

EXECUTIVE

Tuesday 18 September 2012

Present:

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

Also present:

Chief Executive, Strategic Director (KH), Strategic Director (MP), Assistant Director Business Transformation, Assistant Director City Development, Assistant Director Housing and Contracts and Member Services Manager

81

MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 19 June and 3 July 2012 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as correct.

82

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

The following personal interest was declared:

COUNCILLOR	MINUTE
Fullam	85 - Employee of Sanctuary Housing Association.

83

KITCHEN AND BATHROOM REPLACEMENT PROGRAMME

The report of the Assistant Director Housing and Contracts was submitted, seeking approval to increase the housing capital programme for the next three years to accelerate the programme of kitchen and bathroom replacement in the Council's housing stock.

Scrutiny Committee – Community considered the report at its meeting on 4 September 2012 and the support and comments of members were noted.

Members were informed that previous failures in the delivery of the kitchen and bathroom replacement contracts had led to an underspend on the capital budget since 2010/11 and a backlog in the programme. The proposal was to carry over the underspent surplus from the failed contracts in the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme as well as invest additional funding in the replacement programme in future years. In response to a question, the Portfolio Holder stated that the Council sought to invest in the improvement of existing housing stock as well as allocating funding towards new build.

RECOMMENDED to Council that, subject to satisfactory half-yearly progress reports on the contractors' performance:

- (1) an additional £1.775m be allocated to the capital programme in 2012/13 for replacement kitchens, bathrooms, associated works and staff costs; and
- (2) an increase in the Housing Capital Programme to £3.7m in 2013/14 and £3.8m in 2014/15 be approved for replacement kitchens, bathrooms, associated works and staff costs.

(Report circulated)

84

REVIEW OF ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR HOUSING LANDLORD SERVICES

The report of the Assistant Director Housing and Contracts was submitted, seeking approval for the Council's amended Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Policy and Procedures for tackling anti-social behaviour on the Council's housing estates. The current policy and procedures had been in place since 2009 and a comprehensive review would be undertaken every three years. The fall in satisfaction levels for the service had been disappointing – it was hoped that minor changes in policy and the proposed revised procedures would address the issues.

Scrutiny Committee – Community considered the report at its meeting of 4 September 2012 and the comments and support of members for the revised provisions were noted. Executive supported Scrutiny Committee's proposal for a further internal review of practice and procedures and a report back to a future meeting of that Committee.

Executive endorsed the importance of taking anti-social behaviour complaints seriously. Members commented that neighbourhood disputes were often at the root of complaints and perceived incidents of anti-social behaviour may also emanate purely from a conflict in lifestyles. The Portfolio Holder informed Executive of measures such as sound-proofing which were being undertaken on a trial basis with a view to addressing some of the more common areas of complaint.

The Assistant Director Housing and Contracts reported that a further report would be made to Scrutiny Committee - Community and Executive in November/December on the Localism Act's provisions in relation to assured shorthold tenancies.

RESOLVED that the revised Anti-Social Behaviour – Statement of Policy and Procedure is adopted.

(Report circulated)

85

TENANCY SUCCESSION AND ASSIGNMENT POLICY

Councillor Fullam declared an interest in this item as an employee of Sanctuary Housing Association.

The report of the Assistant Director Housing and Contracts was submitted, setting out proposed changes to the Council's policy on the succession and assignment of tenancies.

Scrutiny Committee – Community considered the report at its meeting on 4 September 2012 and the comments and support of members were noted.

Members acknowledged that whilst the under-supply of social housing required a firm policy in respect of succession and assignment, the Council should also take a more flexible and humane approach in particular circumstances. Executive considered that the proposed amendments to the policy in respect of under-occupation, disabled adaptations and the establishment of an appeals procedure sought to achieve a balanced approach. Whilst the Council would still seek to release under-occupied properties, the revised policy would enable greater use of discretion in particular circumstances.

The Portfolio Holder Housing and Community Involvement proposed an additional recommendation relating to mutual exchanges which was supported.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) in cases where succession or assignment occurs as a result of a bereavement, the current Succession and Assignment Policy is revised to:
 - (i) define properties as “more extensive” when there is more than one bedroom in excess of requirement;
 - (ii) define properties which have had disabled adaptations as “substantially different” where the value of the adaptation exceeds £1000; and
 - (iii) introduce an appeals procedure;
- (2) the revised provisions would not apply to mutual exchanges.

(Report circulated)

86

ACQUIRING S106 AFFORDABLE HOMES

The report of the Assistant Director Housing and Contracts was submitted, seeking approval for the purchase of 16 new build affordable homes on two separate development sites in the city at a total cost of £212,546.

Executive supported the purchase of the homes which presented the opportunity for the Council to increase its housing stock and provided excellent value for money. The Portfolio Holder Housing and Community Involvement particularly welcomed the additional provision of properties built to wheelchair accessible standards which were in short supply, an issue which had previously been raised by Scrutiny Committee-Community.

RESOLVED that the purchase of 16 new affordable homes at Dean Clarke House and the Royal Naval Stores Depot be approved at a cost of £212,546 to be met from the HRA Capital Programme.

(Report circulated)

87

AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

The report of the Assistant Director City Development was submitted, briefing Members and seeking views on:

- the contents of a draft Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), prepared to amplify affordable housing policy contained in the Exeter Core Strategy;
- the intention to publish the SPD for public consultation; and
- the contents of an Initial Screening Statement prepared to accompany the draft SPD.

Executive noted that, in the current economic climate, housing schemes coming forward in Exeter were generally proving unable to deliver 35% affordable housing and that Policy CP7 currently rendered many smaller housing schemes unviable. Members supported the pragmatic approach proposed in the draft SPD to address these and other issues.

Further to comments raised by Planning Member Working Group, the Assistant Director City Development proposed that the draft SPD be amended to include a reference to the clauses in S106 agreements that if a certain percentage of dwellings are not commenced within three years from the issue of planning permission, the Council may require Affordable Housing provision to be re-assessed to reflect market conditions then prevailing.

RESOLVED that publication of the draft Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document, attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be agreed for public consultation for about six weeks and that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director City Development to make any minor editorial changes prior to publication.

(Report circulated)

88

PROPOSED ARTICLE 4 DIRECTION TO CONTROL DEMOLITION OF THE CRAWFORD HOTEL, ALPHINGTON ROAD

The report of the Assistant Director City Development was submitted, proposing an Article 4 Direction (under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, as amended), to remove the permitted development right for demolition, with immediate effect, for The Crawford Hotel, Alphington Road, Exeter. He reported that the Hotel was on the Exeter list of Buildings of Local Importance but this did not protect it from threat of speculative demolition.

Executive considered that the Hotel was a significant building in the area and noted local support for the proposal.

RESOLVED that Executive:

- (1) considers that the demolition of The Crawford Hotel without the benefit of planning permission would be prejudicial to the proper planning of the Council's area or constitute a threat to the amenities of the Council's area and that it is expedient that such demolition should not be carried out unless permission is granted for it on an application to the Council;
- (2) delegate to the Assistant Director City Development in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Development and Transport the responsibility to make an Article 4 Direction relating to The Crawford Hotel, Alphington Road in the form (or substantially in the form) of the draft Direction in Appendix 2 of the report, to consider any representations and to decide whether to confirm the Direction with or without amendments.

(Report circulated)

APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES TO SERVE ON OUTSIDE BODIES

The schedule of appointments to outside bodies was circulated.

RESOLVED that the following appointments be agreed:-

- Councillor Laws to replace Councillor Edwards on the Exeter Citizens Advice Bureau
- Councillor Ruffle to replace Councillor Mitchell on Exeter Board
- No further appointment be made to the Exeter Business Centre Board
- Councillor Sutton, Deputy Leader be appointed to the Police and Crime Panel

RECOMMENDED that the following appointments be made by Council:-

- To replace Mr JF Marshall on Exeter Municipal Charities (Church List)
- To replace Mr PJ Shepherd on St Sidwell's Parish Lands and Other Charities.

(Schedule circulated)

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, 3 and 4 of Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Act.

EXETER SCIENCE PARK

In the absence of the Leader, the Deputy Leader took over the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

The report of the Strategic Director was submitted, setting out progress being made to develop the Exeter Science Park and, as part of this, the preferred delivery option for the Exeter Science Park Centre, the first building on the Science Park. The Centre would provide a catalyst to support the overall development of this strategic employment site, and would lead to the creation of 245 knowledge-based jobs over 2014-8. The report outlined the funding package to deliver the Science Park Centre and the requirements from the City Council.

Executive noted that the development of phase 1 of the site had stalled in the current economic conditions and thanked officers for the considerable efforts they had made to progress the project. Members supported the business model proposed and hoped that the bid for Growing Places funding through the South West Local Enterprise Partnership would be successful.

RECOMMENDED that Council:-

- (1) approves the commitment to provide a guarantee to the Exeter Science Park Company to underwrite the loan sought from the Growing Places Fund up to a maximum sum of £914,000 in proportion with our share holding and on the understanding that all other partners commit funds on the same basis with eventual reimbursement from the development account;

- (2) notes that the County Council has agreed to enter into a further agreement with the Exeter Science Park Company and other stakeholders to oversee the future long term development fund;
- (3) approves the City Council contribution up to £150,000 if necessary, towards a cost overrun on the construction of the Science Park Centre, the funding to be reimbursed to the City Council from the development account; and
- (4) upon the completion of the Further Agreement, delegated authority is given to the Chief Executive to sign the shareholders agreement relating to the Exeter Science Park Limited.

(Report circulated to Members)

92

EXETER AND HEART OF DEVON GROWTH BOARD MINUTES

RESOLVED to note the minutes of the Exeter and Heart of Devon Growth Board meeting held on 16 July 2012 and the comments of Scrutiny Committee – Economy thereon.

(Minutes circulated to Members)

93

HR UNIT RESTRUCTURE

The report of the Assistant Director Business Transformation was submitted, requesting the approval of the restructuring of the Human Resources (HR) Unit. The proposal would result in the overall reduction in posts within the unit (12.90 to 8.75 FTE) and ensure HR had the capacity and capability to deliver support to the Council currently and in the future.

Members supported the proposed business partner operating model whereby HR advisers would develop a greater understanding of business needs in relation to HR issues in their designated service areas.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) the proposed restructuring of the HR unit be approved; and
- (2) the payment of compensation to any postholders made redundant in line with the Council's agreed redundancy policy be approved under the provisions of the Local Government (Early Termination) (Discretionary Compensation) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006.

(Report circulated to Members)

(The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 6.45 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 16 October 2012.