

EXECUTIVE

Tuesday 20 September 2011

Present:-

Councillor Edwards (Chair)

Councillors Denham, Fullam, R M Hannaford, Mrs Henson, Martin, Mrs J Morrish, Sheldon and Sutton

Chief Executive, Director Corporate Services, Director Community and Environment, Director Economy and Development, Assistant Chief Executive and Member Services Manager

77

MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 21 June and 5 July 2011 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

78

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

79

DOWNSIZING INCENTIVES FOR COUNCIL TENANTS

The report of the Acting Head of Housing Services was submitted, seeking agreement to implement an amended downsizing incentive scheme for Council tenants to improve the management of the housing stock and increase the supply of family housing to applicants on the Devon Home Choice register.

The Director Community and Environment reported that the scheme had initially been very successful but more recently there had been a reduction in the number of tenants downsizing which was thought to be partially attributable to a reduction in the cash incentive offered.

Members were keen to reinvigorate the scheme which they considered to be a very effective way of releasing under-utilised accommodation. It was suggested that officers should consider additional incentives, such as securing preferential rates from carpets suppliers, and the Director agreed that officers would explore these options.

Scrutiny Committee – Community considered the report at their meeting of 6 September 2011 and the comments and support of the Committee were noted.

RESOLVED that the amended policy document *Reducing Under-Occupation – Incentives for Downsizing* be agreed for adoption.

(Report circulated)

80

HOME ADAPTATION POLICY FOR COUNCIL TENANTS

The report of the Acting Head of Housing Services was submitted, seeking approval to implement and amend the Home Adaptation Policy for Council tenants.

The Director Community and Environment reported that the proposal to seek a contribution to the cost of major adaptations had arisen out of a review by the Housing Resident Auditor Team of how adaptations are delivered to Exeter City Council tenants. The proposal would mean that Council tenants were treated in the same way as owner-occupiers and private sector tenants. In response to a question, the Director confirmed that officers worked closely with Occupational Therapists in assessing applications.

Members welcomed the proposal to amend the Home Adaptation Policy which would enable more work to be undertaken within the resources available thereby reducing waiting times for residents to get work done.

Scrutiny Committee – Community considered the report at their meeting of 6 September 2011 and their comments were noted.

RESOLVED that the amended policy document, *Home Adaptations*, be agreed for adoption.

(Report circulated)

81

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

The Director Community and Environment reported that the Council's Health and Safety Policy, which was last updated in 2008, had been reviewed. An updated version of both the policy statement and the organisation and arrangements for carrying it out were circulated. The policy itself was considered robust and fit for purpose and that it did not therefore need to be altered to any great extent. The Leader of the Council would sign the policy alongside the Chief Executive to acknowledge the relationship between the employees and the body corporate. The revised policy had been scrutinised and supported by the Council's Employee Liaison Forum on 13 July 2011.

Members supported the policy designed to protect the health and safety of the Council's employees, customers and others.

RECOMMENDED that the revised Health and Safety Policy be formally adopted by Council.

(Policy circulated)

82

EXETER VISITOR STRATEGY 2012-15

The report of the Head of Economy and Tourism was submitted, seeking approval for the draft Exeter Visitor Strategy 2012 – 2015 to be used for consultation with partners and agencies relevant to its delivery.

The Director Economy and Development introduced the new Visitor Strategy which built on the outcomes achieved in the previous Strategy, recognising key changes within the industry, planned capital developments and the need to adjust activities to reflect market trends. He drew attention to the action plan and identified the five key priorities which had been developed to be implemented in partnership with the tourism business community in the city and the Heart of Devon Tourism Partnership.

Members welcomed the revised Strategy and acknowledged the important role of the Partnership. They recognised the value of tourism to the Exeter economy as well as the jobs that directly and indirectly relate to tourism. They commented on the significant draw of retail activity as well as the City's heritage and were pleased to note the increasing popularity of Exeter as a base for staying a few days rather than just one day visits.

Scrutiny Committee – Economy considered the report at its meeting of 8 September 2011 and the comments of members were noted.

RESOLVED that the draft Exeter Visitor Strategy for the period 2012 – 2015 be approved for consultation with key industry organisations, partners and other agencies relevant to its delivery.

(Report circulated)

83

CREATION OF POST OF INFRASTRUCTURE OFFICER

The report of the Director Economy and Development was submitted, recommending the creation of a new post of Infrastructure Officer within Planning Services. A key part of the post would be to oversee the introduction of Exeter's Community Infrastructure Levy and coordination with other local authorities within the Exeter Growth Area.

Members acknowledged the impact of the proposed Community Infrastructure Levy which would supersede many aspects of Section 106 agreements, as well as the New Homes Bonus for new housing completions and the return of some business rates. They recognised that securing adequate infrastructure such as transport, education and community facilities was vital to the successful sustainable growth of the city and accepted the importance of having appropriate staff resources in place to undertake the considerable work involved in delivering the infrastructure.

RESOLVED that a new permanent post of Infrastructure Officer (Grade 9) be created with effect from 1 November 2011.

(Report circulated)

84

REVIEW OF THE EXETER VISION PARTNERSHIP

The report of the Chief Executive was submitted, informing Members of the proposed changes to the role and function of Exeter's Local Strategic Partnership – the Exeter Vision Partnership.

The Chief Executive reported that the Exeter Vision Partnership had been a very valuable catalyst for partnership working in the early years following its establishment in 1997. In recent years it had also successfully fulfilled the role of the Local Strategic Partnership. The dismantling of statutory performance regimes now provided the opportunity for the Partnership to review its role and functions.

Whilst there was no statutory obligation to retain the Partnership, Executive members considered its continuation to be important since it provided an effective platform for joint working in the interests of the local economy, businesses and residents. They endorsed the proposal that the Partnership should concentrate on long-term strategic issues affecting Exeter and re-position itself as a "think tank" focussing on the sustainable development and growth agenda for the city.

RESOLVED that the content of the paper be noted and the proposed way forward for the Exeter Vision Partnership be supported.

(Report circulated)

85

SCRAPSTORE - DECISION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

Executive was requested to note a decision taken under delegated authority by the Director Community and Environment in consultation with the Leader of the Council, Chair of Scrutiny Committee – Community and appropriate officers.

Executive on 22 March 2011 agreed to cease the provision of the Scrapstore Service with effect from 31 July 2011 and to terminate the employment of staff involved in providing the service. Due to an oversight, the Executive report had omitted to specifically identify the post of Scrapstore Officer (CE12125) for deletion and the consequent redundancy of the two job-share postholders. In order to address this omission and to enable the arrangements to proceed at the appropriate time, the Director Community and Environment, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, Chair of Scrutiny Committee - Community, Chief Executive and Head of Human Resources, had authorised the deletion of the post and redundancy payments to the two affected postholders.

RESOLVED that the decision taken under delegated authority by the Director Community and Environment, in consultation with appropriate members and officers, in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations be noted and supported.

86

CENTRAL HEATING - RENNES HOUSE - DECISION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY

Executive was requested to note a decision taken under delegated authority by the Acting Head of Housing Services in consultation with the Leader of the Council, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Social Inclusion and appropriate officers.

The Acting Head of Housing Services had instructed the Contracts and Direct Services in-house team to negotiate best value rates with their principal electrical sub-contractor to expedite the supervision of work to complete the installation of improved energy efficient electric central heating systems in Rennes House before the onset of winter 2011. The decision was taken under delegated authority since there was insufficient time before the start of the heating system to allow for full normal procurement/tendering procedures to be carried out. It was unlikely that the work would otherwise be completed before February 2012 and the undue disruption and inconvenience to the mainly elderly tenants over the winter was considered unacceptable.

A member requested that the heating system in Toronto House be investigated.

RESOLVED that the exercise of this authority, undertaken in consultation with appropriate members and officers in accordance with the Council's Contract and Financial Regulations, be noted and supported.

87

APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES TO SERVE ON OUTSIDE BODIES

The schedule of appointments to outside bodies was circulated.

RESOLVED that the following appointments to outside bodies be made:-

St Leonard's with Holy Trinity Charities – Cllr N Shiel
St Thomas Church Charities (Seldon and Others) – Mrs C Smith

RECOMMENDED that the following outstanding appointments be agreed by Council:-

Exeter Dispensary and Aid in Sickness Fund
Exeter Fairtrade Steering Group

88

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985 - EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that, under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

89

EXETER AND HEART OF DEVON GROWTH BOARD MINUTES

The minutes of the Exeter and Heart of Devon Growth Board of 26 July 2011 were circulated.

Members acknowledged the important role of the Board and were pleased to note its co-operative working and positive outcomes. They recorded their appreciation for the significant work undertaken by the Director Economy and Development.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Exeter and Heart of Devon Growth Board of 26 July 2011 be noted.

(Minutes circulated to Members)

(The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 6.20 pm)

Chair

The decisions indicated will normally come into force 5 working days after publication of the Statement of Decisions unless called in by a Scrutiny Committee. Where the matter in question is urgent, the decision will come into force immediately. Decisions regarding the policy framework or corporate objectives or otherwise outside the remit of the Executive will be considered by Council on 18 October 2011.