

THE MEETING OF EXETER CITY COUNCIL

Guildhall
Tuesday 8 April 2014

The Right Worshipful the Lord Mayor (Cllr Lyons)
The Deputy Lord Mayor (Cllr Hannaford)
Councillors Baldwin, Bialyk, Bowkett, Branston, Brock, Bull, Choules, Clark, Dawson, Denham, Fullam, D J Henson, Mrs Henson, Leadbetter, Martin, Mitchell, Morris, Mottram, Newby, Owen, Payne, Pearson, Prowse, Robson, Ruffle, Sheldon, Shiel, Spackman, Sutton, Wardle and Winterbottom

11 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Crew, Crow, Edwards, Laws, Macdonald and Tippins.

12 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Special and Ordinary meetings of Council held on 25 February 2014 were taken as read and signed as correct.

13 **PLANNING COMMITTEE - 17 FEBRUARY 2014**

The minutes of the Planning Committee of 17 February 2014 were presented by the Chair, Councillor Bialyk and taken as read.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 17 February 2014 be received.

14 **PLANNING COMMITTEE - SPECIAL - 24 FEBRUARY 2014**

The minutes of the Special Planning Committee of 24 February 2014 were presented by the Chair, Councillor Bialyk and taken as read.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Special Planning Committee held on 24 February 2014 be received.

15 **PLANNING COMMITTEE - 17 MARCH 2014**

The minutes of the Planning Committee of 17 March 2014 were presented by the Chair, Councillor Bialyk and taken as read.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 17 March 2014 be received.

16 **LICENSING COMMITTEE - SPECIAL - 26 FEBRUARY 2014**

The minutes of the Special Licensing Committee of 26 February 2014 were presented by the Chair, Councillor Dawson and taken as read.

In respect of Minute 3 (Application for the Grant of a Sex Entertainment Venue Licence – EX4 – Eden Lounge, 162-163 Fore Street) and in response to a question, the Chair of Licensing Committee advised that the Decision Notice giving details of the meeting and the decision together with conditions would be published in due course.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Special Licensing Committee held on 26 February 2014 be received.

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LICENSING COMMITTEE - 25 MARCH 2014

The minutes of the Licensing Committee of 25 March 2014 were presented by the Chair, Councillor Dawson and taken as read.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Licensing Committee held on 25 March 2014 be received.

18

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - COMMUNITY - 4 MARCH 2014

The minutes of the Scrutiny Committee - Community of 4 March 2014 were presented by the Chair, Councillor Shiel and taken as read.

In respect of Minute 11 (Questions from Members of the Council under Standing Order 20) and in response to a question, the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Customer Access stated that it was anticipated that the introduction of fixed term tenancies would help to deal with issues such as damage to properties and anti-social behaviour. Whilst the majority of tenants leave their properties in a good state of repair, the Council would be taking a firm but fair approach when it came to the recovery of costs towards repairs when a tenancy was terminated.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Scrutiny Committee - Community held on 4 March 2014 be received.

19

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - ECONOMY 6 MARCH 2014

The minutes of the Scrutiny Committee - Economy of 6 March 2014 were presented by the Chair, Councillor Leadbetter and taken as read.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Scrutiny Committee - Economy held on 6 March 2014 be received.

20

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - RESOURCES - 19 MARCH 2014

The minutes of the Scrutiny Committee - Resources of 19 March 2014 were presented by the Chair, Councillor Baldwin and taken as read.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Scrutiny Committee - Resources held on 19 March 2014 be received.

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AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE - 12 MARCH 2014

The minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee of 12 March 2014 were presented by the Chair, Councillor Bowkett and taken as read.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 12 March 2014 be received.

EXECUTIVE - 18 MARCH 2014

The minutes of the Executive of 18 March 2014 were presented by the Deputy Leader, Councillor Sutton and taken as read.

In respect of Minute 36 (Bowling Green Road, Topsham – Damage Flood Defences) and in response to a question, the Deputy Leader clarified that the repair works for Bowling Green were being assessed. In order to claim the costs of these works from the Government's Bellwin Scheme, the works would need to be completed by the end of May 2014.

The Council expressed their thanks to all the staff that had worked tirelessly in Topsham during the recent period of extreme weather conditions.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Executive held on 18 March 2014 be received and, where appropriate, adopted.

EXECUTIVE - 1 APRIL 2014

The minutes of the Executive of 1 April 2014 were presented by the Deputy Leader, Councillor Sutton and taken as read.

In respect of Minute 42 (Overview of Revenue Budget) and in response to a question regarding the staff pension contributions, the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Health and Wellbeing clarified that the employers contribution rate for each employee was calculated by the pension fund administrator as it forecasts the level required to meet pension fund liabilities based upon current and past employees. The deficit on the pension fund was due to various reasons (investment performance of the pension fund, members living longer etc) and therefore employers' rates have had to increase to work towards closing the gap.

In respect of Minute 45 (Member's IT Provision), a Member wished his concerns regarding realising the proposed efficiency savings be noted.

In respect of Minute 50 (Bus and Coach Station Site) and in response to a question, the Deputy Leader assured Members that progress was being made with this project.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Executive held on 1 April 2014 be received and, where appropriate, adopted.

NOTICE OF MOTION BY COUNCILLOR MITCHELL UNDER STANDING ORDER NO. 6

Councillor Mitchell, seconded by Councillor Pearson, moved a Notice of Motion in the following terms:-

That the Council:-

- recognises the importance of its twinning relationship with Yaroslavl, Russia. The City Council recognises that this relationship is long-term and that it has been at its best when jointly we have put our people first, introducing them to new experiences and new friends. Our twinning relationship has helped us to meet, mix and get along, to share our ideas, our hopes and our fears and we have given each other support.

- It is in this spirit that Exeter City Council raises concern over the treatment of Lesbian Gay Bi-sexual and Transgender (LGBT) people in Russia. In 2013, The Russian LGBT Network, an umbrella LGBT group based in St. Petersburg, conducted an anonymous survey on discrimination against LGBT populations, more than 50% of the 2,007 respondents had experienced psychological abuse, and 15% had experienced physical violence.
- The recent proposals and adoption of anti-LGBT laws in Russia, which include banning representing “traditional” and “non-traditional” relationships as equally acceptable, making it illegal to say anything positive about being gay publicly, or to tell a child that there is nothing wrong with being gay or being raised by gay parents, has coincided with evidence of the spread of homophobic violence in the country.

Exeter City Council recognises that putting people first in our twinning relationships means putting all people first, whatever their sexual orientations.

Exeter City Council resolved to:-

- (1) To write to the Foreign Secretary and Russian Ambassador to the United Kingdom, expressing this Council’s disquiet at the continuing Civil Rights issues occurring in Russia, including the systematic discrimination towards the LGBT community; and
- (2) That it considers the above matter to be in direct contravention of the Twinning Agreement between the Cities of Exeter and Yaroslavl, dated 17 October 1989, and as such requests officers to:

Write to the City Administration in Yaroslavl offering its support to the LGBT community in Yaroslavl in particular and in Russia as a whole; and
 Make representations to this effect to the official delegation from Yaroslavl during their forthcoming civic visit to the City in July 2014.

In presenting the Notice of Motion, Councillor Mitchell stated that over the past 25 years the City Council had valued its twinning agreement with Yaroslavl and the friendship between the two cities. But like any friendship differences should be aired and open. The twinning agreement states that the “Cities are united in the desire to develop as far as is possible links between people in the USSR and Great Britain in a spirit of peaceful co-operation and mutual understanding of all peoples”. With the recent proposals and adoption of anti-LGBT laws in Russia which limits the rights of the LGBT community, he felt that this was not in spirit of the Twinning Charter.

The LGBT community and their supporters were subject to fines and even imprisonment and LGBT tourists were sometimes deported. The recent proposals include banning representing “traditional” and “non-traditional” relationships as equally acceptable and making it illegal to say anything positive about being gay publicly. Furthermore, LGBT community are not permitted to raise children and there has been evidence of the spread of homophobic violence in the country. The Mayor of Yaroslavl who supported human rights has been detained and is awaiting trial.

The City Council, whilst valuing the 25 year friendship between the two cities, recognises that putting people first in our twinning relationships means putting all people first, whatever their sexual orientations.

Councillor Pearson, in seconding the motion, thanked Councillor Mitchell for bringing this matter to the Council's attention. He stated that the Twinning Agreement includes the words "mutual understanding of all people" and asserted that all people are different and that no one should be discriminated against. He stated that the motion was not a criticism of the Yaroslavl City Administration or its residents but the Council expressing its disquiet at the continuing Civil Rights issues and the systematic discrimination towards the LGBT community occurring in Russia.

Councillor Winterbottom, seconded by Councillor Mrs Henson moved an amendment to part two of the Motion to read:

"Informal discussions take place with the Exeter/Yaroslavl Twinning Association, expressing the concerns of the Council over civil rights issues occurring in Russia, including the systematic discrimination towards the LGBT community, and urges them to raise these concerns with their counterparts in Yaroslavl".

The amendment proposed by Councillor Winterbottom was put to the vote and lost.

In supporting the motion, Councillors, whilst recognising the importance of the friendship and twinning agreement with Yaroslavl, supported upholding the rights of the LGBT community. People should not be victimised and subject to verbal and physical abuse because of their sexual orientations and in the twenty first century people should be free to choose whom they love.

Councillor Mitchell, in response, stated that this resolution sent a message that this Council does not tolerate the victimisation of the LGBT community and its supporters.

In accordance with Standing Order 27(1), a named vote on the Motion was called for, as follows:

Voting for:

Councillors Baldwin, Bialyk, Bowkett, Branston, Brock, Bull, Choules, Clark, Dawson, Denham, The Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor Fullam, Henson D, Mrs Henson, Leadbetter, The Right Worshipful the Lord Mayor, Councillor Martin, Mitchell, Morris, Mottram, Newby, Owen, Payne, Pearson, Prowse, Robson, Ruffle, Sheldon, Shiel, Spackman, Sutton and Wardle.

(32 Members)

Abstain:

Councillor Winterbottom

(1 Member)

The Notice of Motion was carried.

(The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and closed at 7.00 pm)

Chair

