

PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday 12 September 2019

Present:

Councillor Buswell (in the Chair for the meeting)
Councillors Atkinson, Henson, D, Lyons, Moore, D, Moore, J and Pattison

Apologies:

Councillors Sills, Owen and Williams

Also present:

Director (DB), Growth & Commercialisation Manager, Skills Manager, Building Exeter
Project Manager and Democratic Services Officer(SLS)

In Attendance:

Councillor Sutton	- Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder Climate & Culture
Councillor Foale	- Portfolio Holder for City Planning & Development
Councillor Harvey	- Portfolio Holder for Environment & City Management

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MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings of Place Scrutiny Committee held on 13 June, 25 June 2019 were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair as correct.

The minutes of the meeting of Place Scrutiny Committee held on 18 June 2019 were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair as correct, subject to the following amendment:-

In Minute 36 (Towards Carbon Neutral Exeter) and a comment by Councillor D Moore should read, that the Council's approach with 'regard to building council houses to passive house standards should be commended'.

Reference was made to the following clarification at Council held on 23 July 2019, in respect of the statement 'that Exeter's Energy Recovery Facility was the largest single source of emissions' and the opportunity to place the statement in context: being one of a small number of strategic waste treatment facilities in Devon that treated waste from a catchment area well beyond the Exeter boundary. Incineration with energy recovery was environmentally preferable to disposing of waste to landfill. Diverting food waste, plastic and glass away from energy recovery and towards recycling, was the subject of a separate report to Place Scrutiny Committee and would reduce net carbon emissions, thus freeing up capacity at the Energy Recovery Facility to divert more of Devon's non recycled waste away from landfill.

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DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest were made.

QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC UNDER STANDING ORDER 19

In accordance with Standing Order 19, five members of the public submitted questions on the potential roll out of 5G in the city.

A copy of the questions had been previously circulated to Members, and these, together with the responses from Councillor Foale, Portfolio Holder City Development & Planning are appended to the minutes.

OPTIONS FOR INVESTMENT IN EXETER'S KERBSIDE RECYCLING SERVICE

The Director presented a report which provided an update on options for investment in the Council's Materials Reclamation Facility (MRF) and kerbside recycling service following the reports to Place Scrutiny Committee on 13 June, 25 June and Executive Committee on 9 July respectively. The cost variations which demonstrated an overall cost reduction were set out in the report. The major changes were the improved recycling containers that would be offered across the city and a reduction in costs for the enhancement of the Materials Reclamation Facility. He also highlighted the risks and was pleased to report that the proposal to use the new triple stack system would help to eliminate some of the existing injury risks to staff when collecting and lifting the existing 45 litre recycling caddies. This was very much the start of the process of the service design and with a current lead in time of 18 months for the delivery of the specialist vehicles, there was plenty of opportunity to finalise the service.

The Recycling Officer demonstrated the triple stacking bins, which were favoured after looking at their use by other authorities, and were designed to mirror the current footprint and height of the existing wheelie bins. The bins would be made out of recycled plastic and the main body were only available in black as the composition of the recycled material did not take any colour, although the flaps can be colour coded to make recycling easier. One advantage is that the manufacturer used the same plastic supplier which we send our recycled plastic to for processing. Discussions were at an early stage but there was a potential for all of our existing bins to be collected, recycled and used to make the new bin system.

The Recycling Officer responded to Members' questions:-

- the opportunities for any pests interfering with the waste were minimised by the three interlinked sections and stacked with the lowest section taking glass as the potentially heaviest material, the middle section taking recyclables such as cans, tetrapaks, plastic containers and a range of other recyclable material and the top section with the dedicated cover to stop water ingress to the paper and cardboard. It was noted that the containers all had drainage holes. The bins were designed to be wheeled out for collection as with the current wheelie bin collection service.
- the food waste caddy handles would also fit over the triple stack bin to ensure one unit could be wheeled to the collection vehicle.
- a colour coded scheme for the bins for those with disabilities was noted, but was not currently possible.
- the whole bin could be wheeled out into place for collection and in the case of any resident having concerns over access around their property such as in the case of steep steps, the Council offered assisted collections.
- there would be a range of different requirements and recognition that one size did not fit all and it would be necessary to ensure that individual needs were met. A household survey would be undertaken.

- donations of older black traditional bins following the roll out of the new triple stack bins would be welcomed.

The Director also responded to a number of Members' questions and advised the following:-

- that a considerable investment would be made over a ten year period and the service to return a small surplus each year. The investment at the Material Reclamation Facility was needed to avoid a failure of the plant and reduce the current shortfall for income expectations the recycling activity that was generally due to breakdowns. The kerbside collections would deal with most material but larger items should continue to be taken to the Recycling Centres at Pinhoe or Exton Road. The new fleet contract opted for lease hire rather than purchase to offer greater financial certainty and enable a more modern fleet. Currently there was no effective electric refuse vehicle but the market is moving swiftly and the new fleet contract will enable the Council to take advantage of any new technology.
- food waste would also be collected and taken to be processed in an anaerobic digestion plant, as part of a county wide contract for food waste. The storage of the food waste, prior to collection would be part of the changes at the MRF. More staff would be required overall, although the detail of the staffing arrangement had yet to be finalised.
- apprentices could potentially be part of the new service and there would be potentially for training new drivers from within the existing staff compliment.
- there were a number of tetrapack collection points in the city.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and City Management referred to the commitment to change the way that waste was collected in the city. He referred to the consultation exercise when 71% of Exeter's' residents responded to improving the opportunities for waste collection. He also responded to a Member about the aspirations to increase recycling rates explaining that the waste hierarchy was to reduce, reuse and recycle. There was a move to reduce waste rather than place an emphasis on recycling rates, but it was felt that through that approach, recycling rates would rise. He quoted a key performance indicator which was the total amount of waste produced per household and Exeter was currently 4th lowest in the country, excluding London.

A Member also thanked the Portfolio Holder for the update and enquired about the future arrangements for collection of hygienic waste material such as nappies, if reusable nappies were not being used. The Recycling Officer stated that this would be considered in the new service design.

Place Scrutiny Committee requested Executive to support a recommendation to Council of the following:-

- (1) adoption of Option 4 (weekly kerbside-sort recycling collection, incorporating glass and food waste collection, with three weekly rubbish collection) and associated investment in the Materials Reclamations Facility; and
- (2) implementation of the chosen service of Option 4, and that a budget of
 - £200,000 is set aside from General Fund revenue reserves to provide the project management and assistance with roll out;
 - a capital budget of £2,105,000 is provided for the improved recycling containers; and
 - a capital budget of £1,500,000 to enhance the MRF.

INEXETER UPDATE

The Growth & Commercialisation Manager reported on the final year of the first InExeter term, 2015-2020, to keep Members up to date with activity delivered. She provided a copy of the BID Business Plan for the next five years and highlighted the main areas of interest:-

- the City Council's annual BID levy fluctuated each year, dependant on how many properties were owned by the Council that were vacant or occupied by the City Council. The City Council paid just over £15,000 in BID levies for the period 2019-2020.
- the City Council had a seat on the BID Board which was attended by the Portfolio Holder for Environment & City Management with support as part of her role.
- a BID Monitoring Meeting was held every quarter, which oversaw the BID levy collection.
- for the financial year ending 31 March 2018 total levies and other income collected had been over £500,000 which was invested back in to the business community and the city centre.
- a range of activities were included in an appendix to the report and the spend for 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 included:-
 - Christmas lights switch on £73,000
 - City dressing, which included the colourful umbrellas £46,000
 - Hot wash and street cleaning £54,000
- this year InExeter granted sponsorship to support local community groups and event organisers. Some of these included:-
 - ECC Exeter Festival £1500
 - Exeter Fringe Festival £1500
 - Historic Buildings Trust St Nicholas Priory £500
 - Big Screen in the Park £1500
 - Exeter Pride £500
 - Plastic Free Exeter £1000
 - Quirk Theatre Christmas production £600
 - WOW Festival £600
- InExeter had recently extended its team with a new Business Engagement Officer to work with businesses within the BID area and a new Events Manager would be responsible for the delivery of a wide range of activities and events over a five year period.
- InExeter would be going to ballot in October 2019, if there was a yes vote the BID will continue for another five years. If there was a no vote, the BID will close on 31 March 2020. Businesses with a Rateable Value over £7,500 in the BID area were eligible to vote, as set out in a circulated map. This was discussed at Place Scrutiny Committee on 25 June.
- InExeter worked with the City Council on many fronts, through Visit Exeter on joint events and marketing campaigns, through the Growth team on supporting businesses and commissioning the Cleansing team for city centre street cleaning.

The Growth & Commercialisation Manager confirmed in response to a Member's comment that the BID area would be increased if the BID vote was successful. She also noted a comment by a Member about the challenges faced by the residents and businesses located there. In advance of the impending BID vote, the contract for the BID Welcome Team had been cancelled with a small part of their work being carried out by the Business Engagement team.

Place Scrutiny Committee noted the report and progress made.

The Skills Manager and the Building Exeter Project Manager submitted a report to update on the Building Greater Exeter initiative, which provided details of the progress since the launch, achievements and also plans for the next stages of development.

A presentation highlighted the overarching focus which was to support the construction sector across Exeter, East Devon and Teignbridge to address the skills and recruitment challenges it faced. In the South West, 27,200 new workers were expected to be needed by 2023, an annual recruitment requirement of 5,440. The initiative to inspire the future workforce and position construction as an attractive career prospect. They supported work placements locally by facilitating recruitment helped people continue their journey and upskill. There were now 28 project partners which had been achieved in little over a year and reinforced the level of commitment shown.

The Building Exeter Project Manager welcomed the level of collaboration in the construction industry, and particularly the construction companies who, whilst normally competing for business had come together to share best practice. They had been contributing towards a number of events to promote careers in the construction sector. They included the National Apprenticeship Show South West, the Apprenticeship Expo at Exeter College, Exeter City Council's Jobs Fair, a STEM Careers Fair and the Big Bang Fair SW where they had teamed up with Building Plymouth and where it had been possible to showcase the 180 plus job roles that were available in construction. She also referred to the Schools Engagement Programme, working with project partners and schools and included talking at careers assemblies, attending careers fairs and events, and helping to organise work experience or a site visit. They had also worked with Military Service leavers and feedback from partners showed that they were a valuable resource for the construction industry with potential employees having excellent transferable skills and a great work ethic as well.

As part of the initiative, the team had been working on another major project over a three year lifespan, the Building Growth SW Project to create a legacy of a continued impact on individuals in construction. This would focus on three areas of:-

- Communications to improve the image and perception of construction one of our project partners and funded opportunity for the construction industry training board and discuss in three areas;
- Soft skills development, and
- Pre-employment and training.

Matthew Cousins, the Commercial Director for Apex Scaffolding and Chair of the Building Greater Exeter Project was invited to recount how the project had benefited both him personally and the industry. He spoke about his experience and the benefits of attending the Big Bang event through the collaboration with Building Greater Exeter and being able to access the necessary resources. He recounted his experience of welcoming Service leavers to the industry as well as encouraging more women employees in the wider construction industry.

The Skills Manager also responded to a Member's comment about the work in progress in relation to apprenticeships in our own community and she discussed the work with the Heart of the South West LEP, as well as the future skills needed and approach to any new technology. She welcomed the opportunity to be a member of

the LEP Construction Skills Group to maximise innovations such as digital skilling to make best use of the technology that would inevitably come along. There were many challenges around the workforce and she hoped that these will be addressed through the Skills Strategy which would be presented to this Scrutiny Committee in the future.

Place Scrutiny Committee noted the report.

51 **DCC EXETER HIGHWAYS AND TRAFFIC ORDERS COMMITTEE MINUTES 9 JULY 2019**

The Exeter Highways and Traffic Orders Committee minutes from the meeting held 9 July 2019 were received.

A Member commented on the Clear Channel advertising policy and suggested that some advertising may not be appropriate for young children or families, particularly in relation to the advertising of some lifestyle choices around food. A Member advised that she had carried out some work with Clear Channel in her role as a County Councillor, and the content for family appropriate advertising had been agreed by the County Planning Committee. Clear Channel attended every Exeter Highways and Traffic Orders Committee meeting and she welcomed information relating to any inappropriate advertising. The Portfolio Holder Environment and City Management confirmed that the City Council was also involved to some extent in the positioning of the advertising boards, and he referred to a recent report to adopt an ethical advertising framework linked to the City Council's corporate priorities.

52 **UNDER STANDING ORDER 18 - PROGRESS ON THE USE OF SINGLE USE PLASTICS**

Councillor Diana Moore requested an item be placed on the agenda under Standing Order 18 regarding progress on the use of Single Use Plastics, and to receive an update on the Motion adopted by council on 24 April 2018 – see link <https://protect-eu.mimecast.com/s/18qfCr9EqcADILs7EBer?domain=committees.exeter.gov.uk>

Councillor Sutton thanked Councillor Moore for raising this matter and reminded Members of the Council resolution and policy which was widely welcomed and supported and she was mindful of the commitment made. She undertook to address the requested information in the following terms:-

The progress and actions taken to implement the Council's policy to end single use plastics -

There had been a mix of progress with some positive changes and certainly Councillor Sutton was mindful that whilst there were a number of reusable cups in the Committee Room, the eradication of the one use cups available in the civic centre was not complete. There were areas where great progress had been made, but there was still more to do. She welcomed the collection of tetra packs, which Councillor Moore had raised earlier in the meeting, and plastic and coffee shop paper cups which was possible at brightly coloured orange, collection banks in the city. Sometimes it was necessary to consider the way that products were used as it could actually take more energy to produce a paper bag, rather than a plastic one. Small actions such as for example, saying no more often to products like straws, may ultimately mean that less are produced, of course there was still a need for straws to offer choices particularly for people with additional needs. The Ocean Recovery Project and partnership with Keep Britain Tidy had made an impact to address some of the plastic waste on the beaches which come from the fishing

industry. Bright orange containers had been placed on the harbour side at Bude and Padstow and marine plastics were being collected and brought back to the MRF in Exeter to be sorted and recycled into other products including for the construction of a stage at Glastonbury. She was proud to say that the City Council did not export any of the city's collected recycling and that may not be the case with some authorities.

A sustainable procurement stance at the City Council should be acknowledged, where before any procurement commenced, questions were already being asked about the procurement of the goods and services. Although this was not entirely resolved, there was an awareness and Councillor Sutton looked forward to the launch for staff of a "Plastic Less Fantastic" toolkit to work with suppliers towards the zero and single use plastic aim.

Details of the barriers to implementation and the proposed steps to overcome these -

Barriers did remain with some people not acknowledging that there were easy wins such as the correct disposal of their takeaway coffee cup. A number of initiatives such as the Council's Procurement Policy were working to overcome this.

Information about further steps planned to further implement the policy -

There had been some steps around the main strategic areas around carbon reduction and certainly it was all staff's responsibility to ensure that this ethos was woven into the fabric of all that we do. Staff had been asked to consider how they carried out their role, particularly in the move to the agile and flexible working culture, with more consideration of what was needed to do the job and what could be considered surplus to requirements. The Procurement Service Lead had been working hard with talking with the Council's Human Resources and staff to develop the Procurement Strategy to see how that could be further embedded into the culture through the Council's policies. At the special Place Scrutiny Committee on 18 June, it was requested that a biannual Committee meeting be held to look at such matters and collate all of the work taking place as part of the Tackling Climate Change work. Members were very supportive of that approach and progress was being made but there was more to do.

Councillor Moore thanked Councillor Sutton for her reply and she appreciated the challenge as some areas were beyond the Council's control. The Motion was fairly specific about the activities within the Council's control, and she was concerned about the attention to detail needed to reflect the bigger ambition. Nevertheless, she welcomed the helpful interim update and introduction of a Procurement Strategy, and looked forward to a further report back on progress.

Councillor Sutton would continue to discuss this with colleagues and make sure that this matter was presented to a future meeting.

(The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 7.00 pm)

Chair