

## **EXECUTIVE**

Tuesday 26 November 2013

### **Present:**

Councillor Edwards (Chair)  
Councillors Denham, Fullam, Hannaford, Mrs Henson, Owen, Pearson and Sutton

### **Also present:**

Chief Executive & Growth Director, Deputy Chief Executive, Assistant Director Housing and Contracts, Assistant Director Economy, Assistant Director Environment, Assistant Director Customer Access and Assistant Director Public Realm

102

### **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meetings of the Executive held on 17 September and 1 October 2013 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as correct records.

103

### **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests were made.

104

### **IMPROVING HOUSING RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT**

The report of the Assistant Director Housing and Contracts was submitted, seeking Members' approval to improve the way that the Council involves its housing residents in the management and strategic direction of the services they receive.

The Assistant Director Housing and Contracts stated that the approach set out in the report reflected the Council's commitment to new ways of working introduced by the systems review process and changes to the regulatory framework in which housing operated. It was likely that the methodology proposed in the report would be fine tuned to enable the Housing Performance and Projects Manager to focus on other tasks and to expand residents' involvement beyond simply the remit of the Performance Scrutiny Partnership. He also commented that careful thought needed to be given on how best to recruit new members of the Performance Scrutiny Partnership going forward in order to obtain a representative cross-section of opinion.

The Portfolio Holder Housing and Customer Access clarified that the approach proposed was to streamline the current system and enable a strategic view to be taken with regards to resident scrutiny of the landlord performance management. He thanked the Housing Resident Involvement Manager for her exceptional work and the Chair of Scrutiny Committee – Community for his involvement as Chair of the Performance Review Committee.

Members discussed the issue of ensuring that there was a diverse representation on the Performance Scrutiny Partnership which could include the co-option of members on to the Partnership should it be appropriate.

Scrutiny Committee – Community considered the report at its meeting on 12 November 2013 and the comments of Members were noted.

**RESOLVED** to approve:-

- (1) the new direction for Housing Resident Involvement;
- (2) the proposal to dismantle the existing Resident Involvement Governance Structure and create a single Performance Scrutiny Partnership from 1 April 2014;
- (3) the redundancy of the Housing Resident Involvement Manager from 1 April 2014;
- (4) the creation of a new part time administrative role from 1 April 2014; and
- (5) that the Performance Scrutiny Partnership consider ways to ensure there is diverse representation on the Partnership.

105

### **ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE**

The report of the Assistant Director Environment was submitted, providing an updated report on the environmental performance of the Council in a single document, and seeking approval for a revision of the three strategies to one overall strategy. Following consultation, a final report would be brought back to Members for approval in the New Year.

In response to Members, the Assistant Director Environment clarified that there was currently a national Communities and Local Government Review which threatened the energy efficient requirement in the City Core Strategy. The Exeter Together Initiative was a collective energy purchasing scheme that had been part of a national Department of Energy and Climate Change sponsored project. The Council had undertaken this in partnership with other Authorities and private industry, which encouraged householders come together collectively to buy cheaper energy and switch energy provide. This national project was focussed on learning about behavioural change and what motivated people to switch energy providers. Work was being undertaken with community groups to encourage a greater take-up of composting through community composting schemes.

Member's discussed the difficulties of insulating older and listed properties; the Councils installation of solar panels on its buildings, its proposals for District Heating Systems and the need to encourage residents to use composting bins.

The Chair requested that a report be brought back to outline the budget implications of supplying composting bins to residents on new housing developments to encourage composting.

Scrutiny Committee – Community considered the report at its meeting on 12 November 2013 and the comments of Members were noted.

**RESOLVED** that:-

- (1) the report be noted;
- (2) the revision of the Environmental, Carbon Management and Climate Change strategies in to one encompassing strategy be approved; and

- (3) a revised Environmental Performance Strategy to be brought to Executive in draft form for consultation in Spring 2014 and subsequent approval following consultation.

106

### **EXETER CULTURAL ACTION PLAN NOVEMBER 2013 TO 2015**

The report of the Museums Manager and Cultural Lead was submitted, presenting to Members the new two year Cultural Action Plan produced by the Exeter Cultural Partnership (ECP) in association with the City Council. The Action Plan represented the next phase of work to be undertaken by the ECP Steering Group.

Councillor Leadbetter spoke on this item under Standing Order no.44. He stated that the Scrutiny Committee – Economy supported the excellent work that the Exeter Cultural Partnership had undertaken on the Exeter Cultural Action Plan. There were, however, some concerns regarding how the Action Plan would move forward, measuring outcomes and what would happen if the funding application to the Arts Council was not successful.

The Portfolio Holder Economy and Culture agreed that the Action Plan was a positive way forward whilst recognising the challenges in measuring its outcomes. It was important to grow the relationship with ECP and through them engagement with the wider cultural sector to ensure long term positive changes for the city. It would be beneficial for the Portfolio Holder for Economy and Culture to sit on the ECP and that the Partnership regularly update the Council on progress being made.

The Portfolio Holder City Development clarified that should the application to the Arts Council be unsuccessful then the Action Plan and the bid content would be used to inform other applications for Grants from the Arts, Heritage Lottery Funding.

Scrutiny Committee – Economy considered the report at its on 14 November and their support of the continuing work of the Exeter Cultural Partnership and the request that they and the Portfolio Holder for Economy and Culture be kept informed with, at least an annual report of progress of the Action Plan, were noted.

**RESOLVED** that the proposed Action Plan be supported, its adoption as the Council's framework document for planning, developing and supporting cultural activities in the city be agreed and that a report updating Members on progress with the Action Plan be brought back to this Committee.

107

### **LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME FOR 2014/15**

The report of the Assistant Director Customer Access was submitted, seeking Members' view on the local Council Tax Support Scheme (CTS) for 2014/15.

Members were updated on the various components, financial impact and administration of the current Scheme including the Exceptional Hardship Fund. The Council, from 2014/15, would no longer receive a ring-fenced grant from Central Government for the cost of the CTS. The amount of CTS expenditure, together with the other Council Tax discounts and exemptions expenditure would need to be defined during the setting of the Council Tax base.

Councillor Leadbetter spoke on this item under Standing Order no.44. He commented on the estimated savings requirement of nearly £1.2 million and on the

80% threshold for support for working age claimants. He highlighted that the impact of the CTS was one of areas that the Cost of Living Forum was considering.

Members welcomed the fact that the Council Tax recovery rate was only marginally down from last year whilst acknowledging that there may still be recovery issues in cases where full financial circumstances of claimants were yet to be determined. Members commended the proactive work being done by officers in the newly designed System to help residents with their financial problems and acknowledged that contacting those residents that were having to pay Council Tax for the first time, having previously received 100% Council Tax Benefit was likely to have contributed to the low impact on recovery rates. They also considered what impact the welfare benefits changes coming forward could have on the Council's future collect rates as well as the financial strain on residents and expressed concerns about the numbers of working people in the City who were living in poverty.

The Assistant Director Customer Access commented that there had been a total of 11 awards from the Exceptional Hardship Fund as at the end of September 2013. The 'One View of Debt' team had been working to take a holistic view to help residents with their financial issues and this approach was working well in supporting those residents with financial problems.

Members supported the proposal to develop a Council tax Base Protection policy and the Assistant Director Customer Access confirmed that this work would be done within the newly established 'One View of Debt' team.

**RECOMMENDED to Council:-**

- (1) the continuation of the Current Scheme for the local Council Tax Support, from 1 April 2014;
- (2) the continuation of the current Council Tax discounts for Empty Unoccupied and Unfurnished properties and Empty Uninhabitable/Major Works properties from April 2014;
- (3) that a decision is taken on the adoption of a Council Tax base protection policy including the use of statutory fines up to prosecution for fraudulent cases;
- (4) the document attached as an appendix to this report are noted; and
- (5) that officers begin modelling the Scheme for 2015-16, for consideration by Council, reflecting any necessary proposed reductions to the current level of support as a result of reductions in Government funding.

**RUGBY WORLD CUP FUNDING**

The report of the Assistant Director Economy was submitted, seeking formal approval for the City Council to commit resources to support its Host City status for three games in the Rugby World tournament in September/October 2015.

The Assistant Director Economy advised that the Rugby World Cup was the third largest global sporting events and Exeter had been chosen as one of the Host Cities. As a Host City, the Council accepted responsibility for the provision of a Fanzone and a number of other activities as set out in the report.

Councillor Leadbetter spoke on this item under Standing Order no.44. He welcomed the Rugby World Cup tournament to the City and hoped that Exeter residents would have every opportunity of being involved.

Members discussed the economic benefits that the tournament would bring to the city and local businesses, possible income from food and drink stalls in the Fanzone to off-set the Council's contribution to costs as the Fanzone would have free entry and the need for the city to build on the legacy of the Rugby World Cup.

Whilst the majority of Members supported the way forward proposed to enable the City Council to sign the required formal Host City agreement, one Member had concerns that there was not a more detailed budget in place.

The Assistant Director Economy clarified that the budget as proposed would be used to fund the provision of the Fanzone and legacy work. The Fanzone would include a large screen, 24 hour security, toilet facilities, fencing, signage, cleaning and other costs over the prolonged period of time of the games, not just the three games to be played at Sandy Park. The £300,000 proposed was based on the advice of experienced event organisers and in taking this forward would be the subject of detailed negotiation with suppliers to manage expenditure as effectively as possible. Progress and expenditure would be reported to future meetings.

**RECOMMENDED** to Council to commit up to £300,000 towards activities relating to the city being a Host City for games and visitors to the Rugby World Cup 2015.

(In accordance with Standing Order 43, Councillor Fullam requested that his name be recorded as having voted against the recommendation)

109

#### **FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS FOR CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT**

The report of the Assistant Director Public Realm was submitted, advising Members of the arrangements for the delivery of on-street civil parking enforcement from 1 April 2014. Members were advised that the annual fee offer to Exeter for 2014/15 was £421,219. The counter-proposal of £487,572 was not accepted by the County Council on the basis that it would not enable them to deliver their required savings.

**RESOLVED** that the report and the proposals for parking enforcement post 31 March 2014 be noted.

110

#### **PARKING TARIFFS**

The report of the Assistant Director Public Realm was submitted, recommending that there should be no increase in parking tariffs until April 2015 at the earliest. The proposals also included the revocation of the present Parking Places Order and the making of a new Parking Places Order.

Councillor Baldwin spoke on this item under Standing Order no.44. Whilst she welcomed the freezing of charges until April 2015 she asked that the Council look again at the tariff for Topsham Quay Car Park. She commented that the current car park charges were too expensive, not in line with other district shopping centre car parks in the city and that Topsham Quay Car Park should be a long stay visitor's car park. She advised that the Topsham Traders were intending to open on the four Sundays leading up to Christmas and requested that the Council allow free parking for these Sundays in the Topsham Quay Car Park.

The Portfolio Holder Economy and Culture commented that the Topsham Quay Car Park Working Group had not been able to agree on a way forward. She advised that the Council would be undertaking a review of parking in the city, this review to take a holistic approach to all parking. In the meantime, from now until Christmas parking would be free in all City Council-run Pay and Display car parks after 5pm with those paying for three hours in Pay and Displays on Sundays being able to get the rest of the day's parking free.

In response to a Members comment, the Portfolio Holder Economy and Culture stated that without wishing to pre-empt the outcome of the Car Parks Review, it was evident that the use of the car parks at Howell Road and Parr Street has declined since the new tariffs were introduced and as a result, in addition to the recommendations in the report, it was proposed that Howell Road and Parr Street would revert to Tariff Band 3: Long Stay Visitors Car Parks when the Parking Order was sealed.

Members welcomed the freezing of car parking tariff until April 2015 as this would encourage visitors to the city and help to stimulate economic growth; the free parking proposed in the run up to Christmas; and the re-designation of Howell Road and Parr Street car parks to long stay car parks.

The Portfolio Holder City Development acknowledged the difficulties with parking in Topsham and supported the suggestion of the working group of increased and better signage of car parks. There was also a need to encourage the Topsham Traders to make use of alternative parking facilities and not park in valuable on street spaces that could be used by potential visitors.

**RESOLVED** that:-

- (1) no increase in the tariffs and charges shown in Annex A until April 2015 at the earliest be agreed;
- (2) the City of Exeter (Civil Enforcement Off Street Parking Places) Order 2012 be revoked and a new City of Exeter (Civil Enforcement Off Street Parking Places) Order 2014 be drafted and advertised, and officers be authorised to make all necessary operational and general amendments to the detail by way of clarification, as part of the Order;
- (3) the Order be amended to permit parking at the rear of the Civic Centre on all days and the times of parking be varied to favour customers visiting the Council offices;
- (4) the provisions in the Order concerning types of vehicle that may be parked in Council car parks to be amended and where necessary the boundaries of the car parks be clarified;
- (5) the provisions in the Order concerning types of Permit and conditions of use to be amended and Authority for determining the dates upon which Flexible Permits are to be available is delegated to the Assistant Director Public Realm in consultation with the Leader and Portfolio Holder for Economy and Culture;
- (6) authority be given for subsequent Amendments to the 2014 Order or later Orders to include the addition of parking places within the civil enforcement area is delegated to the Assistant Director Public Realm in consultation with the Leader and Portfolio Holder for Economy and Culture;

- (7) authority to make limited experimental interventions within the scope of the City of Exeter (Civil Enforcement Off Street Parking Places) Orders be delegated to the Assistant Director Public Realm in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Economy and Culture;
- (8) authority to consider any objections to the proposed Order be delegated to the Assistant Director Public Realm in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Economy and Culture;
- (9) the Order be amended to permit Howell Road and Parr Street car parks to be designated as Tariff Band 3: Long Stay Visitors Car Parks; and
- (10) subject to consideration of any objections, the City of Exeter (Civil Enforcement Off Street Parking Places) Order 2014 be made and sealed.

111

### **FUTURE DEVELOPMENT IN THE CITY**

The report of the Assistant Director City Development was submitted, briefing Members on the context for, and showing the relationships between, the forthcoming strategic planning documents which will guide future development in the city:

- Development Delivery Development Plan Document (DPD)
- The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)
- The Housing Land Review
- The Revised Development Delivery Policy Statement

The Assistant Director City Development clarified that the Housing Land Review assessed the sustainability of a number of areas in the City for development and this document could be used as a evidence based guide to ensure that the Council remained in control of planning in the city.

Members discussed the need to ensure that the Council had robust evidence based documents to protect the green setting of the city from development.

**RESOLVED** that:-

- (1) the publication of the Development Delivery Development Plan Document draft document for consultation and delegated power for the Assistant Director City Development in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder City Development to make minor changes to the document prior to publication be agreed;
- (2) the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment be noted;
- (3) the use of the Housing Land Review as an evidence base to guide the future development in the city be agreed; and
- (4) the Development Delivery Policy Statement to help deliver good development in the city be adopted.

112

### **DELEGATED AUTHORITY IN RESPECT OF FLEXIBLE TENANCIES**

The report of the Assistant Director Housing and Contracts was submitted, seeking approval for the delegation of authority to the Assistant Director Housing and

Contracts to grant, administer and, where necessary, terminate any flexible tenancy.

**RECOMMENDED** to Council that the Assistant Director Housing and Contracts be given delegated authority to grant, administer and, where necessary, terminate any flexible tenancy and that the Constitution be amended to that effect.

113

#### **APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

The schedule of representatives on outside bodies was circulated.

**RESOLVED** that:-

(1) the following appointment be agreed:-

**Exeter School** – Councillor Prowse to replace Mr J Taghdissian

(2) representatives serve on those bodies set out on the schedule; and

**RECOMMENDED** that the appointment to the Exeter Municipal Charity be agreed by Council.

114

#### **APPOINTMENT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FINANCE**

**RESOLVED** that the appointment of David Hodgson as Assistant Director Finance be noted.

(The meeting commenced at 5.35 pm and closed at 7.45 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 17 December 2013.**