

## SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - ECONOMY

21 January 2016

### Present:

Councillor Brimble (Chair)

Councillors Lyons, Branston, Brock, Bull, Harvey, Henson, Prowse, Robson, Vizard, Wardle and Williams

### Apologies:

Councillor Crew

### Also present:

Chief Executive & Growth Director, Economy and Tourism Manager, Leisure Facilities Manager, Principal Accountant Service (PM), Audience Development Lead RAMM, Digital Media Officer RAMM and Democratic Services Officer (Committees) (SLS)

### In attendance:

Councillor Rosie Denham - Portfolio Holder Economy and Culture  
Councillor Rachel Sutton - Portfolio Holder City Development  
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### **1 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2015 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as correct.

### **2 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Branston declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in respect of Minute No 9 as he is employed as a market researcher and withdrew from the meeting. No other declarations of interest were made.

### **3 Portfolio Holder Updates**

Councillors Sutton and Denham presented progress reports on priorities within the City Development and the Economy and Culture Portfolios respectively. Responses to Members' comments and queries are set out below:-

#### Councillor Sutton - City Development

- Ikea had outline planning consent and continued to work on their application for reserved matters which will come back to Planning Committee. She understood that Exeter was scheduled to be next after the current store in Reading, but unfortunately, it was down to the company when they progressed this application.
- a new Sport and Leisure Strategy was being drafted. Although desirable, it was not necessary for the Strategy to be in place to draw down funding from Sport England. The Strategy will be presented to a Scrutiny Committee and offer Members the opportunity to scrutinise and comment. This document may also be used to inform public consultation. Councillor Denham added

that the Strategy was also important to identify strategic need in the city, and to ensure that the appropriate consultation with sports groups was carried out. It was important to ensure that there was active engagement with partners.

- she undertook to respond to the Member in relation to his enquiry on the likely progress of the Morrison development at Middlemoor. She appreciated that planning consent had been gained, but that the time limit was nearly up. It was important for the site to be delivered.
- a copy of the report by Professor Darren Smith exploring the options and implications for accommodating the future growth of students in Exeter was considered by the Planning Member Working Group, and was also available to Members. The report offered a comment on the ratio of houses compared with purpose built accommodation through to 2021. The findings of the University Task and Finish group would also be reported to the Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Sutton congratulated all those involved in the support for the Exeter Community Forum and particularly to the sterling work of Diane Moore and Christine Fraser around the city, as well as the City Council's Community Involvement and Inclusion Officer and other officers.

#### Councillor Denham - Economy and Culture

- a Canal and River Trust stakeholder's meeting had been arranged for 4 February, and invitees from a wide range of user groups had been invited to meet representatives of the Exeter Canal and Quay Trust. It was hoped that the meeting with the Trust would help to develop a better working relationship. The Assistant Director Public Realm would be in attendance.
- she would write to Councillor Henson and Members of the Scrutiny Committee and detail the package relating to the forthcoming Rugby 7's event. They had entered into a contractual arrangement following negotiations by the Assistant Director Finance.
- there had been a huge increase in the number of visitors and an increase in the shop revenue since the Visitor Centre moved into the Custom House. There were also regular opportunities for a range of events and promotions. She would arrange for the data relating to the visitor increase to be sent to Members.
- the Exeter City Futures work was on line from 11 January, as part of a soft launch. The main media launch has been booked for 28 February. The Exeter City Futures Programme Manager was in the process of arranging presentations to the Member Groups. There had also been a whole series of communications and events put in place to raise public awareness and she would ensure an update on its progress was provided.
- a report on the Parking Strategy had been delayed, but the Assistant Director Public Realm would be presenting a report to the March meeting of Scrutiny Committee Economy, as well as reporting the cost implications and more information as part of a Parking Spotlight Review.

Scrutiny Committee – Economy noted the achievements and priorities presented for both City Development and the Economy and Culture Portfolios.

#### **4 Estimates/ New Capital Bids/Fees and Charges**

The Principal Accountant presented the report on the Estimates and Fees and Charges, which outlined the strategic framework, within which the estimates had been prepared; changes in accounting practices which affected all budgets and gave detailed reasons for major changes in the Management Unit estimates. The budget framework, a detailed schedule of the Capital Programme and proposed new schemes for the areas covered by the Scrutiny Committee – Economy and proposed 2016/17 Fees and Charges were included as an appendix.

A Member referred to the coach parking offer in Exeter and asked if, as part of the resurfacing programme at Haven Banks car park, at least two additional coach parking bays could be added to the existing coach park space. The Chief Executive & Growth Director would request a response through the Assistant Director Public Realm.

Scrutiny Committee – Economy noted the draft Revenue Estimates for 2016/17, the proposed Capital Programme and Fees and Charges for further consideration by Executive.

#### **5 Annual Review of Support for Small Businesses**

The Economy and Tourism Manager presented a report which outlined the progress made in supporting businesses through Exeter Business Support and the Exeter Pop Up Shop format. She referred to the progress made to expand the contract for this service for the 2016 financial year to cover the Exeter and the Heart of Devon area. It was important to ensure that a fit for purpose business support service is provided offering free advice and guidance on setting up a new business, and improving the prospects of existing businesses. It was noted that Peninsula Innovations Limited had indicated they would no longer be tendering for the contract, which will result in a new supplier for the Exeter & Heart of Devon Business Advice and Support Contract for 2016/17. The details had been advertised on the City Council's web site, neighbouring websites as well as the Government's free procurement portal. The costs for the service would be shared equally between the neighbouring local authorities. It was anticipated that a successful candidate would be appointed to enable the new contract to commence on 1 April 2016. It was also anticipated that the City Council's Economy colleagues would continue to use the existing client information and data so that the support would continue in the interim period. A list of the support offered to date had been included in an appendix to the report. The Economy and Tourism Manager responded to a Member's question on the take up of workshops, which offered an opportunity for concept development. She would also take up an issue raised by two Members relating to a high street shop and pass on the details to one of the BID ambassadors.

The Economy and Tourism Manager provided an update on the Exeter Pop Up Shop format, which had provided an opportunity for fledgling companies to test their business model. They had been working with Estates to develop this further and were set to introduce a new structure from April onwards to widen the appeal. A Member also referred to the Pop-Up Shop Scheme and whilst the format was used in South Street, there seemed to be a growing number of vacant shops in Sidwell Street, which was damaging to the overall street scene. The Economy and Tourism Manager advised that the initiative would be widened to include such areas.

Scrutiny Committee - Economy noted the report and recommended Executive to:-

- (1) support the City Council in continuing to fund business support for embryonic, new and existing businesses in providing opportunities for individuals to secure the means of improving their financial position and promoting job creation, at a cost of £25,000, and
- (2) officers within Economy & Tourism be authorised to negotiate a contract for £100,000 for the financial year 2016 – 2017, following an advertisement for the continued delivery of services outlined in this report under the banner of Exeter Business Support. It was noted that £25,000 had been secured from each of the neighbouring local authority areas of East Devon, Mid Devon and Teignbridge to contribute to Exeter Business Support.

## 6 **Rugby World Cup 2015**

The Economy and Tourism Manager presented a final report on the activities undertaken as part of the City Council's support for Exeter being a successful Host City for the Rugby World Cup 2015 tournament which took place between 18 September and 31 October 2015, including an update on the extensive legacy activities encouraged and developed as a result of being involved. The city's participation in the Rugby World Cup tournament had provided the city with the opportunity to be involved in a sporting activity on the local, regional and world stage with all of the consequential benefits from raising its profile, demonstrating its pride and ambition, and gaining confidence and experience from delivering such a wide ranging and high calibre event. Tribute was also paid to the effective way the partner agencies contributed to the event, together with the enthusiasm and support given by the well organised volunteers together with long hours from key staff should also be recognised. Copies of correspondence from England Rugby 2015 and Tracy Crouch, Minister for Sport were attached to the circulated report and whole heartedly supported this view. The Economy and Tourism Manager referred to Exeter's involvement in the observer programme, which had been set up to assist countries bidding to host the RWC 2019, and representatives from the Tokyo Metropolitan Government and the Japan Local Government Centre in London had visited Exeter on a fact finding mission.

The Economy and Tourism Manager also referred to the Legacy programme, which had far and long lasting benefits including the contribution to the promotion of health and well-being of its citizens. Other successes have been the My First Rugby Ball initiative, which had enabled a tag rugby training initiative to be developed in local schools. Work continued apace to continue to develop the partnership with Sandy Park and take forward the European Rugby 7's event over the summer months.

The Chief Executive & Growth Director responded to a Member's comment on the numbers in the Fanzone. He referred to England's early exit from the games and the effect on the Fanzone, despite the capacity numbers of the earlier matches. Exeter's Fanzone had been one of the few to remain open, apart from London, for the duration of the games. Despite England's untimely exit, Exeter as a city was a success, and every part of the city had performed to the best of their ability, and been behind the whole tournament. Members wished to pass on their thanks for all of the volunteers and also the legacy programme that helped to contribute to such a successful event for the city.

Scrutiny Committee – Economy noted the report, and requested that Executive welcome the wide-ranging benefits resulting from the tournament including those anticipated from the programme of legacy activities in contributing to the well-being of residents and the positive profile of the city, and express their appreciation to all the

agencies and especially the volunteers and staff for all their commitment and hard work to make the event such a success.

## **7 RAMM Digital Media Road Map and Progress**

The Digital Media Officer for the Royal Albert Memorial Museum (RAMM) presented a report which focused on RAMM's digital roadmap for the period 2015-18. The period is set by the major funding coming from RAMM's Major Partner Museum Funding (in partnership with Plymouth Museum & Art Gallery) from Arts Council England (ACE), and the roadmap would provide a structure to digital development and allow progress to be tracked against agreed timescales.

RAMM had a track record of innovation and success with its digital work, and included recognition from the Museums Association, Museum Next International Museums Conference, UK Museums on the Web, National Museum Directors Council and the Arts and Humanities Research Council. RAMM had sought to make its digital products sustainable and build on this success, rather than creating sequential projects with limited lifespan or no lasting value or identity. The digital landscape was constantly changing both in terms of how different technologies work and how they are used, and such partnerships could help to better deliver the visitor experience online, add a fresh perspective and help unlock future funding.

The Digital Media Officer responded to a Member's question on ensuring the data was kept up to date and of a good standard. He agreed that it was a challenge to keep the online information up to date and current, and he referred to colleague's efforts to look at one another's work critically as well as using a publishing 'buddy' system. He also responded to a Member who commented on the RAMM's print on demand web site, confirming that the details of popular searches were tracked and analysed through the web site.

Scrutiny Committee - Economy requested Executive to approve the following:-

- (1) implementation of the RAMM digital road map as extant at December 2015 (as detailed in an annexe 1 circulated with the report);
- (2) delegated authority be given to the Museum Manager to decide to apply any necessary adjustments to the road map as necessitated by changes in resources or funding from external factors;
- (3) a follow up report for Members will enable the position of the results and findings around the implementation of the road map. Regular reporting to the Arts Council England and Exeter City Council will capture changes to existing digital products; and
- (4) the outcomes of the work that deliver both Exeter City Council objectives and those of its partner, Arts Council England be noted.

## **8 RAMM's Market Research and Data Capture Programme Update**

The Audience Development Lead for the Royal Memorial Museum (RAMM) presented a report which informed Members of the visitor research and data capture programme and for the forthcoming plans to be noted. This would provide a better understanding of who uses the museums service in person and online (and consequently who does not); their views of the visitor experience and their preferences, is information that helps the RAMM team monitor satisfaction rates; identify trends; shape forward planning and informs its audience development and

digital activities and income generation initiatives. Research of this kind provided the user context for RAMM and its services. The report also set out the key findings from the research in relation to views, attitudes and motivations. As part of the programme for the period 2016 – 2018, they would carry out regular surveys both on site and on line to identify trends, analyse data relating to tickets sales and buying behaviour and giving, and also continue to gather visitor numbers, attitudes and views relating to charges for exhibitions to inform future planning.

The Audience Development Lead responded to Members' questions on the classification of children, and advised that the data would include gender and age. She would provide that information to the Member. She confirmed that more regular data collection would be possible, with staff using tablets using a number of scripted questions as well as additional topical questions; additional piece of work to promote RAMM as a tourist attraction would be funded by the Arts Council.

Scrutiny Committee – Economy noted the report.

## 9 **Update on the Exeter Visitor Strategy 2012 - 2016**

Councillor Branston declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in respect of Minute No 9 as he is employed as a market researcher and withdrew from the room.

The Economy and Tourism Manager presented an update to Members on progress with implementing the Exeter Visitor Strategy 2012 – 2016, and also to develop a timeframe to research and consult with business on a new Visitor Strategy for the city. She referred to the overview of progress made and outputs achieved during 2015, against the priorities as well as a selection of achievements made. A set of the key performance indicators were included in the visitor strategy as a basis for monitoring trends and effectiveness of the actions implemented. The main aim of achieving a 5% increase in visitor spend had been increased to 8%. The focus on delivery for 2016 to 2017 would be on delivering outstanding actions from the Visitor Strategy as a result of the Rugby World Cup 2015 events programming, by developing the Exeter & the Heart of Devon Tourism Partnership and to continue to promote Exeter for rugby breaks in the run up to the city hosting the European Rugby 7's in the summer.

The Economy and Tourism Manager responded to a Member's comment on the coach parking drop off and charges, as he was aware of some instances when coaches have parked in residential areas rather than pay the parking fee. She was currently in discussion with Exeter College to arrange for tourism students to carry out some project work collating data on the number of coaches visiting the city both in the Bus Station and South Street locations, seeking details on their visit including their spend. The Economy and Tourism Manager also agreed to send the latest figures of inbound visitors to Exeter airport. A Member welcomed the development of hotels in recent years and hoped that the city's balance in the range of hotels on offer would continue. The Economy and Tourism Manager referred to a report from the East Devon Growth Point and agreed that they were mindful of retaining the right balance of accommodation to suit all visitors. She also agreed to check with colleagues in Environmental Health if there were any parking tickets given to visitors residing out of the U. K. that remained unpaid.

Scrutiny Committee – Economy noted the following:-

- (1) progress made with implementing the Exeter Visitor Strategy 2012 – 2016 and supported the actions proposed to be undertaken for the final year of the Visitor Strategy; and

- (2) way forward to develop a new visitor strategy for Exeter, taking into account the newly emerged Exeter BID and the Exeter Cultural Partnership.

## 10 **Growth and Marketing Task and Finish Group**

The Chair of the Growth and Marketing Task and Finish Group, Councillor Lyons presented the findings and recommendations to the Scrutiny Economy Committee. She referred to the unprecedented increase in the number of enquiries received from companies wishing to relocate to Exeter. There had been an issue over resources and staffing levels within the Economy and Tourism Department and Exeter has the highest number of enquiries in respect of relocation amongst its contemporary Authorities. A detailed review of the budget available to the Economy and Tourism Department was both timely and necessary and should identify what additional resources are available; explore what could be achieved for different levels of available funding; and understand the implications of an increase in additional funding/resources for both the Economy and Tourism Department and the Council as a whole. It should be noted that the Economic Development Teams at Exeter, East Devon, Mid Devon and Teignbridge had a mutually beneficial and good working relationship. Consideration of formalising arrangements in this respect would support a continued approach to combined Authority working and provide a level of security to the existing.

Councillor Lyons also referred to the suggestion of a conference aimed at new businesses involving other Local Authorities, key stakeholders and organisations to raise the profile of Exeter and the Heart of the South West. It would reinforce the commitment to growth and inward investment and would highlight what Exeter and the wider area had to offer including the benefits of the location, infrastructure and key support. Attracting new business to Exeter and the wider area together with encouraging new businesses was essential, as was promoting links between businesses, both existing and new with both key services and organisations.

Members were very supportive of this work and Councillor Lyons wished to thank the Scrutiny Programme Officer and also the members of the Task and Finish Group for their hard work and efforts.

Scrutiny Committee – Economy supported the following:-

- (1) a review of the current staffing levels and budget available for the Economy and Tourism Department is undertaken by Senior Management in conjunction with the Economy and Tourism Team;
- (2) a business case in respect of (i) is to be submitted to the Scrutiny Economy Committee for consideration;
- (3) the sharing of Economic Development expertise between neighbouring local authorities across the wider areas of East Devon, Mid Devon and Teignbridge is formalised by way of an agreement; and
- (4) an Economic Development conference is held, led by Exeter City Council's Economic Development Team, also involving East Devon District Council, Mid Devon District Council and Teignbridge District Council, Exeter University and Exeter College to include combined presentations aimed specifically at new businesses.

11 **Exeter Highways and Traffic Order Committee Minutes**

The minutes of Devon County Council's Exeter Highways and Traffic Order Committee held on 9 November 2015, which had been circulated for information were noted.

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

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

13 **Parkwood Leisure Management Contract - Annual Report**

The Leisure Facilities Manager presented the report which set out the performance of the Parkwood Leisure Legacy Leisure Management Contract for year five of the contract from October 2014 to September 2015.

The Leisure Facilities Manager responded to an enquiry about the level of patrons and whether these were comparable to other facilities. A Members' Briefing for Exeter City Councillors would be held on the 10 March 2016 to provide an opportunity to explore any issues or comments on the day to day operation of the sites with representatives from Legacy Leisure.

Scrutiny Committee – Economy noted the report.

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

The minutes of the Exeter and Heart of Devon Growth Board held on 17 December 2015 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 7.10 pm

Chair