

EXETER STRATEGIC BOARD

Thursday 16 November 2017

Present:-

Exeter City Council
Councillors Bialyk, Denham, Edwards, Sills and Thompson

Devon County Council
Councillors Hannaford, Leadbetter, Ackland, Asvachin, Prowse, Atkinson, Aves, Brennan and Whitton

Associate Members
Jude Taylorson (Faith Groups) and Diana Moore (Exeter Community Forum)

Also Present

Councillor John Hart, Leader Devon County Council

Also Present

Programme Manager - Communities, Communities and Commissioning Manager and Democratic Services Officer (Committees) (HB)

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APOLOGIES

These were received from Phil Atwell, Simon Bowkett with Fiona Carden substituting, Gillian Champion, Karime Hassan and John Laramy.

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 SEPTEMBER 2017

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2017 and of the "Away Day" on 6 November 2017 be taken as read and signed by the Chair as correct records.

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COUNCILLOR JOHN HART LEADER OF DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL

The Chair welcomed Councillor John Hart, Leader of Devon County Council, who spoke on the future direction and plans of the County Council in light of Government policy and continued cuts to local government funding. Link to animated film below:- <https://youtu.be/14UyGmjfgsU>

He highlighted some of the issues:-

- there were huge financial pressures on the Council, with the £206 million savings made over the past six years, representing a third of the County Council budget. A further £22million savings sought for this financial year and a total savings over the next three years of £64 million;
- the County Council has a turnover of £1.3 billion with £400 million in the education budget for 93,000 school children and with 8,000 miles of major roads to keep safe and in good order;
- to help achieve savings the work force had been cut from 9,000 to 3,500 and new ways to do business and improve services identified. This included new social enterprises including Libraries Unlimited and helping communities to do more for themselves. 10,000 acres of farm estate generate an annual income of £3million;

- with more people over the age of 65 and the cost of protecting children and helping support others, such as those with a learning disability or other complex needs increasing, looking to develop a closer relationship between Adult, Social Care and Health;
- the formation of a Heart of the South West Joint Committee comprising Devon and Somerset Councils, two National parks and three Clinical Commissioning Groups would, it was hoped, provide for better working with the Local Enterprise Partnership and Exeter's participation was vital in this as well; and
- by 2020 Local Government would face a funding gap of £10.8 billion and the core Government grant would be cut to almost nothing and local businesses and local people will have to fund all local services through the Council tax or business rates.

He responded as follows to Members' queries:-

- recognise concerns regarding the change in youth service provision such as in the West Exe area but Devon has managed to retain a site in each district comparing favourably with other authorities and a more professional and targeting service is being delivered;
- an extra £4 million provided to top up the Government bus subsidy for the over 65's with urban dwellers estimated to benefit to the value of £1,000 per annum. The Government however resists a £10 per annum bus pass charge in spite of a £30 charge levied for rail passes;
- pleased that Exeter, with the other Devon Districts, the two Unitaries and the County Council are a Business Rates Retention Scheme pilot area but uncertainty remains as to how the scheme will operate and whether there will be a net gain for the area as there were concerns that there could be a re-distribution to assist neighbouring authorities. This issue, and others to be raised at bi-annual meetings with Devon MP's;
- will enquire about Devon social care representation on the Exeter Health and Wellbeing Board and obtain feedback on the outcome of a recent meeting where the formation of a strategic transport board for the City was mooted; and
- emphasis importance for the County and Exeter and other Districts to work closely to achieve better value.

The Chair thanked Councillor Hart for attending.

EXETER BOARD - WAY FORWARD

Jo Yelland presented the revised final draft terms of reference for the Board, the amended final version of which is attached to the minutes.

Members welcomed the proposals and confirmed that the Board had an important role to play in providing strategic direction and in advising the City and County Councils about the needs of Exeter's residents and communities. There was agreement that the revised proposals provided a strategic purpose for the Board and that it should set out its priorities on an annual basis for development in conjunction with its partners.

Members highlighted the complexity of issues and challenges inherent in the delivery of the raft of County and City services and of the need to avoid duplication of effort. They requested guidance from officers on appropriate areas to prioritise and consider in depth and to ensure that these were not been addressed through other mechanisms such as the scrutiny processes of both Authorities. This prioritisation would be undertaken on an annual basis, areas identified to be considered at future themed meetings of the Board. There was a suggestion that a review of public sector land assets in Exeter could be one area for investigation.

Members debated the grant giving role of the Board. The majority of grants made at the Funding Sub Group meetings were small scale with some organisations who had initially been refused, either re-applying in a different format or seeking support from other grant sources which could lead to duplication. Because of the volume of applications, the budget was normally expended early in the financial year, as with this financial year, where it had also been agreed to make a large grant of circa £19,000 to progress the new Youth Strategy. It was suggested, therefore, that the grant budget could be better divested in the form of larger grants for strategic purposes, which could tie in with the theme based approach proposed. An alternative would be topping up existing City and County Council grant pots.

The following were supported going forward:-

- the new name of Exeter Strategic Board to be adopted, the membership of five City Councillors and the nine Exeter County Councillors to be retained with all current Associate Members to be continued to be invited to assist the Board as appropriate;
- a strategic analysis setting out the needs and issues facing residents to be provided to the Board, to include the Public Health Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, on an annual basis for an annual work programme to be agreed and progressed through three themed Exeter Strategic Board workshop debates;
- Community Groups and Special Interest Associations, to be advised in advance of the themes of each workshop in order to participate/provide evidence. It would be necessary for the chosen themes to be appropriately publicised to enhance opportunities for public engagement;
- in view of the above, and with alternative mechanisms for the public to put questions to elected Members at the City Council's Scrutiny Committees and Devon County Council itself, the Open Forum item be discontinued; and
- meetings of the Exeter Strategic Board be live streamed via Facebook etc.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) the new Exeter Strategic Board operate on the basis set out above and in accordance with the revised terms of reference attached;
- (2) the next Board meeting on 1 February consider a strategic analysis to agree on priorities for the next 12 months; and
- (3) the 1 February meeting further consider the Board's grant making process.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Exeter City Council/Exeter Community Strategy

The Programme Manager Communities updated the Board on City Council initiatives for supporting communities through:-

- Asset Based Community Development - ABCD

ABCD would receive 15% (£3.75 million) of Neighbourhood CIL over 10 years for investment in community building as part of the delivery of Wellbeing Exeter in support of the Community Strategy. The City Council was seeking to support the development of the community strategy through embedding ABCD principles and approach across the whole Council.

- Community Grants

The Community Grants Programme had provided 336 Grants to the value of £1.5 million over two years to 194 organisations under 10 different grant “types” with 50% going to a small number of organisations. It was noted that a far greater value was added on to the benefit of the community through drawing down match funding from other sources, including national schemes. A detailed grant overview was provided showing the 2016/17 and 2017/18 breakdown of grants under the different categories, by individual wards and by activities funded. Members noted the variance in amounts for each ward recognising that this was due in part to the organising capacity and capability of the respective communities, one Member suggesting that an evaluation of the social value of the community projects assisted in this way would be beneficial.

- The Exeter Community Forum and Exeter Community Strategy

Diana Moore thanked the City Council for supporting the development of the Exeter Community Forum and Exeter Community Strategy which was an impressive initiative, emphasising that it had been developed in discussions with community organisations and acknowledging the importance of consultation.

The priorities identified for grant giving were two fold - for communities affected by new housing developments and for areas with high levels of deprivation, with three levels of community capacity building - developing individuals’ skills and resources, encouraging groups to organise and develop grant applications and, at the highest level, a formalised plan for the area. To date, the Community Forum had primarily worked with communities of place but it was the intention to explore how to develop engagement with a community of interest and a community of identity approach. She stated that the Community Form had not, to date, been consulted on Devon County Council’s Community Strategy

Devon County Council Draft Community Strategy

The Devon County Council Communities and Commissioning Manager spoke on the County Council’s draft Community Strategy being brought forward by the County Council’s Communities Team headed by Dr Virginia Pearson. It provided a framework for collaborative action across public, private, voluntary and community sectors and with families and individuals. With increasing demands on local authority resources, the Strategy was intended to encourage increased community capacity and resilience in support of the County Council and wider partners. It was also hoped that it would provoke thought on how public bodies could re-orientate themselves to create the conditions for people to take greater control of issues relevant to them.

The strategy would also help inform how the Council, and its services, could develop ways of working with communities to develop different approaches and services and, potentially explore a different local infrastructure to deliver and resource them.

The Chair asked for wider consultation on the Strategy.

Responding to a Member, who asked a question about the role and work of the Community Builders, Diana Moore stated that they worked within communities, identifying social resources and helped people develop and provide their own resources. Specifically, in respect of Pinhoe, a second appointment had been made

after the first post holder had moved on, the new individual already providing a first response and working with the community, listening and supporting local people to make things happen. She undertook to ensure the community builder contacted the Councillor who would then be in a position to advise her constituents of this contact.

Another Member remarked on the importance for the Community Forum and Community Associations to fully engage with younger people in community building and in developing the Community Strategy and Diana confirmed that young people had been very active through the Alphington Village Hall.

There followed a brief debate on the nature and philosophy of building strong communities and the dynamic between the various parties involved.

34 **FEEDBACK FROM MEMBER REPRESENTATION ON MULTI AGENCY GROUPS**

Exeter Health and Wellbeing Board

The Board noted the minutes of the meeting held on 12 September and 31 October 2017.

35 **DATES OF MEETINGS**

The following dates of future Board meetings were noted, all commencing at 5.30pm in the Civic Centre:-

Thursday 1 February 2018

Thursday 21 June 2018

Thursday 20 September 2018

(The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 8.00 pm)

Chair