

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - ECONOMY

6 September 2012

Present:

Councillor Crow (Chair)

Councillors Brock, Bialyk, Bull, Crew, Lyons, Pearson, Prowse, Robson and Wardle

Apologies:

Councillors Choules, Leadbetter and Mottram

Also present:

Strategic Director (KH), Strategic Director (MP), Assistant Director Economy, Principal Economic Development Officer, Projects and Business Manager, City Arts and Events Manager and Member Services Officer (SLS)

In attendance:

Councillor Sutton - Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Development and Transport
Councillor Denham - Portfolio Holder for Economy and Tourism

32 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following personal interests were declared:-

COUNCILLOR	MINUTE
Councillor Prowse	33, 34 and 35 (Member of Devon County Council)
Councillor Bull	34 and 38 (Member of Devon County Council's Highways and Traffic Orders Committee and Arts practitioner, part of the organisation of Exeter Respect and is known to the owner of the Bike Shed Theatre)

33 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL UNDER STANDING ORDER 20

Councillor Prowse declared a personal interest as a Member of Devon County Council.

In accordance with Standing Order 20, a question from a Member was put to the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Development and Transport in respect of pavement parking issues. The Portfolio Holder replied. Copies of the question had previously been circulated to Members. The question and the reply from the Portfolio Holder (in italics) are appended to the minutes.

34 SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT ON SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

Councillor Prowse declared a personal interest as a Member of Devon County Council. Councillor Bull declared an interest as a Member of Devon County Council's Highways and Traffic Orders Committee.

The Projects and Business Manager presented a report which sought Member support for the draft Supplementary Planning Document on Sustainable Transport, prior to the commencement of a public consultation exercise. The document is to form part of the emerging Local Development Framework for Exeter and has been produced to aid compliance with Objective 5 of the Core Strategy, to achieve a step change in the use of sustainable transport. The report will also be considered by Members of the Planning Member Working Group before seeking approval of the draft for public consultation by Executive at their meeting on 2 October.

The Projects and Business Manager responded to a number of comments:-

- Inclusion of electric vehicle charging points was just one way of reducing emissions. The Council's Air Quality Action Plan set out other measures and he would respond to Councillor Wardle on the specific timescales for improving air quality within the city.
- The use of priority lanes (bus lanes) could allow Heavy Goods Vehicles to maintain a higher gear when travelling through the city, thereby reducing emissions. (A Member referred to a recent meeting of the County Council's Exeter Highways and Traffic Orders Committee and the Congestion Working Party, which were considering ways of reducing the number of HGV's travelling through the city centre).
- The cycle parking standards were in some cases higher than those in the Local Plan, and in some cases lower. The new approach was based on evidence; for example the workplace standards were based on best practice at establishments like the Met Office and the Environment Agency.
- In accordance with Government policy, car parking standards were no longer maximum but indicative standards. On its own, restriction of parking could cause displacement into residential areas, as was complained of around the RD&E Hospital, although that establishment has put a number of measures in place such as its own park and ride service and considerable amounts of cycle parking.
- There had been steady growth in car club provision, with the facility available in Exe Street as part of a car free development, and also in Topsham. This was also being pursued at new developments in Monkerton and Newcourt, as part of a package of measures to encourage less car use and greater use of other means of transport.
- The Green Infrastructure Study crosses local authority boundaries with East Devon and Teignbridge District Councils. There was a correlation between cycle routes and the green infrastructure.

Scrutiny Committee – Economy supported the report and recommended Executive to approve the draft Sustainable Transport Supplementary Planning Document for public consultation.

(Report circulated)

35 **TRANSPORT INITIATIVES AND ISSUES UPDATE**

Councillor Prowse declared a personal interest as a Member of Devon County Council.

The Projects and Business Manager updated Members on the progress made in relation to transport initiatives and issues affecting Exeter and the City Council's involvement, both as a planning authority as well as providing transport infrastructure. The report included a summary of the Devon Metro rail proposals as well as a package of other public transport developments, traffic management and road improvements, cycling and walking. The report emphasised the need to ensure that any new development was designed to maximise sustainable modes of travel, and where possible to influence policy making and promote Exeter's interests. The report also contained a paper about the Invitation to Tender for the Great Western Franchise, for which bids have to be submitted by 25 October.

The Projects and Business Manager provided an update on the refurbishment of the Central Station forecourt. This had involved prolonged dealings with Network Rail in particular, but work should finally commence by the end of the current financial year. He also responded to a Member's question on the location of the new crimson information 'monoliths', which would incorporate a touch screen and real time transport information and would be located (a) at the corner of Sidwell Street by John Lewis, (b) in Cowick Street, and (c) in or near Princesshay, (the final location was still under discussion with Land Securities). A Member referred to the County Council's Exe Rail Project Working Party and had been impressed with the various initiatives to improve public transport. He felt that both the City Council and Devon County Council should be congratulated on their achievements and he fully endorsed the report.

Scrutiny Committee – Economy noted the report and Members offered their continued support for the Council's improvement in initiatives designed to enable and encourage more sustainable travel.

(Report circulated)

36 **PLACE MARKETING STRATEGY - EXETER ECONOMY 2012 - 2016**

The Principal Economic Development Officer presented a report on the outcome of consultation on the draft Place Marketing Strategy and sought to provide Members with an opportunity to comment on the final proposed document. The report set out the outcome of the consultation which had taken place in July and August. The report also set out a summary of the proposed first year of actions of the three year marketing programme. One of the aims of the Strategy was to help attract investment and skilled workers to the Exeter economy and raise awareness of the local economy. One outstanding action was to continue to find an appropriate strapline to portray the overarching characteristics of the local economy, which could be adopted by local businesses.

A Member referred to the previous presentation by the South West Local Enterprise Partnership and asked if they could attend a future meeting. The Assistant Director Economy said he would extend a formal invitation to a future meeting as appropriate. He stated that there was every indication that the Growth Board partners would contribute towards the much needed staff resources to deliver the strategy. There needed to be a dialogue about how to find the right approach through the Marketing Alliance when the area covered both Exeter and East Devon.

Scrutiny Committee – Economy supported the final proposed Place Marketing Strategy, and the commitment of the Marketing Budget to support the implementation of the Place Marketing Strategy.

(Report circulated)

37 **PROGRESS REPORT: UNEMPLOYMENT IN EXETER**

The Principal Economic Development Officer presented a report which updated Members on trends in unemployment within Exeter, and the support available to help people back into work. He provided an update on the apprenticeship scheme at the City Council, as two apprentices had been taken on in business administration support in Environmental Health and Civic Support. They would study for a business administration qualification. Two more apprentices will be taken on at the Museum and also in the Parks and Gardens Service. A Member congratulated the Council on their recruitment of apprentices and hoped there would be more in future years. The Strategic Director (MP) confirmed that the initial aim was to start with these apprentices and have a further intake next year and expand the scheme in future years. The City Council had created a separate funding stream to allow this scheme to progress. The apprentices will be mentored by designated colleagues within the Council as well as their progress charted by colleagues in Human Resources and staff at Exeter College. Members welcomed this excellent initiative.

A Member referred to the Job Seekers Allowance claims for the period until July 2012 and suggested it would be more relevant to show a comparison of previous years. The Strategic Director (KH) confirmed that Members received a regular copy of the economic trends. A Member referred to the long term unemployment rate and any effort to improve the situation had to be welcomed. The Principal Economic Development Officer stated that the unemployment rate for 2012 showed 40 fewer people and 10 more claiming over the 12 month period. A Member also hoped that every effort would be made to develop more local procurement involving local companies as they should be in a good position to fulfil up and coming contracts.

Scrutiny Committee – Economy noted the report and the progress made.

(Report circulated)

38 **ANNUAL ARTS AND EVENTS REVIEW 2012**

Councillor Bull declared a personal interest as an art practitioner who is known to the owner of the Bike Shed Theatre and has contributed towards the organisation of the Exeter Respect Festival.

The Festival and Events Manager presented a report which sought to review and report back to Members on the performance of the festivals and events portfolio, comprising Exeter Open Studios in 2011 and in 2012, Animated Exeter, Vibraphonic,

Respect and the Exeter Torch Relay. Officers have also been working to develop a major new festival for the city in two phases in 2013/14, which would involve commissioning outdoor arts performances using indoor and outdoors spaces across the city. She drew attention to the achievements made in 2012, despite there being no major festival event as the centrepiece. A Member congratulated the Festival and Events Manager and her team on the summer's activities which had worked very well throughout the city.

Scrutiny Committee – Economy noted the report on the performance of the festivals and events portfolio in 2012/2013 and the proposed approach to the festival programme of phases in 2013/2014.

(Report circulated)

39 **BUDGET MONITORING REPORT TO 30 JUNE 2012**

The Strategic Director (KH) presented the report on material differences by management unit to the revised budget. The current forecast suggested that net expenditure forecast for this Committee would decrease by a total of £386,830 after transfers to and from reserves, which represented a variation of 13% from the revised budget. The main variations by management unit were detailed in the report and it was noted that the budget remained ahead of profile. He responded to a Member comment stating that Exeter was bucking the retail trend, stating that the work by Members to address the local economy were now coming to fruition.

The Strategic Director responded to a Member's comment and confirmed that the allocation for a pay award had been included in the 2012/13 budgets, but the profile had changed. The Strategic Director also responded to a comment on car parking income which was expected to exceed expectation, despite the closure of the King William Street Car park. Members were right to question whether the income would hold, but there was every indication that the improvements in the city's footfall and potentially the car parking income would continue.

Scrutiny Committee – Economy noted the report.

(Report circulated)

40 **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 for the consideration of the following item on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3, of Part1, Schedule 12A of the Act.

41 **EXETER AND HEART OF DEVON GROWTH BOARD MINUTES**

The Strategic Director (KH) provided an update on the Cranbrook development following the occupation of the first houses, including the imminent opening of the new primary school. A Member sought the approach needed for an upgrade of the partial barrier at the Crannaford railway crossing, which he had previously raised at the County Council's Devon and Exeter Rail Project Working Party. The Strategic Director (KH) suggested the Member write to East Devon District Council to draw

attention to the current level of infrastructure. He also confirmed East Devon District Council had engaged service providers such as the PCT in the planning of the new community and provision for GP facilities in Cranbrook had been taken into account.

Scrutiny Committee – Economy noted the content of the Exeter and Heart of Devon Growth Board Minutes.

(Report circulated to Members)

The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 7.15 pm

Chair