

EXETER BOARD

Thursday 15 January 2015

Present:-

Exeter City Council
Councillors Baldwin, Edwards, K Owen and Sutton

Devon County Council
Councillors Leadbetter (Chair), Foggin, Hannaford, Hannan, Leadbetter, Morse, J Owen,
Prowse and Westlake

Associate Members
Simon Bowkett (Exeter CVS) and Superintendent Keith Perkin (Devon and Cornwall
Constabulary)

Also Present

Nicola Forsdyke, Exeter City Council Housing Options Manger and Adrian Staegemann and
Ruth Tune of the Street Homeless Outreach Team.

1

APOLOGIES

This was received from Phil Atwell.

2

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25 NOVEMBER 2014

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2014 be taken
as read and signed by the Chair as correct.

3

EXETER COMMUNITY TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION

It had been agreed at the Board meeting in September that the Chair, Deputy Chair
and Councillor Hannaford meet with the Association to discuss the potential for
securing a more secure, on-going financial commitment from the County and City
Councils. This would now be arranged.

4

EXETER BOARD FUNDING SUB GROUP

The minutes of the Sub Group meeting of 12 January 2015 were tabled for
Members' information.

5

OPEN FORUM

Questions on the following topics were put to the Board under the Open Forum
arrangements.

Policing and Enforcement - Aled Davies

In addition to the circulated answer, Superintendent Perkin provided the following
statistics for Exeter:-

70 patrolling constables, 10 sergeants and 1 Inspector

16 Neighbourhood beat officers with 25 community support officers, 4 Neighbourhood Team Leaders and 1 inspector
Support of other officers such as CID, etc

He offered to speak further to Mr Davies on the issues raised.

Exeter City Council's repair project for damp council flats – John Murphy

Noting the specific problem referred to of an elderly lady who had incurred significant costs in the purchase and use of a de-humidifier and was seeking reimbursement, the Portfolio Holder confirmed that this claim would be examined as assessments were undertaken of individual cases which might merit special support. Residents had been advised of the budget for the works and would be informed of the contract start date, which was due to commence in April.

Bin Collection - Syahrul Hidayat

The Portfolio Holder confirmed that the allegation of fly tipping was being looked at by officers but that, without evidence, it was difficult to ascertain the true position. The ward Councillor, present at the meeting, agreed to look into the matter.

The questions and replies from the Chair (in italics) are appended to the minutes.

6

DEVON YOUTH SERVICE - YOUTH CENTRES IN EXETER

Mark Lane updated the Board on progress with the continuation of youth service provision in the City:-

Knight Club

A three year interim lease to allow further development and testing of the ICOSA Church business plans was proposed, the County Council committed to repair the leaking roof and to transfer a sum of money to help towards the costs of mitigating the ongoing flooding issues caused by poor highway drainage in the vicinity.

Following their property survey, ISCA had raised some additional queries prior to contract relating to the property which had been responded to and a transfer was anticipated by mid January.

Phoenix

The YMCA wished to take on the Centre, but wanted to use the building for other community purposes to generate enough income to cover building running costs and, ultimately, costs of delivering youth services.

The agreement of the Wonford Community and Learning Centre (WCLC) trustees was necessary for the lease arrangements to be changed to allow both centres to be run for youth and community activities and this was being negotiated with the City Council and the Centre as well as the potential of the YMCA running some youth provision from the Centre on limited available evenings in the interim.

The County Council and the YMCA had agreed that, as an interim measure, the County Council grant a short term lease with a break triggered by the City Council reversing the temporary change in permitted use. This change would help the trustees of the WCLC decide if the proposals were acceptable.

West Side

The City Council had indicated that it would agree to a re-assignment of the County Council lease to the YMCA in principle. The YMCA site survey had identified significant repairs to the roof which was a large capital expenditure item but had been advised to make an application to the new Invest In Devon Youth Capital Fund to meet the cost. A replacement boiler was required and would be funded by the County Council.

The County Council would grant the YMCA a long sub lease with an initial break option and the County Council had instructed the preparation of a draft lease.

It was anticipated that the YMCA would take possession at the beginning of April 2015.

RESOLVED that the position be noted.

7

ROUGH SLEEPERS COUNT

Nicola Forsdyke, Exeter City Council's Housing Options Manager and Adrian Staegemann and Ruth Tune of the Street Homeless Outreach Team reported on the results of the rough sleepers count in November 2014, the possible causes and solutions. The total number of homeless people sleeping on the streets had been counted at 34 - a 48% increase with 50% having a local connection to Exeter. Of the 34, two were female, 10 believed to have endured mental health issues, six with alcohol issues and two using legal highs and 10 entrenched in rough sleeping. The remaining 24 required assessment before placement and, of these, 11 had been identified as only wanting self contained accommodation but had very high support needs. The increase in female rough sleepers was a concern which was attributable, in part, to the closure of the Esther project for vulnerable women.

Exeter, along with East Devon, Mid Devon, Teignbridge and Torbay had obtained Single Homeless funding to assist this client group over the next year. Renewed efforts around the Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) approach would focus on encouraging agencies to come together and resolve individual's circumstances. Nicola confirmed that Exeter would receive the largest share of resources as it had the highest level of need.

Adrian and Ruth summarised the work of SHOT which undertook outreach work to those sleeping on the streets five nights and early mornings a week. The primary solution was to provide accommodation at Gabriel House which catered predominantly for those with complex needs, some 90% relating to alcohol and 95% with offending histories. It was constantly full with a current waiting list of 20.

Rough sleeping had been a problem for many years in Exeter and was increasing across the country with no easy solution to this complex and challenging problem. As with other urban areas, rough sleepers gravitated to Exeter where there were greater support opportunities for their lifestyle including health and accommodation resources.

It was becoming more difficult to work with some rough sleepers and the SHOT were seeing an increase in chaotic behaviour, some of which was linked to unmanaged substance misuse and mental health problems. Reductions and changes in service provision and a lack of outreach support in terms of health, mental health and substance misuse workers, was often resulting in non engagement by clients. Referring to the vulnerability of rough sleepers Superintendent Perkin mentioned the need to have regard, as far as possible, to their security. A more rigorous approach to discourage City Centre locations could lead to sanctuary being sought in more

secluded and dangerous locations. Simon Bowkett referred to a number of organisations supporting the homeless across the country who were facing severe financial challenges and to the estimated cost of supporting one rough sleeper in Exeter, which, at £8,391, would total £285,000 for the 34 identified in November. He also reported a joint agency capital bid for £500,000 funding from Public Health England to assist in setting up a multi agency hub at Wat Tyler House.

Referring to MEAM, Integrated Care Exeter, the work of different local authority departments as well as the voluntary sector and recent changes in commissioning Members felt that an explanation of the different responsibilities and the role of the various bodies and individuals would be helpful.

RESOLVED that Nicola Forsdyke update the next Board on progress with MEAM including the latest position on rough sleepers together with representatives of the County Council commissioning team, with Mental Health officers if possible, to provide an overview of the support systems available.

8

MAPPING COMMUNITY ASSETS

Dawn Rivers reported on progress with the mapping of community facilities in the City. Following discussions that have evolved from a number of different grant making groups in the City, including New Homes Bonus Fund and the Exeter Board Funding Sub Group it had felt necessary to have a good understanding about community facilities in different parts of the City. This resource would also be useful in discussions with communities about community assets and potential of joint working with other groups in their areas. Further mapping would take place to ensure that all venues that had the potential for community use were included, such as Church Halls, School Halls and Social Clubs. Local Members and community groups would be consulted to ensure comprehensive coverage.

The County Council had recently launched its (Beta) Community website <https://beta.devon.gov.uk/community> that forms part of the Community Resilience work to "Help people to help themselves". This site included information about use of buildings across the county to see if they could be better used and delivered in a different way.

The City Council would be looking to develop this work in conjunction with colleagues from Devon County Council, also other statutory agencies including the police and ambulance services as part of having greater involvement with communities to discuss options and solutions for service delivery in the different areas.

Members recognised the value of the exercise as the existence of a comprehensive database of the City's community resources would assist planning and funding decisions and go some way in eliminating duplication.

RESOLVED that a further report on community engagement as part of the Devon Local/Community Resilience be made to the next Board meeting.

9

FEEDBACK FROM MEMBER REPRESENTATION ON MULTI AGENCY GROUPS

The Board noted the minutes of the meeting of the Exeter Health and Well Being Board held on 11 November 2014.

DATES OF MEETINGS 2015 AND FUTURE BUSINESS

RESOLVED that the following dates and venues for meetings be noted:-

Tuesday 28 April 2015 - County Hall
Thursday 30 July 2015 - City Centre
Thursday 24 September 2015 - County Hall

(The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 7.04 pm)

Chair

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EXETER BOARD

OPEN FORUM

15 JANUARY 2015

QUESTION FROM MR ALED DAVIES

With all the present and future government funding cuts, I am concerned as to how Exeter will continue to keep the city safe and clean for all its residents and visitors. Fewer police and PCSO's can only lead to only more anti social behaviour that will cost more longer term to address. Also, I believe that Exeter has only one enforcement office which if correct I find totally wrong. I strongly believe eyes on the street are better than certain administration roles in offices. It's better to try and solve any potentially problems like anti social behaviour sooner (e.g. drug related issues, minor crime, graffiti, fly tipping and general litter problems and some poor student disciplines within the city.

- How many police, PCSO's and Enforcement Officers do Exeter have at present?
- What will these numbers be in six months time?
- What percentage of staffing at council is administration based and is this figure likely to reduce?

I am the Vice Chairman of the Tidy Exeter Group which meets monthly at the Civic Centre and these questions do get raised on a regular basis. It would be interesting to hear what plans are in place to address the above issues.

ANSWER

The number of Police and PCSO that operate within the city of Exeter is a matter best put to the Police. In terms of Council 'Enforcement Officers', there is a whole range of front-line officers dealing with many different enforcement issues to different degrees, such as Environmental Health Officers (6), Environmental Health Technicians (6), Licensing Officers(4), Building Control Officers (4), Planning Officers (11), Waste Supervisors (3), and Community Patrol Officers (5). In terms of issues such as litter and fly-tipping, environmental health staff together with Supervisors/Officers from Waste and Community Patrol, all have powers to tackle such issues, although it is not the primary function of their role.

For other anti-social behaviour such as drug-litter, street drinking, urinating in the street, etc. many of these officers together with Housing Officers, CCTV Controllers and the Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator work closely with the Police and other agencies to deal with particular problems by a variety of means which include enforcement.

In terms of your other questions:

- 1) at this point in time there is no formally approved change that would alter these numbers in 6 months time, however, that does not rule out changes that may take place with approval over the short term;
- 2) it is difficult to answer your question in the way you phrase it, as some staff roles will be predominantly an administrative function, some a managerial/supervisory function, some a customer service function, some solely front line, others a technical/regulatory function, whilst many will have an element of administration within their job role.

EXETER BOARD

OPEN FORUM

15 JANUARY 2015

QUESTION FROM JOHN MURPHY

Exeter City Council's repair project for damp council flats

At the Exeter *Open Forum* meeting for the public, on 15 January, I would like to ask about the long-awaited repairs project to deal with damp in 350 council flats.

1. Has the city council let a contract to rectify the problems of damp in 350 council flats?
2. If so, who is the contractor, what is the value of the contract and when will the work start? If not let why not and when will you let the contract? If let, who were the other firms tendering for the work? What was the criteria used to determine the winning bid? What factors are being used to determine the priority of flats to be rectified?
3. Will the city council compensate residents for the cost of electricity to run their de-humidifiers to deal with the damp problem? Will the council redecorate the flats affected by the damp problem? When will this work take place?
4. What communication plan does the city council have to keep residents of the affected flats informed of progress on the project to implement remedial action? Is this plan available to the public?
5. Why was scaffolding left erected at one block of flats in Calthorpe Road for three months when no work was taking place?

ANSWER

1. No, the contract is currently out to tender. We anticipate awarding the contract in early March with a contract start date of April.
2. We are not in a position to provide some of this information for the reasons set out above, while other information in respect of competing tenders would in any case be commercially confidential. Prioritisation of works will be agreed with the successful contractor.
3. We will look at each situation on its merits as dehumidifiers may not be the most appropriate solution in all cases. We will redecorate as necessary as soon as all works have been carried out.
4. We have written to all residents confirming budgets for the work have been approved and will contact them again once the contract has been let and an agreed programme of work is in place.
5. The scaffolding was erected by a roofing contractor and works have been carried out. The works were completed before Xmas and the contractor has been asked to remove the scaffolding.

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EXETER BOARD

OPEN FORUM

15 JANUARY 2015

QUESTION FROM SYAHRUL HIDAYAT

My name is Syahrul Hidayat and live in a rented house at 63 Cecil Road EX2 9AQ. I am requesting to have an opportunity to raise a question of 'how the City Council tackle the behaviour of a certain member of community who always put their rubbish into neighbours area (pavement)' on 15 January 2015. It has been a problem since I live there and there is no significant action as the binman do not pick them and left near my door for days/week. Others may see it as my bin which is actually not.

ANSWER

For residents in Cecil Rd, the waste collection point is the front boundary of their own property. There are occasions in some streets where a collection point for a number of houses is an appropriate arrangement between the Council and residents, but we are not aware of such in Cecil Street. Therefore, a resident who puts waste outside a neighbour's property rather than their own, could be considered to be fly-tipping. We can remind residents to leave their waste at the correct collection point, and if the address of the neighbour leaving waste outside Mr. Hidayat's can be identified, we can contact that person and if necessary we have the power to issue a fixed penalty notice for non-compliance

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