

THE MEETING OF EXETER CITY COUNCIL

Guildhall
Tuesday 13 December 2011

The Right Worshipful the Lord Mayor (Cllr S Brock)
The Deputy Lord Mayor (Cllr Mitchell)
Councillors Baldwin, Bialyk, Branston, P J Brock, Bull, Choules, Clark, Cole, Crow, Dawson, Denham, Edwards, Fullam, R M Hannaford, D J Henson, Mrs Henson, Hobden, Macdonald, Martin, Mrs Morrish, Mottram, Newcombe, Payne, Prowse, Robson, Ruffle, Sheldon, Shiel, Spackman, Sutton, Taghdissian, Thompson, Tippins, Wardle and Winterbottom

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MINUTES

The minutes of the Extraordinary and Ordinary meetings of Council held on 18 October 2011 were taken as read and signed as correct.

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OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS

The Leader of the Council informed members that he had been very impressed by his visit to the redeveloped Royal Albert Memorial Museum (RAMM) and noted the very favourable feedback received from visitors. The Council endorsed his comments and looked forward to the opening of RAMM to the public on Thursday 15 December 2011.

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PLANNING COMMITTEE - 31 OCTOBER 2011

The minutes of the Planning Committee of 31 October 2011 were taken as read. Members declared the following personal interests:

COUNCILLOR	MINUTE
Prowse	107 (member of Devon County Council and Exeter Highways and Traffic Orders Committee)
Hobden	107 (member of Devon County Council and Exeter Highways and Traffic Orders Committee)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 31 October 2011 be received.

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LICENSING COMMITTEE - 29 NOVEMBER 2011

The minutes of the Licensing Committee of 29 November 2011 were taken as read. A Member declared the following personal interest:

COUNCILLOR	MINUTE
Choules	75 (applicant is known to him)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Licensing Committee held on 29 November 2011 be received.

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - COMMUNITY - 8 NOVEMBER 2011

The minutes of the Scrutiny Committee - Community of 8 November 2011 were taken as read. Members declared the following personal (*prejudicial) interests and left the meeting where appropriate:

COUNCILLOR	MINUTE
Choules	65 (employee of the University)
Mottram	*72 (undertaken work for Parkwood Leisure)

In response to a question on Minute 66 (Community Grants), the Portfolio Holder Housing and Community Involvement informed members that a further report would be submitted to Scrutiny Committee – Community on 17 January 2012 providing an update on the distribution of grants and considering options for use of unspent funds in 2011/12.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Scrutiny Committee - Community held on 8 November 2011 be received.

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - ECONOMY - 10 NOVEMBER 2011

The minutes of the Scrutiny Committee - Economy of 10 November 2011 were taken as read. Members declared the following personal interests:

COUNCILLOR	MINUTE
Prowse	49 (known to both questioners and is member of Devon County Council) and 50 (member of Devon County Council)
Taghdissian	49 (representative on Parking and Transport Outside London Adjudication Joint Committee)

In relation to Minute 50 (Questions from Members of the Council under Standing Order 20) Councillor Thompson reported that she would request Scrutiny Committee – Economy to amend the wording of the minute to reflect her comments.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Scrutiny Committee - Economy held on 10 November 2011 be received.

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - RESOURCES - 23 NOVEMBER 2011

The minutes of the Scrutiny Committee - Resources of 23 November 2011 were taken as read. Members declared the following personal interests:

COUNCILLOR	MINUTE
Ruffle	65 (member of a Trade Union involved in Pensions Dispute)
Spackman	65 (employed by branch of UNISON not associated with this authority)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Scrutiny Committee - Resources held on 23 November 2011 be received.

EXECUTIVE - 6 DECEMBER 2011

The minutes of the Executive of 6 December 2011 were taken as read. Members declared the following personal (*prejudicial) interests:

COUNCILLOR	MINUTE
Branston	117 (trustee of Exeter Canal and Quay Trust)
Denham	117 (trustee of Exeter Canal and Quay Trust)
Edwards	*117 (trustee of Exeter Canal and Quay Trust)
Winterbottom	117 (trustee of Exeter Canal and Quay Trust)

In relation to Minute 118 (Parking Tariffs) Councillor Baldwin reported that Executive would be requested to make an amendment to the minute.

In response to questions, the Portfolio Holder emphasised that the proposed increase in charges at Matthews Hall and Topsham Quay car parks were intended to encourage turnover, and thereby increase trade, in Topsham. The Leader of the Council agreed to forward the letters from businesses in Topsham regarding the turnover at Topsham Quay car park to Councillor Mottram.

In response to a question regarding the reason for the decline in car park income, the Portfolio Holder responded that the closure of Debenhams in Sidwell Street had contributed to the reduction in income from King William Street car park. The refurbishment of the car park was planned in preparation for the arrival of the John Lewis Store. She responded that the Car Parking Task and Finish Group had a wide remit to review the use of car parks in the City, rather than specifically car parking charges. With regard to questions regarding visitors using free on-street car parking in preference to car parks, the Portfolio Holder responded that members with concerns should consider requesting a Residents Parking scheme in the areas affected.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Executive held on 6 December 2011 be received.

NOTICE OF MOTION BY COUNCILLORS BULL AND DAWSON UNDER STANDING ORDER NO. 6.

Councillor Dawson, seconded by Councillor Bull, proposed a Notice of Motion in the following terms:-

“That this Council calls on the Government to reverse its cruel cuts to the tariff which will harm a lot of residents in Exeter.

They are planning to cut the tariff for solar PV installations with a capacity of 4Kw or less by more than 50% from 43p/Kwh to 21p/Kwh. For multiple installations the rate falls to 16.8p/Kwh.

Their rushed cuts to the Feed-in Tariff for solar PV goes too far, too fast, hits families trying to protect themselves from soaring energy bills, put thousands of jobs and businesses in the solar industry in jeopardy, and give lie to the Government’s promise to be the “greenest Government ever”.”

Councillor Dawson drew Council's attention to the number of jobs that would be lost in one of the few remaining growth industries, particularly in the South West. She emphasised the detrimental impact this would have particularly on families, by increasing energy bills. Councillor Bull spoke on the great success of the Feed-in Tariff scheme and questioned the need for the cuts in the tariffs.

Councillor Hobden, seconded by Councillor Taghdissian, proposed the amendment of the motion to read as follows:-

"That this Council calls on the Government to take the following views of Exeter City Council into account in its consultation on Feed-in Tariffs:

Council notes the current government consultation on changes to the "Feed-in Tariff" scheme, which is helping to fund photovoltaic (PV) installations, and is concerned that:

1. The halving of the tariff at short notice is causing problems for suppliers and local authorities alike
2. The reduction in systems being installed mean less jobs will be created
3. "Stop-start" policy changes undermine the government's aim to create new green industry and low-carbon energy supplies
4. The proposal to apply a lower tariff to multi-installations could exclude further tenants from the benefits of PV installations on their homes.

Council therefore agrees to write to the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change and relevant Ministers of State asking that:

1. The Tariff is reduced progressively over a longer period to enable the industry and householders to adjust but not before April 2012.
2. A Community Tariff is established, ensuring Councils and other Social Housing providers are excluded from the lower Tariff proposed for multi-installations, so that more households in fuel poverty can benefit from free electricity".

Council also resolves to copy relevant correspondence to the Local Government Association (LGA) so the LGA can make full use of all examples in its on-going lobbying work with the Government. "

Councillor Hobden reported that the current level of tariffs was not sustainable, did not provide value for money and restricted the amount of money available for other energy schemes. In proposing the amendment, she felt that the Council should respond to the Government consultation in a constructive rather than confrontational manner. Whilst accepting the merit of expressing the Council's concern, Councillor Taghdissian supported the view that the wording of the original motion was unlikely to elicit a sympathetic response from the Government, preferring the more comprehensive wording of the amendment. Another member commented that the scheme remained generous despite the reduction in tariffs.

Other Councillors reported that the Government had already been lobbied on the issue and considered the consultation to be a "sham" exercise since the Government appeared to have made decisions already in relation to the tariffs prior to the end of the consultation period. Members made reference to the broad political support for the scheme and emphasised the negative economic and environmental effects of the change, noting particularly the important impact of low carbon energy supplies on climate change.

The amended motion was put to the vote in the terms set out above and carried on the Lord Mayor's casting vote.

(The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and closed at 7.55 pm)

Chair