SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - RESOURCES
28 JANUARY 2015

PUBLIC QUESTION UNDER STANDING ORDER 19

QUESTION TO SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FROM 3 COMMUNITY GROUPS:
St David's NP/St James Forum/Alphington

QUESTION:

What is the level of New Homes Bonus for 2015/16 and the proposed sum which is earmarked for community projects through community groups;

Is this an increase in the amount allocated for decision by community groups in 2014/15, and what is the major portion of the balance being allocated for?

Christine Fraser
Jo Hawkins
Diana Moore

REPLY

Councillor Edwards, thanked Ms Fraser, Moore and Hawkins for the question and as Leader responsible for the budget and strategic determination of the Council replied. He stated that the provisional allocation of New Homes Bonus for Exeter City Council in 2015/16 is £3,528,983.

The allocation of the funds was determined in line with the approval given by Council in February 2014.

- £120,000 for capacity building;
- £250,000 for community projects;
- £36,000 for ward grants;
- The balance is to be used to fund the proposed leisure complex.

The funding allocation remains the same as in 2014/15, unless it is amended by Full Council.

This funding would provide an equitable way of distributing the available funding, and this was against the backdrop of a challenging financial regime with this Authority having to identify and make over £3 million in savings. It may not be possible to guarantee the same level of funding in future years.

A Member also referred to the stance taken by the City Council which had not been to use New Homes Funding to supplement any funding gap of services, but would be used to enhance the future of the city. A Member agreed with the discussion and hoped that Ms Fraser was satisfied with the response and that this subject would be discussed at a future Scrutiny Committee.

Ms Fraser made a final comment and thanked Members for the opportunity to ask her question. She suggested that the community groups would appreciate the creation of a community development strategy to identify any funding possibilities, as many bids now included match funding and such research could help to locate and respond to the different packs and funding

regime. They hoped to develop a community alliance and share best practice to achieve maximum value and to benefit all. They recognised the level of cuts that they were faced with and would rather address future funding in a more strategic way and also eliminate any duplication.

Members noted the question and for drawing a possible future coordinated approach to funding to their attention.