

SCRUTINY ECONOMY COMMITTEE 9 JUNE 2011

Key Elements of the Programme for the Economy Portfolio for 2011/12

Economic Development

It is important to recognise that the national picture is not very promising, there is no growth in the economy, and the reduction in public sector funding will have a localised impact on the city. The SWRDA has forecast some 5,000 job losses in the City through public sector cuts. Therefore as an absolutely priority for the City Council must be to support growth and recovery.

The key priorities for supporting growth and recovery in 2011/2012 are summarised in the report of the Head of Economic Development on the main agenda, they are as follows:

- Work with the business community to secure support for the establishment of the city centre Business Improvement District. The City centre remains the engine of the city's economy and I am sure the BID will have a positive impact on the city centre;
- The arrival of John Lewis to the City Centre will be a major boost to the economy; we have a lot to do in terms of supporting this investment with improvements to the public realm.
- We will continue to work with Land Securities and the Crown Estate to build on the City Centre Vision, and transport study already undertaken with a view to bringing forward a concept master plan for the Bus & Coach Station site. A key element of this will be to produce a detailed feasibility analysis based on established master planning principles. If a viable scheme can be identified we will be looking to press ahead with the planning processes and seeking to agree Heads of Terms for a development agreement.
- Individual developments, such as John Lewis, and Waitrose have an important role to play both in providing immediate jobs for construction workers and in creating new permanent jobs. Both developments will provide hundreds of jobs and will provide an important boost to the local economy.
- A priority for this year will be to capitalise on the investment that has been made in the growth point outside the city. Therefore we will work with the Exeter and Heart of Devon Growth Board to influence and secure support for priority actions and developments from the new Local Enterprise Partnership. Although we do not have a seat at the table of the LEP we will make our presence felt through the new Growth Board.
- An immediate priority will be to assess with our partners in East Devon and the County Council the merits of pursuing proposals for an Enterprise Zone
- We will continue to progress the development of Exeter Science Park with a particular focus on its promotion
- Increase business formation and survival through a programme of activities coordinated by Exeter Business Support

- Promote the formation and survival of social enterprises through the services of Fruit Tree for Business
- Adjust service delivery and customer relationship management in the handling of investment enquiries and the operation of the Commercial Property Register with reduced resources
- Continue to work with the Exeter and Heart of Devon Employment and Skills Board to promote investment in relevant training provision for employers and progress projects which support local people to take advantage of job opportunities arising from the Exeter and East Devon New Growth Point projects
- Through the delivery of Exeter Positive Steps Fund projects assist people from the most deprived neighbourhoods and backgrounds in the city to take up training and/or employment

Estates

The process of selecting a new auctioneering firm to run the livestock markets at the Matford Centre is in hand and we hope to select a new partner over the course of the summer with a view to the new arrangements being in place for next Spring..

We will continue to work to deliver the next phases of the Canal Basin regeneration. In particular work is now in hand on the conversion of the Old Electricity Building into a new indoor climbing centre and Devon County Council have confirmed their intention to bring forward their scheme for a new Outdoor Education Centre. Over the course of the summer we will be examining our approach to the listed buildings and the uncompleted site at the head of the Basin in conjunction with the Exeter Canal & Quay Trust.

AFU

As members will know Council has agreed to reluctantly close the Archaeological field units. Most of the staff will be made redundant at the end of June with a core team being retained until the end of March of 2012 to close down outstanding projects and to honour contractual obligations. This will be a difficult time for staff and we will wish to achieve this closure in a orderly, and responsible manner with minimal risk to the Council's reputation

Councillor Rosie Denham
Portfolio Holder Economy and Tourism