

EXECUTIVE

Tuesday 24 January 2012

Present:

Councillor Edwards (Chair)
Councillors Denham, Fullam, R M Hannaford, Mrs Henson, Martin, Mrs Morrish, Sheldon
and Sutton

Also present:

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

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MINUTES

Subject to the deletion of the word "Centre" in the fifth line of the third paragraph of Minute 118 (Parking Tariffs) at the request of Councillor Baldwin at Council, the minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2011 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

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GRANTS COMMITTEE

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Grants Committee held on 1 December 2011 be received.

(Minutes circulated)

125

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following personal interests were declared:

COUNCILLOR	MINUTE
Cllr R Hannaford	132 (member of Devon County Council Development Control Committee)
Councillor Mrs Henson	132 (lives in vicinity of Car Park North of Digby Drive)

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COUNCIL TAX BASE 2012/13

The report of the Head of Treasury Services was submitted, setting the 2012/13 Council Tax base in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations.

RESOLVED that, in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations, the amount calculated by Exeter City Council as its tax base for the year 2012/13 shall be 38,241.

(Report circulated)

HOUSING RENTS 2012/13

The report of the Head of Treasury Services was submitted, recommending a rent and service charge increase from 1 April 2012 for Council dwellings.

The Director Community and Environment reported that in addition to the general inflationary factor of 5.6%, the increase reflected rental convergence with the housing association sector within four years. In response to a question, the Director undertook to inform members of the proportion of tenants in receipt of Housing Benefit.

Executive supported the proposed rent and service charge increases and noted the support of Scrutiny Committee – Community on 17 January 2012.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) rents of Council dwellings are increased from 1 April 2012, by an average of 6.84% which includes a general inflationary increase of 6.1% together with the phased introduction of the Government's rent restructuring proposals; and
- (2) Service Charges are increased by 6.1% with the exception of charges specified in paragraph 3.1 of the report.

(Report circulated)

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUSINESS PLAN 2012-2042

The report of the Acting Head of Housing Services was submitted, informing Members of the outcome of the review of the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.

Scrutiny Committee – Community considered the report at its meeting of 17 January 2012 and their comments were noted.

The Director Economy and Development reported that the Council would adopt a 50 year maturity loan payment plan and the interest rate would be fixed at the current, historically low, level. He reported on the underlying key assumptions made in the Business Plan.

Members supported the Business Plan which described what the Council aimed to achieve as a landlord in the short, medium and long term. They acknowledged that the Council had benefited from an efficient, effective and forward-looking Housing service for many years which had enabled the Council to be free of housing debt. They welcomed the opportunity to maximise resources and flexibility in order to improve services and respond to the challenging housing crisis. The Portfolio Holder Housing and Community Involvement informed members that a report on special needs housing would be made to a future Scrutiny Committee – Community.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) the conclusions in the report be approved;
- (2) the Council adopts a 50 year equal repayment of the debt; and

- (3) a further review is undertaken of the HRA Business Plan annually and the findings reported to Members.

(Report circulated)

129 **DIRECTORSHIP OF THE ASSOCIATION OF RETAINED COUNCIL HOUSING (ARCH)**

The report of the Acting Head of Housing Services was submitted, advising Executive of the changes which the Association of Retained Council Housing (ARCH) is proposing to make to its governance and structural arrangements.

The Director Community and Environment reported that in order for the Council to retain its ARCH Executive Board status in the new arrangements it must nominate Directors to the Board.

Members acknowledged the significant benefits of the Council's membership of the organisation including consultancy and the opportunity to contribute to Government consultation and policy-making. They also commented on the importance of ensuring that the Council received value for money in respect of membership of such organisations.

RESOLVED that, in accordance with s.323(1) of the Companies Act 2006 the Portfolio Holder Housing and Community Involvement and the Assistant Director Housing and Contracts be authorised to be Directors of ARCH and execute voting rights on behalf of the Council.

(Report circulated)

130 **EXETER VISITOR STRATEGY 2012-16**

The report of the Head of Economy and Tourism was submitted, seeking approval to the final draft of the Exeter Visitor Strategy 2012-2016.

Scrutiny Committee – Economy considered the report at its meeting of 19 January 2012 and Executive noted their comments. The Director Economy and Development reported that two of the most significant factors identified by members of the Committee as influencing the success of the Strategy related to the importance of an adequate public transport infrastructure and sufficient hotel bedspaces.

Members noted the summary of comments and suggestions received through the consultation process and were pleased that responses had generally been very supportive of the overall approach of the Visitor Strategy and its proposed Action Plan.

RESOLVED that the Exeter Visitor Strategy 2012-2016 be approved.

(Report circulated)

131 **CORE STRATEGY INSPECTOR'S REPORT AND ADOPTION**

The report of the Director Economy and Development was submitted, seeking support for the adoption of the Core Strategy and subsequent forward planning work.

The Director reported that the Inspector had found the Core Strategy as amended to be sound but had proposed three changes to the plan which related to: (a) the adequacy of housing land supply (b) further investigation into the location of Gypsy and Traveller sites and (c) the deletion of reference to employment land at Ibstock Brickworks. Whilst the introduction of provisions of the Localism Act meant that the Inspector's modifications would no longer have binding status after 21 February, he strongly advised the Council to adopt them in order to strengthen the Council's position at appeal.

Members welcomed the proposed adoption of the Core Strategy which they hoped would ensure a carefully planned future for the City rather than ad hoc responses to development proposals. They were pleased to note that the Council would join the 30% of local authorities which had an adopted Core Strategy and recorded their appreciation for all the hard work of the officers involved.

RECOMMENDED that the Core Strategy as amended by the Inspector be adopted by the Council.

(Report circulated)

132

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICY STATEMENT

The report of the Director Economy and Development was submitted, seeking approval to the adoption of the Development Management Policy Statement (DMPS) which the Inspector examining the Core Strategy had recommended to deal with any shortfall in the provision of a five year housing land supply.

Councillor R Hannaford declared a personal interest in the issue as a member of Devon County Council's Development Control Committee.

Councillor Mrs Henson declared a personal interest as she lived in the vicinity of the Car Park North of Digby Drive which was listed as one of the sites not in the 2010 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment.

The Director reported that the Council had given a commitment to introduce a Development Management Policy Statement at the Examination into the Core Strategy and had provided a detailed example of such a statement. This document was the subject of consultation with stakeholders and had been debated at some length at the reconvened hearing.

RECOMMENDED that Council adopt the Development Management Policy Statement to constitute informal policy to deal with any issues relating to a shortage of housing land supply.

(Report circulated)

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APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES TO SERVE ON OUTSIDE BODIES

The schedule of appointments to outside bodies was circulated.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) the intention of Exeter Municipal Charities to merge with Lord Mamhead Homes be noted and their request for a reduction from seven to four Council representatives in addition to the Lord Mayor be approved; and

RECOMMENDED that:-

- (2) an appointment to replace Alderman NWF Long on Exeter Municipal Charities (General List) be agreed at Council.

(Report circulated)

134 **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 items on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12a of the Act.

135 **DISPOSAL OF 15 CHURCH STREET, HEAVITREE**

The report of the Acting Head of Estates Services and Acting Head of Housing Services was submitted seeking approval to dispose of 15 Church Street, Heavitree from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) by selling it on the open market.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) the Acting Head of Estates Services be authorised to dispose of 15 Church Street on the terms outlined in this report; and
- (2) the Acting Head of Housing Services be authorised to use the funds generated from the sale to purchase suitable homes to meet the City Council's current social housing needs.

(Report circulated to Members)

136 **ACQUISITION OF 16 CHANTER COURT**

The report of the Acting Head of Estates Services and Acting Head of Housing Services was submitted, seeking Members' approval to the acquisition of the 50% share of 16 Chanter Court held by the current shared ownership tenants.

RESOLVED that the Acting Head of Estates Services be authorised to acquire a 50% share in 16 Chanter Court, subject to consultation with the Portfolio Holder Housing & Community Involvement and the Acting Head of Housing Services.

(Report circulated to Members)

137 **RETIREMENT OF HAZEL BALL**

On the occasion of her last Executive meeting, members recorded their appreciation to Hazel Ball, Director Community and Environment for her long and dedicated service and for the significant contribution she had made to the Council.

(The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 6.15 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 21 February 2012.