

EXECUTIVE

Tuesday 9 April 2013

Present:

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

Apologies:

Councillor Fullam

Also present:

Chief Executive, Strategic Director (KH), Strategic Director (MP), Assistant Director Finance, Corporate Manager - Legal, Corporate Manager Democratic and Civic Support, HR Business Manager and Member Services Manager

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DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests were made.

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OVERVIEW OF CAPITAL EXPENDITURE 2012/13

The report of the Assistant Director Finance was submitted, reporting on the current position in respect of the Council's revised annual capital programme and advising Members of the anticipated level of deferred expenditure into future years.

Members were advised that the revised capital programme for 2012/13 was £20.101 million. During the first nine months of the year the Council had spent £11.119 on the programme, which equated to 55.32% of the revised programme. The Assistant Director Finance identified the main variances, achievements and issues which had affected the programme. He drew attention to the requirement to replace the PARIS Income Management System which no longer met regulatory payment industry standards and was being withdrawn at the end of the year.

Councillor Brock attended the meeting and spoke on this item under Standing Order 44. In response to her enquiry regarding the current position on the conversion of 22 St David's Hill, the Portfolio Holder Housing and Community Involvement reported that a meeting was due to take place with ward Councillors later that week.

The Strategic Director (KH) undertook to confirm the latest position with regard to the CCTV camera which was part of the Well Oak Footpath scheme.

Scrutiny Committee – Resources considered the report at their meeting of 20 March 2013 and its support was noted.

RECOMMENDED to Council that:-

- (1) the request for additional funding of approximately £25,000 to upgrade the PARIS Income Management System be approved; and
- (2) the report be noted.

(Report circulated)

OVERVIEW OF GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2012/13

The report of the Assistant Director Finance was submitted, advising Members of the overall projected financial position of the General Fund Revenue Budget and Housing Revenue Account after nine months, for the 2012/13 financial year.

The Assistant Director Finance reported on the main variances affecting expenditure. He reported the forecast reduction in Service Committee net expenditure for 2012/13 which totalled £299,470 and the forecast General Fund and Housing Revenue Account working balances.

Scrutiny Committee – Resources considered the report at their meeting on 20 March 2013 and their comments were noted.

Executive was pleased to note the forecast underspend on Service Committee budgets. Members also welcomed the reduction in the Council's sundry debts over 30 days old. The Assistant Director Finance undertook to provide members with more detail in respect of the outstanding debt on trade waste.

RECOMMENDED to Council to approve:

- (1) the General Fund forecast financial position for the 2012/13 financial year;
- (2) the HRA forecast financial position for 2012/13 financial year;
- (3) the outstanding Sundry Debt position as at December 2012; and
- (4) the creditors' payments performance.

(Report circulated)

REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY REVIEW MEMBER WORKING GROUP

The report of the Scrutiny Review Member Working Group, on the operation of the scrutiny function within the Council, was submitted. The cross-party Working Group had been established by Council on 16 October 2012.

Councillor Margaret Baldwin, Chair of the Working Group, presented the report. She informed Executive of the background to the review, the issues and options explored by the Working Group, the conclusions reached and the recommendations made. She acknowledged the contribution of all members and officers who had participated in the review.

Executive recorded their appreciation to the members of the working group and those officers who had supported it, for their comprehensive review of the operation of the scrutiny function within the Council. They welcomed the proposal for an independent Audit and Governance Committee reporting directly to Council.

Members acknowledged that the Council's constitution already provided a range of powers to facilitate effective scrutiny and emphasised the importance of providing training for members in order to ensure that these were more fully utilised. They welcomed the proposal to formulate an annual, more outwardly focussed, scrutiny work programme and the prioritisation of business at Scrutiny Committee meetings.

They acknowledged the successful operation of Task and Finish Groups and supported their continuation. They agreed that the establishment of a Scrutiny Programme Officer post within the new Democratic Services team was integral to the successful implementation of the proposals.

The Leader endorsed the need for greater clarity in the presentation of information, particularly financial data, in Committee reports and the importance of developing members' expertise to enable them to make informed decisions. The Strategic Director (MP) proposed that the presentation and monitoring of information would in itself be an appropriate subject for a scrutiny review.

RECOMMENDED to Council:-

- (1) to support the principles for the effective operation of the scrutiny function as set out in paragraph 4.3 of the report, including appropriate training events which members would be expected to attend;
- (2) to agree the establishment of an Audit and Governance Committee with effect from 15 May 2013, with the terms of reference set out in Appendix 1 of the report, and the deletion of the existing Final Accounts Committee and Standards Committee;
- (3) to approve the payment of a Special Responsibility Allowance of £2,237 per annum to the Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee, with effect from 15 May 2013;
- (4) to agree the terms of reference for the three Scrutiny Committees as set out in Appendix 2 of the report;
- (5) to agree the reporting lines to the Scrutiny Committees and the Audit and Governance Committee, as set out in Appendix 3 of the report;
- (6) to delegate to the Corporate Manager Democratic and Civic Support all consequential amendments required to the Constitution;
- (7) to agree the establishment of a part-time Scrutiny Programme Officer post in Democratic Services as set out in paragraph 6 of the report; and
- (8) to review the operation of the new arrangements approximately one year after implementation.

(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 Councillor Baldwin be appointed as the Council's representative on the Exe Estuary Management Partnership; and

RECOMMENDED that appointments to the following organisations be made at Council:

- The Exeter Municipal Charity
- The Exeter Phoenix Arts Centre Board

(Schedule circulated)

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ANNUAL PAY POLICY STATEMENT

The report of the Human Resources Business Manager was submitted seeking approval to the Council's annual Pay Policy Statement 2013/14 in line with legislative requirements. The Chair agreed to accept consideration of the item as a matter of urgency since local authorities are required by Section 38(1) of the Localism Act 2011 to produce a pay policy statement on an annual basis.

RECOMMENDED to Council that the Pay Policy Statement 2013/14 and Appendix be adopted and published in accordance with legislation.

(Report circulated)

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

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EXETER SCIENCE PARK CENTRE

The Chair agreed to accept consideration of this item as a matter of urgency in view of the need to finalise negotiations between the Exeter Science Park Company (ESPC) and the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) on the terms of the Growing Places Fund loan to enable the Science Park Centre to be built.

The report sought approval for a small variation to the conditions of the Council's support for the project, as recommended by Executive on 19 March 2013 to Council. The Chief Executive reported that the other partners of the Exeter Science Park Company had accepted the variation.

RECOMMENDED to Council to accept the City Council being jointly and severally liable with its partners in committing to underwrite the Growing Places Fund loan from the Local Enterprise Partnership, in support of securing the building of the Exeter Science Park Centre.

(Report circulated to Members)

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EVOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL'S TOP MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

The Chief Executive and all remaining officers, other than the Human Resources Business Manager and the Member Services Manager left the meeting during consideration of this item.

Martin Denny, Principal Consultant of the Local Government Association (LGA) attended the meeting and presented the report which informed members of the outcome of processes put in place following consideration of changes to the Council's senior management structure by Executive on 19 March. The LGA were supporting the Council in considering and implementing further changes, having previously worked with the Council on the major senior management restructuring and recruitment process which took place in 2011/12.

Executive supported the proposals set out in the report.

RECOMMENDED to Council that:-

- (1) the request for voluntary redundancy by the Chief Executive, in accordance with paragraphs 4.1 and 4.2 of the report, and the terms and conditions of the Council's Organisational Change Policy, be approved with an effective date of 31 July 2013;
- (2) the proposed arrangements for recruiting to the two new posts of Chief Executive & Growth Director and Deputy Chief Executive, as described in paragraphs 4.3 to 4.5 of the report, be approved; and
- (3) the names of the members constituting the Recruitment Panel, as described in paragraph 4.4 of this report and including Councillor Mitchell as the Liberal Democrat Group representative, be agreed.

(Report circulated to Members)

(The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 6.25 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 23 April 2013.