

EXECUTIVE

Tuesday 1 December 2015

Present:

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

Also present:

Chief Executive & Growth Director, Deputy Chief Executive, Assistant Director Finance, Assistant Director Customer Access, Assistant Director Environment, Corporate Manager Democratic and Civic Support, Corporate Manager Property, System Lead - Finance 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 2016/17

The report of Exeter's Independent Remuneration Panel was submitted which advised Members of its recommendations in relation to Members' Allowances for 2016/17.

Mr Phillips, Chair of the Panel, advised Members that the panel had considered the Council's allowance schemes in relation to other Councils in the region and were of the view that the allowance at Exeter City Council had fallen behind. The recommendation was for an increase of the basic allowance to £5,000 and that the Dependants' Carers' Allowance should match the Living Wage.

A Member stated that his group did not support the proposed increase in light of the staff salary increases and he would be voting against the recommendation.

RECOMMENDED to Council to agree:-

- (1) the basic structure and principles of the current Members' Allowances scheme be retained for 2016/17;
- (2) the basic allowance be increased by £425 to £5,000 per annum, and that all Special Responsibility Allowances be calculated as a multiple of this (as indicated on Appendix A to the report presented to the meeting);
- (3) the principle that any Member qualifying for more than one Special Responsibility Allowance is paid the higher allowance only, should be retained;
- (4) Travel and Subsistence allowances available for staff continue to apply to Exeter City Councillors, where appropriate;

- (5) the current Dependants' Carers' Allowance scheme be maintained and that the level of allowance should now match the Living wage currently offered to the lowest paid Exeter City Council employees of £7.85 (retaining the uplift of the standard rate of income tax, thus increasing the hourly rate to £9.42); and
- (6) the sum of £50 paid to the Independent Persons affiliated to the Audit & Governance Committee for up to four hours work, and £100 for four hours and over, payable to each of the two Independent Persons (up to a maximum of £500 per person in any one year) be retained.

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

118 **EXETER CITY COUNCIL'S LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME FOR 2016/17**

The report of the Assistant Director Customer Access was submitted which sought Members' views on the local Council Tax Support (CTS) Scheme for working age residents for 2016/17. The local CTS scheme started in April 2013 and Members were required to agree the Scheme rules annually.

The Council was part of the Devon Local Government Steering Group whose view was that it was preferable to maintain the scheme for 2016/17. Officers' recommendation therefore was to maintain the Scheme as per the current year and it was highlighted that Members may wish to consider changes to the 2017/18 when the impact of Department of Communities and Local Government review of the local CTS was known. The Assistant Director Customer Access highlighted that should Members wish to make any changes to the 2016/17 Scheme, these would be subject to a full consultation with all stakeholders this would incur a cost.

RECOMMENDED that Council approves the continuation of the current 2015/16 CTS scheme for working age customers for the financial year 2016/17.

119 **OVERVIEW OF REVENUE BUDGET 2015/16**

The report of the Assistant Director Finance was submitted advising Members of the overall projected financial position of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and General Fund Revenue Budgets for the 2015/16 financial year after six months and to seek approval for a number of supplementary budgets.

The Assistant Director Finance referred to the underspend in the General Fund of £1,744,085 and the HRA of £1,175,246 and a supplementary budget request of £25,000, match funding with Devon County Council for weed control for the city.

In response to a Member's question, the Assistant Director Finance clarified that with regards to the transaction fees for car parking, the credit cards attracted a 1.5% fee and pay by phone was charged in pence.

Members welcomed the work that had been undertaken to achieve the level of savings as outlined in the report.

Scrutiny Committee – Resources considered the report at its meeting on 18 November 2015 and its comments were reported.

RECOMMENDED that Council approve the:-

- (1) General Fund forecast financial position for the 2015/16 financial year;
- (2) HRA forecast financial position for 2015/16 financial year;
- (3) additional supplementary budgets listed in Appendix C;
- (4) outstanding Sundry Debt position as at September 2015;
- (5) creditors' payments performance; and
- (6) Council Tax and Business Rates collection performance.

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CAPITAL MONITORING STATEMENT

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 to advise Members of the anticipated level of deferred expenditure into future years.

Members were advised that the current position in respect of the Council's revised annual capital programme was £20,477 million. During the first six months of the year the council spent £4.683 million on the programme, which equated to 22.9% of the revised programme, compared with 16.3% which was spent in the first six months of 2014/15.

The Assistant Director Finance referred to the additions to the capital programme and that the funding for Strata would go to Council via a recommendation from the Strata Joint Executive Committee.

Members wished to place on record the recognition awarded to the Corporate Energy Manager and the team on their recent achievements in winning a public sector National sustainability award in respect of the solar panels in two of the city's car parks.

Scrutiny Committee – Resources considered the report at its meeting on 18 November 2015 and its comments were reported.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes and approves:-

- (1) the revision of the annual capital programme to reflect the reported variations set out in paragraphs 8.4 and 8.5; and
- (2) the proposed additions to the Capital Programme set out in paragraph 8.7.

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TREASURY MANAGEMENT - HALF YEARLY REPORT 2015/16

The report of the Assistant Director Finance was submitted to update Members on the current Treasury Management performance for the 2015/16 financial year and the position regarding investments and borrowings at 30 September 2015. The report was a statutory requirement and was for information only with no key decisions required. Members were updated on the interest rate prospects, net interest position and the future position.

Scrutiny Committee – Resources considered the report at its meeting on 18 November 2015 and its comments were reported.

RESOLVED that the Treasury Management report in respect of the first six months of the 2015/16 be noted.

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STAFFING WITHIN THE ELECTORAL SERVICES TEAM

The report of the Corporate Manager, Democratic & Civic Support, Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer was submitted setting out a proposal to increase the staff within the Electoral Services team (to replace a part time member of staff) to assist with the continually increasing workload associated with the introduction of Individual Electoral Registration (IER). Members were advised that by increasing the post to full time an additional resource within the team would be identified to specially work with the University to drive up student registration, as well as other under-represented groups.

In response to a Member's question, the Corporate Manager, Democratic & Civic Support, Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer clarified the canvassing process and that fixed penalty notices of £80 could now be issued to residents who refuse to register.

Members discussed the merits of issuing fixed penalty notice to residents who actively refused to register, and gave agreement in principle for this to be instigated

RECOMMENDED that Council approve the permanent increase in the establishment of the Electoral Services Team.

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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.

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WASTE OPERATIVES - STAFFING

The report of the Assistant Director Environment was submitted requesting an increase in the 2016/17 revenue budget to allow for an uplift of five staff to ensure there was the optimum complement of staff to operate Waste Operation and the Materials Reclamation Facility (MRF) effectively. This increase would be partly offset by resulting reductions in agency staff use.

The Assistant Director Environment advised of the proposed change in relation to the second recommendation outlined in the report, as there was a wish to reduce the dependency on agency staffing at an early stage.

In response to a Member's question, the Assistant Director Environment clarified that the proposed budget for agency staff was £57,000.

Scrutiny Committee – Resources considered the report at its meeting on 18 November 2015 and its comments were reported.

RECOMMENDED that Council approve:-

- (1) the revised Waste Operations and MRF staff establishment as set out in Appendix 1;
- (2) an additional budget of £57,359; and
- (3) preparation of a business case for the deletion of the (currently vacant) post of Clinical Waste van driver to be submitted to Executive at a later date.

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ST JAMES PARK STADIUM - REDEVELOPMENT SCHEME

The report of the Corporate Manager Property was submitted advising Members on the proposed partial re-development of St James Park Stadium to improve the current playing and spectator facilities at the stadium. The report also outlined the proposed mechanism for securing funding for the stadium.

The Leader highlighted the important and valuable work that Exeter City Football Club undertook in the local community and for young people in the city.

Scrutiny Committee – Resources considered the report at its meeting on 18 November 2015 and its comments were reported.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) the current condition of the stadium be noted and the proposals for an upgrade be supported;
- (2) the opportunity to facilitate the stadium improvements as part of a wider re-development of the St James Park stadium site and adjoining land be supported; and
- (3) the proposed mechanism for delivering improvements by way of disposing of land and recycling the consideration into stadium improvements be approved.

(In accordance with Standing Order no.43, Councillor Owen requested that his abstention from voting be recorded)

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ADDITIONAL EVENTS BUDGETS 2016/17

The report of the Assistant Director Finance was submitted to request additional funding for 2016/17 and the following two years, to enable the Council to bid for two events to be hosted in Exeter.

Members discussed the ticketing arrangements and distribution for the event detailed in paragraph 8.1.

The Leader proposed that the events detailed in paragraph 8.4 be removed from the recommendation to be reconsidered if a more equitable proposal was put forward. This was agreed by the majority of the Members.

Scrutiny Committee – Resources considered the report at its meeting on 18 November 2015 and its comments were reported.

RECOMMENDED that Council approves a budget for 2016/17 of £125,000 to enable the Council to bid for one event described in paragraph 8.1 to 8.3 to be held in and around the City.

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

(The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 6.20 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 15 December 2015.