

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - RESOURCES

17 September 2014

Present:

Councillor Baldwin (Chair)

Councillors Mottram, Bialyk, Brock, Bull, George, Lyons, Morris, Robson, Sheldon, Spackman and Tippins

Apologies:

Councillors Winterbottom

Also present:

Deputy Chief Executive, Assistant Director Environment, Assistant Director Finance, Corporate Manager Democratic and Civic Support, Corporate Manager Property, Corporate Energy Manager, and Democratic Services Officer (Committees) (SLS)

33 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2014 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as correct.

34 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of discloseable pecuniary interest were made.

35 Constitutional Changes - Strata

The Deputy Chief Executive advised that a report to amend the City Council's constitution in relation to this matter be withdrawn from this agenda to allow internal negotiations to continue. A report on the future governance structure will be prepared by all three Councils (Exeter City Council, Teignbridge District Council and East Devon District Council) to ensure the implementation of a shared ICT service through a wholly owned company to be known as 'Strata Service Solutions Limited. Members were advised that a sum of £970,000 funding for the shared service had been received as part of a Transformation Challenge award to the City Council as the City Council had demonstrated a commitment to re-engineer the business practice to help improve services for residents as well as reduce costs.

It was noted that a report would be presented to a Special Meeting of Scrutiny Committee Resources on Thursday 2 October at 5.00pm.

36 Review of Income Generating Measures: Task and Finish Group

Councillor Bialyk provided an update on the deliberations of the Income Generating Measures Task and Finish Group, which had been formed to help identify areas for investigation as a high priority. The Group had met and considered a number of suggestions which had been put forward. He wanted to ensure that Members and staff were sufficiently engaged and encouraged any further suggestions to be passed on, in the first instance to the Scrutiny Programme Officer.

It was currently envisaged that an interim report will be provided to Scrutiny Committee Resources at the next meeting in November.

37 **Capital Monitoring Statement**

The Assistant Director Finance presented the report, advising the current position in respect of the Council's revised annual capital programme and of the anticipated level of deferred expenditure into future years. The report also sought approval to amend the annual capital programme in order to reflect the reported variations. Details of the managed approach to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) was set out in the report as well as receipts which brought the total brought forward in excess of £2 million. He responded to a Member's comment on the possibility of Section 106 monies having to be returned if they were not used in a reasonable time frame, and stated that he could only recollect such action on one or two occasions. Following a request, he would ensure that future reports contained a glossary of terms to provide an explanation of the more technical financial terms.

Scrutiny Committee – Resources noted the current position and recommended approval by Council of the revised annual Capital Programme.

38 **Overview of the Revenue Budget 2014/15**

The Assistant Director Finance presented a report which advised Members of the overall projected financial position of the General Fund Revenue Budgets and Housing Revenue Account after three months, for the 2014/15 financial year. The report also sought approval for a number of supplementary budgets totalling £89,000. The report also contained details of the three Scrutiny Committees and the Housing Revenue Account, together with a budget variance after the first financial quarter of the year. The Service Committee budgets showed a forecast underspend of £66,290 against a revised service net expenditure budget of £12,372,560. It was projected that there will be an overall net contribution to the General Fund balance of £229,285.

The Corporate Manager Democratic & Civic Support responded to a Member's comment, welcoming the reduction in postage costs, and advised that savings had been achieved by using the TNT delivery service, who sort and then deliver to Royal Mail, enabling a greater discount. There may be the possibility of achieving further savings through the use of a bar code on all letters.

Scrutiny Committee - Resources noted the report and requested that Council approve the :-

- (1) General Fund forecast financial position for the 2014/15 financial year;
- (2) Housing Revenue Account forecast financial position for 2014/15 financial year;
- (3) additional supplementary budgets listed in Appendix C of the circulated report;
- (4) outstanding Sundry Debt position as at June 2014;
- (5) creditors' payments performance; and
- (6) Council Tax and Business Rates collection performance.

39 **The Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places within the Exeter Parliamentary Constituency**

Councillor Hannaford attended the meeting under Standing Order 44 to speak on this item.

The Corporate Manager Democratic & Civic Support and Returning Officer presented a report which set out the proposals for new polling district and polling places arrangements which have been recommended as a result of the Council's responsibilities under the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 and Schedule A1 of the Representation of the People Act 1983.

Councillor Hannaford requested that Members support the recommendation for four polling districts in the Exwick ward. He welcomed the opportunity to identify a fourth polling station.

The Corporate Manager Democratic & Civic Support and Returning Officer responded to a comment on the effect of the closure of buildings currently occupied by youth clubs and stated that there were no compelling powers to use any such premises with the exception of schools. He was in contact with Devon County Council to discuss the future approach. A Member considered that funding suitable community facilities for use as polling stations in Cowick was a challenge, but he made the suggestion of using the Trefoil Lodge in Buddle Lane. A Member also asked for further consideration of the location of one of the two Duryard polling stations, as it could be a busy student area and whether that was suitable venue for all voters. The Corporate Manager Democratic & Civic Support and Returning Officer reassured Members that factors such as examination periods would be taken into account at future elections, but there was a shortage of suitable accommodation in that ward.

Scrutiny Committee – Resources noted the report and recommended that Council be requested to approve the following:-

- (1) adoption of proposals set out in the report for implementation from a revised register of electors to be published on 1 December 2014;
- (2) the formal publication of the final report on the Review of Parliamentary Polling Districts and Places within the Exeter Constituency on 16 October 2014, as required by the Electoral Administration Act 2006; and
- (3) the completion of a further review by 31 January 2020, as required by the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013.

40 **Corporate Health and Safety Policy Update**

The Assistant Director Environment presented a quarterly update and advised that this formed part of the Corporate Health and Safety Management System which was designed to provide Members with an all-round briefing on corporate health and safety.

Scrutiny Committee – Resources noted the following:-

- (1) quarterly update as set out in Appendix I, and the Annual Health and Safety Report 2013 / 2014 at Appendix III; and also
- (2) requested that Executive recommend to Council, the approval of the changes to the Council's Health and Safety Policy, as set out in Appendix II to the circulated report.

41 **A Renewable and Energy Efficiency Programme Update**

The Corporate Manager Property provided an update on the Renewable and Energy Efficiency Programme work that has been undertaken since the previous report to Scrutiny Committee - Resources on 19 March 2014. The Deputy Chief Executive also referred to the aspirations to become an energy neutral Council and he confirmed that we were well on the way to achieving that.

The Corporate Energy Manager attended and made a presentation on the achievements and projects to ensure Exeter was an Energy Neutral Council. She

welcomed Member s' support and involvement, as well as staff to make a real change and enable Exeter to stand out as a forward thinking Council and low carbon city. A recent review of Civic Centre Energy had resulted in a number of projects with the Civic Centre as part of the renewable and Energy Efficiency Programme including –

- a number of water saving devices which had resulted in a reduction in water consumption;
- the introduction of energy efficient hand air dryers instead of paper towels;
- a reduction in oil used by the central heating system;
- the installation of LED lighting in the Civic Centre as part of a phased effective control approach;
- solar panels installed on the roof of the Civic Centre;
- an Electrical Vehicle Charge point project – both at the Civic Centre and at sites throughout the city had been developed with vehicle electrical charge points for residents and visitors. This innovative project had been achieved, without any capital costs through a government grant and sponsorship from BMW. The service was currently free to use at this stage, but there was an option to charge to cover running costs.

A number of other aspirations included –

- a business case being developed for the replacement of the oil fired boilers;
- the continued phased introduction of LED lighting on level one of the Civic Centre;
- tenders for the installation of Car Port Solar canopies on the top floor of John Lewis, Cathedral & Quay and Mary Arches car parks has been awarded to the preferred bidder.

Members congratulated the Council's Energy Team on the excellent work they had achieved so far. The Deputy Chief Executive also wanted to thank the small team who had both done an exceptionally good job and made significant progress, and with Member support they would continue to move forward.

Scrutiny Committee - Resources noted the progress made to date and delivering the Renewable and Energy Efficiency Programme.

42 **Budget Monitoring**

The Assistant Director Finance presented a report which advised Members of any major differences by management unit to the revised budget for the first three months of the financial years up until June 2014. The current forecast suggested that the net expenditure for this Committee would decrease from the revised budget by a total of £35,570 after transfers from reserves and revenue contributions to capital as detailed in an Appendix 1. This represented a variation of 0.61% from the revised budget and included supplementary budgets of £83,620.

Scrutiny Committee - Resources noted the report.

The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 6.40 pm

Chair