

## EXECUTIVE

Tuesday 9 December 2014

### Present:

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

### Also present:

Chief Executive & Growth Director, Deputy Chief Executive, Assistant Director Economy, Assistant Director Finance, Corporate Manager Democratic and Civic Support, Corporate Manager Policy, Communications and Community Engagement, Customer Access Development Officer and Democratic Services Manager (Committees)

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### DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest were made.

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### MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES 2015/16

The report of Derek Phillips, Chair of Exeter's Independent Remuneration Panel was submitted which advised Members of the recommendations of the City Council's Independent Remuneration Panel in relation to Members' Allowances for 2015/16.

Mr Phillips, Chair of the Panel, acknowledged the experience of the two new Panel Members, Bryony Holden, Chief Executive of South West Councils and Graham Russell, a Senior Associate at South West Councils. He advised Members on the survey and interviews undertaken with 20 Councillors by members of the Panel. He outlined the recommendations to Council in respect of members' allowances for 2015/16 which equated to the officers' pay award for the coming year of 2.2%. The Panel expressed disappointed at the discontinuation of the Councillor's Pension Scheme and they would be pursuing this when opportunities arose.

The Leader thanked the Panel for all their hard work on the robust review of Members' Allowances.

**RECOMMENDED** to Council to agree the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel as set out in paragraph 4 of the circulated report.

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### RUGBY WORLD CUP 2015 UPDATE

The Assistant Director Economy updated Members on the current position with regards to the Rugby World Cup. He advised of recent activity in respect of Fanzone, transport, the volunteer programme, marketing strategy and the legacy. The Fanzone now had a draft risk assessment in place and, as part of the Fanzone, CCTV would be installed to the area rear of Boots, which would remain after the World Cup. Confirmation had now been received of the tour of the Trophy next summer. The ticket sales had indicated that about 80% of the sales for the Exeter

venue had gone to the wider South West Area. Tickets sales also indicated that 500 to 1,000 foreign visitors were expected per game although additional visitors from overseas were likely to visit the city during the World Cup. A further detailed report would be brought back to the next Executive.

The Leader commented that the World Cup was expected to generate £39 Million for the local economy.

The Portfolio Holder for Economy and Culture stated that the Business community was now starting to come on board and a number of working groups had been set up with local businesses. The four main media communications organisations within the city had now formed a media bank to work together promoting the Rugby World Cup. Ultimately, it was down to the businesses in the city to take advantage of the increase footfall and additional income that this event would bring to the city.

**RESOLVED** that the position be noted.

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### **MAJOR GRANTS AND NEW HOMES BONUS PANEL MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Major Grants and New Homes Bonus Panel held on 27 November 2014 were submitted.

In response to a question, the Portfolio Holder for Economy and Culture clarified that any decision regarding the future of Exeter Arts Council would be considered by the Major Grants and New Homes Bonus Panel and then Executive.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Major Grants and New Homes Bonus Panel held on 28 July 2014 be received and, where appropriate, adopted.

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### **BUSINESS CASE FOR THE COUNCIL'S CHANNEL SHIFT PROGRAMME**

The report of the Assistant Director Customer Access was submitted summarising the Council's Channel Shift Programme, outlined in the Business Case attached to the report. Officers were requesting the approval of funding on an invest- to-save basis, which sought to improve the Council services to customers whether they approach the Council face to face, by telephone or via internet-enabled provision.

The Deputy Chief Executive outlined the Council's positive approach to the e-delivery of services which included a request for the approval of funding on an invest-to-save basis.

The Customer Access Development Officer gave an overview of the Business Case and identified the cost benefit to the Council over a six year period. The programme would provide high quality telephone and on-line services to enable staff to have more time to deal face to face with those customers with more complex needs. The on-line self service portal would offer a simple, but secure point of access allowing the customer to view every aspect of their transaction with the Council. Customers would still be able to come into the Civic Centre to speak face to face or over the phone to a member of staff to progress their queries and obtain advice and help.

The Leader thanked the officers involved for their hard work in putting this Business Case together.

A Member stated that whilst generally supporting the way forward, he had concerns regarding the Council meeting the needs of the residents with difficult circumstances and the elderly who might not readily have access to technology.

The Portfolio Holder for Economy and Culture commented that the Council needed to ensure that it was 'Fit for Purpose' and while encouraging the use of digital technology, officers would be available for face to face contact with those residents that require extra support.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Customer Access stated that the Council needed to move to a digital form of providing service particularly as Universal Credit was rolled out. The Council would continue to offer face to face service for customers with complex needs. It was hoped that in the future the Customer Service Centre would move towards becoming a community hub with a multi agency presence.

The Portfolio Holder for Enabling Services stated that there would still be a face to face presence and that this system would free up more time to be spend on those residents that needed it the most.

Scrutiny Committee – Resources considered the report at its meeting on 19 November 2014 and the support and comments of the Members were noted.

**RECOMMENDED** that Council approves the identified Capital and Revenue funding for the Programme, noting the predicted savings to be subsequently accrued.

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#### **PROPOSED PASSENGER LIFT AT RAMM QUEEN STREET ENTRANCE**

The report of the Museums Manager and Visitor Services Officer was submitted updating Members on the issues relating to the museum's existing DPAL (Disability Platform Access Lift) at the Queen Street entrance, mis-haps and potential risk to visitors and the Council. The lift had not been included as part of the redevelopment of the Museum and there was now a need to ensure that the lift was fit for purpose.

Scrutiny Committee – Resources considered the report at its meeting on 19 November 2014 and the support and comments of the Members were noted.

**RECOMMENDED** that Council approves the installation of an enclosed passenger lift at RAMM's Queen Street entrance and associated works with a budget of £45,000.

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#### **OVERVIEW OF REVENUE BUDGET 2014/15**

The report of the Assistant Director Finance was submitted advising Members of the overall projected financial position of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and the General Fund Revenue Budgets for the 2014/15 financial year after six months.

The Assistant Director Finance referred to the overall position in respect of the General Fund and the working balance which was projected to rise from £3,364,640 to £3,469,275. He brought to Members' attention the variance in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) which was due to a more realistic budget being set and the on-going work taking place to reduce void times, this work would now be extended to the void times in private sector leasing.

Members were advised of the supplementary budgets and two further requests for funding including a sum of £80,000 for the appointment of a Quantity Surveyor and a Construction Design and Management Consultant in respect of the Leisure Complex Project. An additional £11,500 was also required to develop the Business Case for the Channel Shift Programme to include the creation of a temporary post.

In response to a Member's question, the Assistant Director Finance clarified that two vacant sweeper's posts had been deleted from the establishment. The saving of £255,000 in the Customer Service Centre were prior to those expected as a result of the Channel Shift Programme.

Scrutiny Committee – Resources considered the report at its meeting on 19 November 2014 and the support and comments of the Members were noted.

**RECOMMENDED** that Council approve the:-

- (1) General Fund forecast financial position for the 2014/15 financial year;
- (2) HRA forecast financial position for 2014/15 financial year;
- (3) additional supplementary budgets listed in Appendix C;
- (4) outstanding Sundry Debt position as at September 2014;
- (5) creditors' payments performance; and
- (6) Council Tax and Business rates collection performance.

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#### **CAPITAL MONITORING STATEMENT TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2014**

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

The Assistant Director Finance advised Members that the grants of £3 million to the Environment Agency for the flood defence works and £615,000 to Strata had now been paid, and £500,000 of the £1 million loan will be paid to the Science Park in January 2015. These payments would show an improved position with regards to the performance of the capital programme.

Members were advised of an additional funding request of £50,000 to invest in the Municipal Bond Agency created by the Local Government Association, which would allow the Council to become a shareholder. A letter of intent had been sent by the 4 December. There had also been an additional funding request for £37,500 for new lighting at Exton Road, as part of a health and safety recommendation to bring the lighting to an acceptable standard to enable staff to work safely in the proximity of refuse collection vehicles at all hours.

A Member raised concerns regarding the impact of the borrowing on the revenue account, the offset of the expenditure on the Athletics Track against a saving in sports facility refurbishment and the underspend on energy saving projects.

The Assistant Director Finance clarified that as not all of the sports facility refurbishment budget was required, it had been used to offset the additional expenditure on the replacement of the Athletics Track at Exeter Arena. The underspend of £425,000 in respect of energy saving projects was being carried

forward to the next financial year and work was on going to deliver energy saving schemes.

The Portfolio Holder for Enabling Service commented that the Council had recently received an award for all the work it was undertaking on Energy Saving Projects.

The Portfolio Holder for Economy and Culture clarified that Parkwood Leisure did invest in maintenance, improvement of leisure facilities and equipment as part of their contract.

Scrutiny Committee – Resources considered the report at its meeting on 19 November 2014 and the support and comments of the Members were noted.

**RECOMMENDED** that the Council notes and approves:-

- (1) the current position in respect of the annual capital programme; and
- (2) the additional funding request set out in section 8.8.

(In accordance with Standing Order no.43, Councillor Fullam requested that his voting against this recommendation be recorded)

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#### **TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2014/15 HALF YEARLY UPDATE**

The report of the Assistant Director Finance was submitted on the current Treasury Management performance for the 2014/15 financial year and the position regarding investments and borrowings at 30 September 2014. The report was a statutory requirement and was for information only with no key decisions required.

The Assistant Director advised that, currently, monies were invested in accounts where the funds could be recalled the next day and all money market funds used were triple A rating organisations.

Scrutiny Committee – Resources considered the report at its meeting on 19 November 2014 and the support and comments of the Members were noted.

**RESOLVED** that the Treasury Management report in respect of the first six months of the 2014/15 financial year be noted.

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#### **BUDGET STRATEGY 2015 - 2016**

The report of the Assistant Director Finance was submitted, providing a strategic overview of the budgetary position for the 2015/16 financial year and beyond including an indication of the likely level of available resources and the known demand for resources and the proposals to ensure that a balanced budget was achieved. The medium term financial plan predicated a balanced budget by 2018/19.

A Member raised concerns regarding the omission of the New Homes Bonus Funds from the figures as this was an income and that the cost of the borrowing was rising.

The Assistant Director Finance clarified the following points in response to Members:-

- the monies for Wear United had not been paid and as this project was no longer going ahead the funds would be added back to the Local Infrastructure Fund budget
- the interest and debt payments with regards to the Leisure Complex Project were included in the medium term financial plan
- advice from the External Auditors and the Audit Commission is that using the New Homes Bonus funds to plug revenue budgets is not appropriate
- the Council does borrow to fund its capital programme.

The Leader stated that the Council did not know how long the New Homes Bonus funding would continue therefore it was not being used to support the revenue account, as in many authorities, and was being spent on projects to increase economic growth in the city.

**RESOLVED** that the contents of the report be noted and the proposals to establish a balanced revenue budget and capital programme be approved.

(In accordance with Standing Order no.43, Councillor Fullam requested that his voting against this recommendation be recorded and Councillor Leadbetter requested that his abstention from voting be recorded)

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### **APPROVAL TO ESTABLISH A NEW STANDING LIST**

The report of the Acting Service Lead – Corporate Property Assets Management and Interim Corporate Procurement Manager was submitted examining, in accordance with the contract regulations, the need for modified and comprehensive standing lists of approved contractors to better meet the changing needs of the Council. The report further sought to simplify the process of adding or modifying standing lists in the future to enable more efficient management of processes. Devon County Council would not charge the City Council to use its standing list.

The Leader welcomed the development of procedures to ensure that small and medium sized businesses were able to compete fairly for Council contracts.

**RESOLVED** that:-

- (1) a trial of the Devon County Council Select List of Approved Contractors (Devon SLoAC) be approved to assess its validity in use as an addition to the Council's own Approved List of Contractors;
- (2) the Interim Corporate Procurement Manager develop procedures to ensure that Small and Medium sized businesses are able to compete fairly for Council let contracts:

**RECOMMENDED** to Council:-

- (3) that delegated authority be given to Assistant Director Finance and Corporate Manager Property to approve the creation or modification of approved contractor standing lists and the Constitution- Contract Regulations - section 2.5.5 be amended accordingly.

## **ELECTORAL REVIEWS OF DEVON AND EXETER**

The report of the Corporate Manager Democratic and Civic Support and Returning Officer was submitted detailing the City Council's proposed response to the Local Government Boundary Commission's current electoral review of Devon. The report also informed Members of the proposed electoral review of the City of Exeter and its implications.

Members were advised of the reasons for the review and of the City Council's concerns for the need to ensure that the County Council and City Council Boundaries were co-terminus. There was a need to move the City Council review swiftly to ensure that adequate time was allowed for consultation and the subsequent implementation of any boundaries changes. The date for an initial decision was mid January 2015.

Member discussed the possible implications of Individual Elector Registration (IER) and the effect this could have on ward numbers and boundaries and there was concern that this could have a detrimental affect on the review.

In response to a Member, the Corporate Manager Democratic and Civic Support and Returning Officer clarified that the review would include the most up to date figures plus projections until 2021. Currently under IER the registered number of electors was short by 6,000.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Customer Access raised concerns regarding the lack of co-terminosity between County and City boundaries and the negative effective this could have on community cohesion in the city.

The Corporate Manager Democratic and Civic Support and Returning Officer clarified the three criteria that the Boundary Commission must balance which included the interest and identities of local communities.

The Leader proposed an amendment to the membership of the cross party working group to consider the Council's initial decision on its future size and electoral cycle and that it should comprise of four Labour Group Members, two Conservative Group Members and one Liberal Democrat Group Member. This was carried.

### **RESOLVED** that:-

- (1) the comments contained in this report form the basis of the City Council's response to the Local Government Boundary Commission's electoral review of Devon;
- (2) in relation to the Local Government Boundary Commission's electoral review of Exeter, a cross party working group comprising four Labour Group Members, two Conservative Group Members and one Liberal Democrat Group Member be established to consider the Council's initial decision on its future size and electoral cycle; and
- (3) in relation to the Local Government Boundary Commission's electoral review of Exeter, an Extraordinary meeting of Council be held on 20 January 2015, to consider the recommendations of the above working group.

(In accordance with Standing Order no.43, Councillor Fullam requested that his voting against this recommendation be recorded)

**SCRUTINY REVIEW WORKING GROUP REPORT**

The report of the Corporate Manager Democratic and Civic Support was submitted updating Members on the trial changes to the Scrutiny Agendas and meetings during September and November 2014. The report also outlined the findings of the cross party Scrutiny Review Working Group in respect of the success of these trial changes and comments received from other Members and officers.

Members agreed that the changes had improved the smooth running of the Scrutiny meetings.

**RESOLVED** that the findings of the Scrutiny Review Working Group together with other Member/Officer comments were noted: and

**RECOMMENDED** to Council that the trial changes be made permanent with immediate effect and that the arrangement be reviewed in 12 months.

**APPOINTMENTS TO STRATA - JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**RECOMMENDED** that appointments to the Strata Joint Scrutiny Committee be agreed by Council.

**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 during consideration of the following item on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Act.

**PROPOSAL FOR LEISURE COMPLEX AND SWIMMING POOL**

The joint report of the Assistant Director Economy and Assistant Director Finance was submitted which sought final approval for the development of the new leisure complex and swimming pool to replace the Pyramids Swimming and Leisure Centre and for the funding to undertake the project.

The Deputy Chief Executive outlined to Members the resource implications including the non financial, the assessment of need and the operational viability.

The Leader proposed an amendment to the membership of the Leisure Complex Programme Board so that the Leader of the Opposition could nominate a representative if he so wished. This was carried.

Scrutiny Committee – Resources considered the report at its meeting on 19 November 2014 and the support and comments of the Members were noted.

**RECOMMENDED** that Council approves:-

- (1) the allocation of £19.4 million to develop a new leisure complex and swimming pool on part of the bus station site to replace the Pyramids;
- (2) that the Leader nominate and Council appoint the Leisure Complex Programme Board as a Sub-Committee of the Executive;



- (3) that all future spend decisions in respect of the £19.4 million budget for the development of the new Leisure Complex and Swimming Pool be delegated to the Leisure Complex Programme Board;
- (4) that the Leader nominate, and Council appoint, the following Members to the Leisure Complex Programme Board:
- The Leader of the Council
  - Portfolio Holder- Economy and Culture
  - Portfolio Holder- City Development and
  - Leader of the Opposition or nominated representative; and
- (5) that the Proceedings of the Leisure Complex Programme Board take place in accordance with the Executive Procedure Rules.

(In accordance with Standing Order no.43, Councillor Fullam requested that his voting against this recommendation be recorded and Councillor Leadbetter requested that his abstention from voting be recorded)

(The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 7.35 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 16 December 2014.**

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