra revenue collected between the hours of 10 pm and midnight has been of the order of £200-double the original estimate?

Reply: During the 15 days prior to Christmas when security was employed the value tickets where drivers attempted to leave without paying after 10.00pm, totalled £162.20 (£10.81 per day) The value of tickets correctly presented during the same period amounted to £1,990.90 (£132.73)

They found that a relatively small number people were not paying for their parking.

- 2) How much extra money are we being charged for this security cover?

Reply: The cost was £25 per day.

Would it not make more sense to roster late night car park cover using our own staff instead as the extra overtime pay is more than covered by the extra revenue being collected at present?

Reply: There are not the resources to extend the current coverage. The cost of the additional security was only £2 per hour more than if we used City Council staff, thus a business case for additional resources to cover this in isolation would be unsustainable.

- 3) Further can the Portfolio Holder explain in simple terms that the public would understand how-when a car is closed it is in reality open because the barriers are raised-and when a car park is open it is not as the barriers are down!

Reply: We have not felt it necessary to physically close the outside area of Mary Arches car park when the facility is 'closed' preferring only to secure the inside decks only. In common with all our open air car parks, the public are permitted to use them outside the tariff charging times.

When the car park is open for business the exit barriers are down and rise when a valid paid ticket is inserted.

- 4) Would it not be more sensible to keep the barriers down when the car park is closed and late leavers can call the security firm to let them out? This would ensure that such late leavers would be obliged to pay in order to get out.

Reply: The cost of attendance by the security company would be prohibitive and would at, the current rate, be more than that paying for someone to staff the barrier. An alternative would be to close the car park at the same time as Guildhall Car Park and forego the evening tariff of £2 currently levied after the standard tariff becomes free elsewhere but the loss in income as demonstrated above would be significant.

Councillor Ruffle thanked Councillor Denham for her comprehensive report and requested a written copy. He accepted the revised figures of £162.30 over 15 nights or £10.81 a day. He hoped to have the opportunity to meet with the Portfolio Holder to discuss further.

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Portfolio Holder Priorities 2013/14
Sustainable Development & Transport
[Now City Development]
Progress report for Scrutiny Economy 16 January 2014

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.
	Progress: Responsibility for this priority has transferred to the Portfolio Holder for Economy and Culture
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.
	Progress: Responsibility for this priority has transferred to the Portfolio Holder for Economy and Culture
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.
	Progress: Funding for the posts of Civil Engineer, Lead Architect and Assistant Engineer have been removed from the revenue budget. We currently have a part-time Lead Engineer (Drainage), who is crucial to the progression of the Exeter Flood Defence Scheme, and two Assistant Engineers with one Assistant Engineer vacancy. The current proposal (subject to review over the next six months) is to continue maintaining our basic engineering maintenance function with the four staff referred to above.
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.
	Progress: The service has been redesigned, staff formally consulted and 18 new posts job evaluated. Recruitment to the new structure will commence shortly for full implementation by May. The new structure involves a reduction in establishment from about 36 fte in 2013/14 to about 30 fte in the 2014/15 budget. The reduction is likely to be achieved by voluntary redundancies. A separate detailed redesign has been undertaken of Land Charges. More positive development outcomes are being achieved and enhanced customer satisfaction.
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>
	<p>Progress: the Council and its development partners have identified the basis of a viable scheme for retail and leisure led redevelopment re-providing the bus station. The future of Paris Street and replacement of bus laying-up are significant issues. An Outline planning application is expected Summer 2014.</p> <p>Progress continues with the Council's plans to build a new leisure facility on the Bus Station site adjacent to the Paris Street roundabout. An extensive tendering process is under way to secure an external professional project management consultancy firm. The successful firm will be formally appointed in February 2014 and will thereafter produce and manage the project programme and work plan.</p>
Keep me/my environment safe and healthy	
1	<p>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.</p>
	<p>Progress: We have agreed a contribution of £3m and are actively engaged with the Project Board and detailed operational issues. Funding for the project should be approved in February and Phase 1 is due to begin in April 2014. A Lawful Development Certificate has been agreed for Phase 1 works and pre planning application discussions are ongoing on Phase 2.</p>
2	<p>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.</p>
	<p>Progress: Devon Energy Company Obligations delivery partner appointed. Council housing stock and Registered Providers can benefit. Three houses in St Thomas to be given package of improvements under 'Ready for Retrofit' programme.</p>

Deliver good development

- 1 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.
- 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:-
- Monkerton:
- 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.
- Newcourt:
- 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.
- Alphington:
- 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.

Progress: About 469 homes are expected to be delivered in 2013/14. The Council's latest SHLAA shows the 600 target should be exceeded in 2015/16. The yield is lower than the average required by the Core Strategy largely due to the slow rate of implementation of large outline consents at Monkerton and Newcourt. Since April 2013, the Council has approved or resolved to approve over 2,000 homes. The Development Delivery DPD identifies further proposed sites for about 1,000 homes.

The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment has been updated to December. The current supply is 5 years and 3 months.

Monkerton

The three outline consents for 1162 homes were issued at the end of November, approval of reserve matters applications have yet to come forward. An outline application for 450 homes has been submitted by Devon County Council and one is imminent for 185 homes by Barratt. A funding mechanism is in place for the Tithebarn link road, it is due to start on site on 2 June. Considerable effort was required to reach the point where Eon and the main developers have a heads of terms agreement on a district heating scheme, this needs to move forward to a master agreement quickly to take advantage of HCA local infrastructure funding.

Newcourt

Outline planning approval for the Dart land was issued in October however, the decision has been subject to judicial review. This is being robustly defended requiring staff resources. Heritage Homes has been assisted from pre application discussions to a start on site for a scheme of 40 homes. The implications for delivery of primary schools are being addressed. The Council is about to consider planning applications by IKEA and the Newcourt Railway Station has secured planning approval, agreement on land transfer and funding. It is due to start shortly. The DDDPD identifies the proposed location of the 16 ha of employment land. Pre application discussions have been commenced with landowners between the railway line and the M5 motorway.

	<p><u>Alphington</u></p> <p>A public consultation survey of local residents on issues affecting a development brief in July attracted over 400 responses. These have now been analysed and a further meeting with Alphington Forum was held on 13 January. I envisage that a proposed draft brief will be reported to PMWG and Executive in February. Officers and Members have continued to liaise with Devon and Teignbridge Councils regarding infrastructure issues in South West Exeter, one planning application has been submitted to Teignbridge and another is imminent.</p>
2	<p>We will adopt the St James Neighbourhood Plan following the recent referendum vote in favour.</p>
	<p>Progress: The Exeter St James Neighbourhood Plan was adopted by Council In July following a 92% vote for adoption in the referendum. It was the second adopted neighbourhood Plan in England and the first for an urban area.</p>
3	<p>When made available, we will consider the implications of the Inspector's report on the application for a town/village green at Eastern Fields.</p>
	<p>Progress: The Inspector reported that the use of the land did not meet the legal tests in June. A legal challenge was made in September with leave for judicial review. The case will not be heard until the outcome of a supreme court case in early April, there may be a decision by May or June.</p>
4	<p>We will respond to proposals from local communities for grants from the NHB Local Infrastructure Fund.</p>
	<p>Progress: The 2013/14 allocation of £250,000 has been allocated to twelve separate organisations, with projects ranging from a bicycle refurbishment scheme, through replacement park gates, to new community buildings. Some of the projects we assisted in the previous year have now been completed, including the Mulberry Garden at Exeter Community Centre, and an extension to Topsham Rugby Club.</p>
5	<p>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.</p>
	<p>Progress: Cowick Street was substantially completed in September, connection of the information monolith is awaited. Central Station was completed in December, an opening event will be arranged shortly. Devon County Council has agreed to use higher quality yorkstone to surface the area around the entrance to the Central Library following a City Council offer of a £20,000 contribution to the costs. Funding will be sought through the 2014/15 budget process.</p>
6	<p>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.</p>
	<p>Progress: Simon Bates has been appointed as Green Infrastructure Project Manager to the Growth Team he has already been involved in work on Newcourt and the proposed Monkerton ridgeline park. A Green Infrastructure Board has been established and agreed terms of reference.</p>

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.
	Progress: The Inspector who considered the Council's proposals for CIL found the rates sound on 29 August and CIL was implemented from 1 December. Some significant proposed developments that benefited from resolutions to approve needed to be issued before the implementation date. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan is a live document. We continue to work with neighbouring authorities and recently met Teignbridge and Devon at Member level regarding infrastructure issues in the proposed South West Exeter development. The Inspector's report on CIL led to additional work to cease to apply the Council's adopted Affordable Housing SPD (requiring 25% on a 15 home threshold) and to consult on a revised document (relating to 35% and a 3 home threshold with amended advice on mix).
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.
	Progress: Responses submitted to Government consultations on Allowable Solutions, Housing Standards Review and Independent Heat Customer Protection Scheme. Memorandum of Understanding signed by partners to delivery of district heating to the City. Exeter, Teignbridge and Devon councils have match funded bid for total of £0.5 m to procure an Energy Services Company partner.
9	We will consider representations on the Issues & Options DMDPD and publish a Development Delivery Development Plan Document for public consultation.
	Progress: About 600 representations from about 300 respondents were considered (many relating to Eastern fields) and the DDDPD was agreed by Executive and published for public consultation on 16 December. The current consultation exercise includes four exhibitions. Significant additional work was necessary on the evidence base and supporting documents including an updated Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, a revised Development Management Policy Statement to that agreed at the time of adoption of the Core Strategy and a Housing Land Review to meet a commitment given at the Examination. This work will assist the Council to resist inappropriate proposals such as in the hills that form the landscape setting of Exeter.
Maintain the (property) assets of our city	
1	We will complete an update of records of locally important heritage assets.
	Progress: In July, PMWG considered a report on the results of consultation and reassessment of locally important heritage assets. This new list will feed into the final DDDPD.
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.

	Responsibility for this priority has transferred to the Portfolio Holder for Economy and Culture
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.
	Responsibility for this priority has transferred to the Portfolio Holder for Economy and Culture
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.
	Responsibility for this priority has transferred to the Portfolio Holder for Economy and Culture
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.
	Progress: The Davies Commission published its interim report on UK airport capacity in December. Differential Air Passenger Duty is not favoured; however the Commission sees a developing role for regional airports in point to point travel.

The City Development service has also responded to significant other demands in the period. These include:

An annual report to PMWG in July that resulted in production and agreement by Executive of a draft amended HMO SPD for public consultation, undertaking public consultation, analysis of comments and recommendations to PMWG and Executive for adoption.

Reporting for determination planning applications by Morrisons and the Police authority at Middlemoor, redesigned schemes at Portland House and Ibstock Brickworks and considering an application for an amended S106 agreement at Pinhoe Quarry.

Responding to University of Exeter expansion plans, including approval of a significant extension and conversion at St Lukes campus.

Leading on establishment of a Devon Design Review Panel that considered schemes for St Thomas Hall and Exeter Cricket Ground at its inaugural meeting.

Councillor Rachel Sutton
Portfolio Holder City Development
January 2014

**Portfolio Holder Priorities 2013/14
Economy and Culture**

Help me run a successful business	
1	City Centre Strategy 2013/2022
	Draft Strategy has been approved after extensive consultation with the business community, other city centre users and the agencies responsible for its cleanliness, safety, development and important role as a hub for employment, important services and cultural activity. The City Centre Partnership Board membership and approach is being reviewed to be fit for purpose to oversee and drive delivery of the strategy. A programme of work will follow setting out how and by whom the key actions are to be taken forward.
2	Economic Development Strategy 2013- 2018
	Development of knowledge based economy strategy will shortly be finalised with the broader economic development strategy prepared by end of March 2014. The intention is to set out the way forward for supporting and growing the local economy as the basis for securing a continuation of the partnership approach between public and private sectors including key government agencies which has been so successful to date.
3	Advertise premises and sites through our on-line commercial property register
	In the year ending 31 st December 2013, the service handled 1177 new enquiries and 29 companies completed their expansion or relocation plans creating 370 jobs following support from the service. Of these enquiries, 88% were secured via the Council's website.
4	Promote the City nationally and internationally to secure investment and attract new businesses and skilled workers
	New website up and running and prospectus being finalised. New video launched and activities to now use these tools proactively as part of promotional campaign are being implemented.
5	Bring employers to major employment sites, including Exeter Science Park, creating upwards of 26,000 jobs in the next 15 years in the Exeter growth area
	First occupier now on site at Science Park and construction of new Science Park Centre will now start in Jan 2014 with some prospective occupiers being identified. There is an exciting prospect of Met Office investment in a new super computer which could be a significant magnet for further occupiers and boosting the development of the science park.
6	Support thriving district shopping centres including Topsham, Cowick Street, Fore Street, Heavitree, Magdalen Road
	Independent shops being assisted with support given to the development and distribution of five Trail leaflets aimed at raising the profile of areas away from the High Street. There has been a significant improvement in the relationship and engagement with independent traders in the City. Support has been given to the Federation of Small Businesses in promoting Small Business Saturday to attract media attention to Fore Street and Cowick Street. A Small Business Saturday parking permit for Pay & Display car parks was also provided.

	<p>Topsham has its own leaflet aimed at attracting tourism.</p> <p>Initial meeting held with Cowick Street traders to discuss the possibility of a locally-led strategic plan for Cowick Street. A small group are now looking at developing a consultation of traders and the wider community.</p> <p>Disucssions are ongoing around improving engagement with Fore Street Heavitree traders.</p>
7	<p>Promote the City as a retail and visitor destination</p> <p>Activities to promote the city are ongoing involving coordinated activity with businesses directly contributing through the Exeter and Heart of Devon Tourism Partnership. For example 50,000 copies of the Winter in the City promotional brochure were printed and distributed throughout Devon, produced in partnership with the Express & Echo. This was also included as an 8 page supplement in the paper (Oct half term). Also there is ongoing development of the promotional website www.ExploreExeter.co.uk to promote Exeter for day visits and short breaks and a national promotion of Exeter with an themed extensive PR campaign. There is some evidence that this is resulting in the city remaining attractive to visitors and keeping the city centre streets busy. For example the number of Park and Ride users has increased by 10% by the end of December 2013 compared with the previous year, an increase from over 608,000 to over 672,000</p> <p>The development and promotion of the city, and particularly the city centre, as a visitor destination is now recognised as a strategic economic priority and is being picked up through multiple areas of work including the City Centre Strategy, Cultural Action Plan and Parking Review.</p>
8	<p>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.</p> <p>Contracts have been exchanged and pay by phone should be on offer in Council car parks from mid January.</p>
9	<p>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.</p> <p>The city's civil parking enforcement service will transfer to the County Council on 1 April 2014. We are working closely alongside the County Council to ensure a smooth transition. The Parking Review will also include the on-street parking offer.</p>
10	<p>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.</p> <p>Progress: The immediate issues have been identified and most relate to on street parking issues which are the remit of the County Council. Car parking capacity in Topsham will be considered as part of the Parking review.</p>

Provide great things for me to see, do and visit

1	<p>Offer an inspiring programme of events, activities and exhibitions at the Museum, enriching the cultural lives of all who live, visit and work in the City</p>
	<p>October to December programme published which includes the 'flagship' exhibition 'West Country to Worlds End' 26th October 13 to 2nd March 14. Ongoing programme planning continues with visitor numbers remaining good particularly attracted by the high quality exhibitions RAMM is able to secure through its Arts Council funding and its growing reputation as a leading regional museum and art gallery.</p> <p>RAMM has worked in partnership with other organisations to broaden participation and access to the museum and to develop links with the Health & Wellbeing agenda, through projects such as Essentially Me! with Exeter's Youth Inclusion and Support Team.</p>
2	<p>RAMM (Major Partners Museum Bid). Secure a successful bid.</p>
	<p>Application for the next round of significant funding to provide the essential underpinning of the quality and extent of the activities of the RAMM from the Arts Council will be being made in January with the result for this vital source of money being known in the Summer. This funding will be for the period of 3 years from April 2015.</p>
3	<p>Work with Parkwood Leisure to maintain and improve sporting and leisure facilities operated on behalf of the council</p>
	<p>The Members Working Group was set up to work with Parkwood to achieve an improved level of service for users of the facilities. There is a programme of improvement plans in place which will be revised and updated once the results of the independently produced Quest Assessments (industry acknowledged Quality Scheme) of the facilities are received. Each facility would then produce an improvement plan that relates directly to their individual assessments. The MWG will be able to monitor progress of these plans.</p> <p>Significant improvements over the past year have included the introduction of the social media Facebook presence for customers to be able to make online comments and enquiries. An online booking system has been introduced to make it easier for customers. The annual Customer Satisfaction Survey undertaken every August/September indicated an increase overall across all the facilities of 7% in the customer satisfaction ratings. Major improvements have been made in the refurbishments of Wonford and Clifton Hill fitness rooms and replacement of the bowling mat underlay at Isca Bowls Centre.</p> <p>Progress is also being made in delivering the replacement running track at the Arena which is due for completion next summer. This will result in a closure of the track but on completion Exeter will have a national standard track that will last up to 25 yrs and remain the number one athletics facility in the South West. Consultation with customers and clubs has been very positive and they are fully supportive of the Council's decision to replace the track despite the loss of their training and competition facility for a few months in the athletics season.</p> <p>More detail will be provided by the officer report to Scrutiny Committee and the presentation by the Parkwood manager.</p>
4	<p>Continue to give grant aid to Animated Exeter, Vibrasonic and Exeter Respect festivals</p>
	<p>The Council has supported these three successful festivals again this year. Vibrasonic's attendance was just under 5000 with some 300 artists involved. Exeter Respect attracted a diverse audience of some 20,000 over the two days in the summer. A successful application for £46800 has been made to the Arts Council fund, Grants for the</p>

	Arts, for Light Stream, an animation event in Fore Street over three nights of the festival in February 2014. Further details of these events are contained in the 2012/13 Arts Review report being presented to Scrutiny Economy including information on the success of the Unexpected Festival which took place in September and which engaged with some 20,000 people over 17 events.
5	Work with the Exeter Cultural Partnership to prepare a Cultural Strategy to develop the breadth and quality of activity in the City
	<p>An initial Cultural Action Plan has been presented to and received the support of Scrutiny Committee - Economy and Executive. This has set out four objectives agreed with the Cultural Partnership towards establishing the city as a regional cultural centre with aim of increasing involvement and participation at all levels. Progress with this will be reported back to future meetings.</p> <p>A bid, by Exeter Cultural Partnership with the support of Exeter City Council, has been submitted to the Arts Council and Visit England's Cultural Destinations Fund for a total of £347,600 over three years which will contribute to the delivery of the Action Plan with the intention of supporting cultural activity alongside the Rugby World Cup.</p>
6	Work towards the development of the new swimming pool and leisure facilities.
	The Project Board for Leisure Centre has been constituted and recruitment of the Project Manager is underway. Following a complex design and procurement process, construction is forecast to start in late 2015.
Help me get back to financial independence	
1	Continue to work with the Exeter and Heart of Devon Employment and Skills Board to promote investment in training provision for employers and progress projects which support local people to take advantage of job opportunities
	Encouraging developers to employ local people is being pursued through the planning process and a report recommending an approach to secure skills and employment plans and commitments to training from developers as part of the planning process has been considered by Planning Member Working Group and is on the agenda for this Scrutiny Economy meeting. With the departure of the officer supporting the Board further progress building upon success with other initiatives aimed at helping people into work and to receive training in work is delayed until a replacement is recruited. It is important to note that the work of the Board alongside other Boards in the area has resulted in the skills agenda now being one of the key priorities in the LEP Strategic Plan.
2	Work with local partners to explore how we can join up services to help residents to find or get back into employment
	The Employment and Skills Board is increasing its employer membership to add representation from sectors not covered and to increase its engagement in the business community. It has submitted/is lobbying the LEP to ensure skills issues are included in any proposals for additional funding to address challenges and opportunities for local people arising out of developments happening in and around the city. The Board includes representatives from Job Centre Plus, Exeter College and other organisations which directly and have resources to contract others to provide help or training for residents.

Run the Council well

1	<p>In partnership with the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Health and Wellbeing, 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.</p>
	<p>Progress: A parking review will take place in 2014 and will address charging and other policies. The principle of bringing management arrangements for car parking assets in house was approved by Executive Committee in November and assets will be transferred into in house management arrangements, where practicable, as they become available. It is not proposed that we foreshorten any existing contracts nor is it envisaged that it will be practicable to take all the assets into the in house portfolio.</p>
2	<p>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.</p>
	<p>Progress on this has been delayed by other priorities but it remains my intention to review this function.</p>

Councillor Rosie Denham
Portfolio Holder Economy and Culture
January 2014

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