

EXETER CITY COUNCIL
SCRUTINY ECONOMY COMMITTEE
4 SEPTEMBER 2008

BEACON HEATH SURGERY

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 Council resolved on 15 July 2008 that the petition submitted by Councillor Martin to Dr Kevin Snee, the Chief Executive of the Devon PCT, be referred to Scrutiny Economy.
- 1.2 The petition, signed by 112 residents of the Beacon Heath area, states:

“We, the undersigned, call on you and your officers to take responsibility for the long delay in the provision of a new Health Centre for Beacon Heath and to deliver on your commitment to provide a much needed new primary care facility for the community”.

2.0 BACKGROUND TO THE PETITION

- 2.1 Officers have been discussing the possibility of releasing a site at Exhibition Fields (see annexed plan) for the provision of a new surgery for the Beacon Heath area since September 2004. A provisional agreement to make the site available on an Agreement for Lease and Long Lease basis was reached in May 2006. A planning application for the construction of a detached building to provide a medical centre and pharmacy, parking, access to the highway and associated works on the site was submitted in September 2006. Planning permission was approved at the Planning Committee meeting of 6 November 2006. Subsequent discussions between the Partners of the Southernhay Surgery (the Practice who are to take the site) and their commercial funders (Lloyds TSB plc) resulted in the City Council agreeing to make an exception to our normal disposal practice by agreeing to grant an up-front 250 year building lease. This was approved by City Council's Executive on 19 June 2007. It was also necessary to advertise the disposal of the land as public open space and to consider any objections to the disposal. This advertising and consideration process was completed in early September 2007. Since that time, officers have sought to conclude agreement of the Heads of Terms with the Practice, but there has been no substantive progress towards the grant of the building lease.
- 2.2 The City Council's Property Manager recently met with officers of the PCT and with representatives of the Practice and it has been confirmed that the issues currently causing delay are substantively between the Practice and their Bank. It is understood that the Practice and the Bank are looking to resolve these matters and hopefully they will soon have concluded their funding agreement so as to be able to give some idea as to when they may be able to draw down on the building lease and commence work on site. If this has happened before Scrutiny Economy, a verbal update can be provided at the meeting.

3.0 RESPONSE TO THE PETITION

3.1 In view of the fact that the underlying reason for the delay is between the Practice and its Bank, it would seem that the petition should perhaps have been directed at the Practice. Members are advised that City Council officers will continue to press the Practice to resolve the outstanding issues regarding funding and to drawn down on the building lease. However, neither the PCT nor the City Council is in a position to be able to enforce this course of action on the Practice.

4.0 RECOMMENDED that:

The petition be noted.

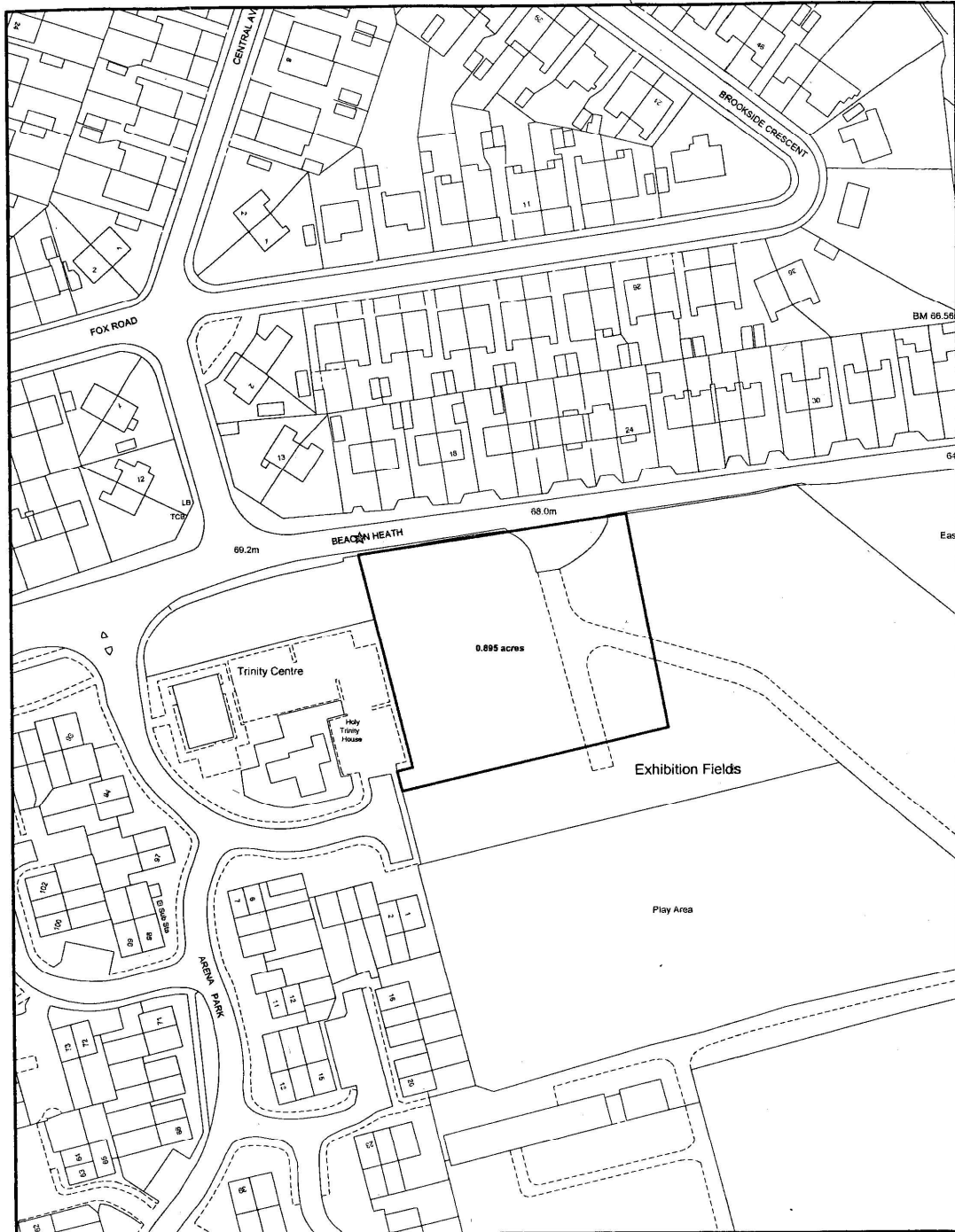
**DAVID PROSSER
HEAD OF ESTATES SERVICES**

**JOHN RIGBY
DIRECTOR**

ECONOMY & DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)
Background papers used in compiling this report:- None

Date: 24 July 2008/22/08/08



Scale 1:1250	Centre Grid Ref : 176-17	© Crown Copyright - Licence 100025458	Date : 23/02/2005
--------------	--------------------------	---------------------------------------	-------------------



Head of Estates Services, Directorate of Economy and Development, Exeter City Council, Civic Centre, Paris Street, Exeter, EX1 1NN.