

EXECUTIVE

Tuesday 15 January 2019

Present:

Councillor Edwards (Chair)
Councillors Bialyk, Morse, Pearson, Sutton and Wright

Apologies:

Councillors Denham, Harvey and Leadbetter

Also present:

Chief Executive & Growth Director, Director (BA), Chief Finance Officer, Director (DB),
Service Lead Housing Tenancy Services and Democratic Services Manager

1 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2018 were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair as correct.

2 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest were made.

3 **PROPOSED CONSULTATION ON PUBLIC CONVENIENCES**

The Director (DB) presented the report requesting permission to start a public consultation on the proposals to close a number of public conveniences to achieve the required budget savings and enable a balanced budget to be set.

Members were informed that further central government funding cuts meant that the City Council had to find additional savings of £3.9 million over the next two financial years. All non-statutory services were under pressure to deliver savings Public Conveniences were not a statutory service the Council no longer had enough funding to maintain all the sites that it operated.

The consultation would start next week and run for three weeks, this would be on-line and papers copies would be available at the Civic Centre. Part of the consultation would be around the concept of a community toilet scheme which had been successful in other parts of the Country including Bristol.

Members were asked how they would like the final decision to be made, delegated to the Director or brought back to Executive.

Councillor Pierce, speaking under Standing Order No.44, raised concerns regarding the potential closure of the Public Conveniences at Topsham Quay and that they were essential for the Economy and Tourism in Topsham.

The Leader stated that this process was the start of a consultation and that Councillor Pierce should encourage the Topsham residents to write in.

The Director (DB) confirm that so far 19 letters had been received in support of the Topsham Fore Street toilets.

Members support the final decision be brought back to Executive to make.

RESOLVED that the following be noted:-

- (1) In common with many cities around the UK, the Councils public toilets no longer serve the needs of residents and were costly to maintain. Many were hidden away and in poor condition. They attract serious and repeated anti-social behaviour including widespread drug use and are regularly vandalised. Understandably many are infrequently used;
- (2) Further central government funding reductions mean that the City Council had to find an additional saving of £3.9 million over the next two financial years. Every service was being challenged to ensure that it provides value for money and all non-statutory services were under considerable pressure. Public conveniences were not a statutory service and the Council no longer had enough funding to maintain all the sites it operate;
- (3) the Council operate 26 public conveniences across the City Council area, with two of those currently closed due to anti-social behaviour; and
- (4) a consultation on proposals to rationalise the Council's existing provision to a more manageable number and suggested alternative proposals to improve the availability of good quality publically accessible toilets be approved and the consultation results be brought back to Executive to make the final decision.

4

HOUSING RENTS AND SERVICES CHARGES

The Chief Finance Officer presented the report setting out the proposed changes to council dwelling rents, garage rents and service charges with effect from 1 April 2019.

Members were advised that this was the final year of implementing the 1% rent cut, this would result in an overall reduction of £400,000 to the Housing Revenue Account in 2019/20.

People Scrutiny Committee considered the report at its meeting on 10 January 2019 and its comments were reported.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) rents of Council dwellings are reduced by 1% from 1 April 2019;
- (2) garage rents are increased by 3% from 1 April 2019;
- (3) service charges remain at their existing levels, with the exception of charges specified below from 1 April 2019:-
 - (a) 10% increase in emergency light testing in line with routine testing costs and additional installations;
 - (b) 20% decrease in respect of the Older Persons' property service charge reflecting a frozen post; and

- (c) 5% reduction in respect of door entry systems in line with system maintenance costs.

5

2019/20 BUDGET STRATEGY AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

The Chief Finance Officer presented the report providing a strategic overview of the budgetary position for the 2019/20 financial year and beyond including an indication of the likely level of available resources, the known demand for resources and the proposals to ensure that a balanced budget was achieved.

The Chief Finance Officer advised Members that this was the last year of a four-year Central Government Settlement agreement with the provisional settlement for 2019/20 being announced in December 2018. The approximate award for New Homes Bonus was expected to be £2.518 million for 2019/20 and unfortunately the application for Devon Authorities to be a 75% pilot for Business rates was unsuccessful. The Councils budget strategy for next year assumed a council tax increase of £5 along with the estimated surplus on the collection fund of £96,331 and increase in the tax base this would raise an extra £208,000.

The Council had a legal responsibility to produce a balanced budget and that savings of £2.4 million had to be found next year on top of the savings already identified.

In response to the Leader, the Chief Finance Officer stated that there was uncertainty going forward as to what funding would be available for future years and that the Council needed to reduce its budget where possible.

RECOMMENDED that Council:-

- (1) note the contents of the report; and
- (2) approve the proposals to establish a balanced revenue budget and capital programme.

6

COUNCIL TAX BASE AND NNDR 1

The Chief Finance Officer presented the report setting the 2019/20 Council Tax base in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012. The report also sought to delegate to the Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer) the Council's estimate of Business Rate Income (NNDR1) for the next financial year.

Members were advised that the amount calculated for the Council as its tax base for the year 2019/20 would be 36,988 this was an increase of 441 properties over the figures for 2018/19.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by Exeter City Council as its tax base for the year 2019/20 shall be 36,988 and;
- (2) responsibility to approve the Council's NNDR1 return by 31 January 2019 be delegated to the Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer).

7 **CREATION OF A SECOND POST OF A CIL AND SECTION 106 MONITORING OFFICER**

The Director (BA) presented the report which sought approval to establish a new, second, permanent position of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 Monitoring Officer in City Development. The new position would be funded through Community Infrastructure Levy receipts which were intended to be used for administration purposes, and through future receipts secured through Section 106 agreements for similar purposes. The postholder would work to ensure that both CIL and Section 106 monies were effectively monitored, secured, and spent in accordance with legislative requirements.

The Portfolio Holder for Economy and Culture supported this post to ensure that the both CIL and Section 106 monies were received in good time to help deliver essential infrastructure for the City.

RECOMMENDED that Council approve the use of Community Infrastructure Levy - derived funds to create the new position – Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 Monitoring Officer.

8 **EXETER SCIENCE PARK COMPANY. SHAREHOLDER REPRESENTATIVE**

The Chief Executive & Growth Director presented the report seeking approval for the Exeter City Council's Shareholder representative on the Exeter Science Park Company. Members were also advised there was a requirement to appoint a Director to replace David Hodgson, it was proposed that this be Jon-Paul Hedge as he would bring Communications and Marketing experience to the Board.

Members supported the way forward.

RESOLVED that David Hodgson be appointed as Exeter City Council's Shareholder representative for the Exeter Science Park Company and Jon-Paul Hedge be appointed as a Director of the Exeter Science Park Company.

9 **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 items on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1,2 3 and 4 of Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Act.

10 **ST LOYES MANAGEMENT REPORT**

The Director (BA) presented the report in relation to the management of Exeter City Council's Extra Care Scheme (Exeter's Extra Care Scheme) formally known as St Loyes Extra Care. It was anticipated that the scheme would be completed by 2020 and would be an asset held within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

The Service Lead Housing Tenancy Services advised of the two options available to the Council in relation to the management of Exeter City Council's Extra Care Scheme. Option one requiring the housing management function to be carried out in house by the City Council's Housing Service Team including maintenance, tenancy matters and all care elements to be provided on a commissioned basis and option

two requiring the housing management function to be carried out by a care provider in addition to the care provider under a management agreement.

People Scrutiny Committee considered the report at its meeting on 10 January 2019 and its comments were reported.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) the preferred option two in relation to the management of Exeter's Extra care Scheme (EECS) as set out in section 8 of the circulated report be approved; and
- (2) the Director responsible for Housing be given delegated authority in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for the Housing Revenue Account, to agree the eligibility criteria for allocations to EECS in negotiation with Devon County Council (DCC) and the nominated care and housing management provider following that appropriate procurement specialist consultants are engaged to provide expert advice on the setting up of any agreements with DCC and the care/ management provider.

11

WASTE OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

The Director (DB) presented the report seeking preliminary approval for a minor restructure in the Waste Operations management team. No posts would be added nor deleted but three postholders would have some of their duties changed.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) the proposed restructure in the Waste Operations team be supported; and
- (2) the consultation and implementation plan as described in this report be approved.

(The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 6.06 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 26 February 2019.