

SCRUTINY ECONOMY COMMITTEE

31 May 2012

Key Elements of the Programme for the Economy Portfolio for 2012/13

The importance of Exeter's economy as an economic hub and focus for growth within Devon and the wider South West is clear. The area provides a base for leading regional, national and international employers, attracting people with higher level skills and investors. Maintaining and improving the competitiveness of and confidence in the city for investment, promoting and helping people into employment and attracting more visitors have to remain high priorities

There are continued uncertainties in the economy. Therefore an absolute priority for the City Council must be to continue to support growth and recovery.

The key priorities for supporting growth and recovery in 2012/2013 are summarised as follows:

- We will continue to work with Land Securities and the Crown Estate to build on the City Centre Vision, and feasibility study undertaken with a view to bringing forward the development of the Bus & Coach Station site. 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. In conjunction with these proposals we will undertake feasibility and initial planning for a new leisure facility.
- In the short term 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.
- A priority for this year will be to continue to work to capitalise on the investment that has been made in the "Growth Point" outside the city. We will continue to 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.
- 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.
- Develop the Council's approach to helping people into employment. The report before Scrutiny Committee sets out some proposals including the creation of a number of apprenticeship opportunities within the Council.
- We will continue to progress the development of Exeter Science Park with a particular focus on progressing the first buildings on site and its promotion.
- We will maintain our support for measures to promote business formation and survival through a programme of activities coordinated by Exeter Business Support which is based on a partnership with the University of Exeter Innovation Centre.
- Support for the formation and survival of social enterprises.
- Agree and implement a place marketing strategy differentiating the city from others focussing on promoting and securing investment in the Exeter economy.

- Provide a responsive and proactive commercial property and investment support service to facilitate investment and the finding of suitable accommodation.
- Work with the Cultural Partnership to prepare a cultural strategy to develop the breadth and quality of activity in the city and to realise the contribution culture can make to the life of residents and the city's economy.
- We will continue to support key festivals in the city including Respect, Animated Exeter and the Exeter Festival of South West Food and Drink. Recognising the importance of events and festivals to the image, attraction and enjoyment of the city, we do recognise a gap at the moment in the spread and nature of events across the year. We will, with partners, be looking to develop either a new kind of event, or variation of an existing one, where resources allow.
- We will seek to support district shopping centres in local communities to ensure they continue to be vibrant and vital. This will require attention through the planning process, and consideration of approach to support communities through the New Homes Bonus.

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Portfolio Holder Economy and Tourism
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