

EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

Tuesday 21 January 2020

Present:-

The Right Worshipful the Lord Mayor Councillor Peter Holland (Lord Mayor)
Councillor Mrs Yolonda Henson (Deputy Lord Mayor)
Councillors Atkinson, Begley, Bialyk, Branston, Buswell, Foale, Foggin, Ghusain, Hannaford, Harvey, Henson, D, Lamb, Leadbetter, Lyons, Mitchell, M, Moore, D, Moore, J, Morse, Newby, Oliver, Owen, Packham, Pattison, Pearson, Quance, A, Sheldon, Sills, Sparkes, Sutton, Vizard, Wardle, Warwick, Williams, Wood and Wright

1

APOLOGIES

These were received from Councillors K. Mitchell and I. Quance.

2

JAPANESE DELEGATION

The Lord Mayor welcomed a delegation from the Japan Local Government Centre who were visiting the City Council on a fact-finding mission, particularly around carbon neutral initiatives.

3

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No questions from the public were received.

4

EXECUTIVE - 14 JANUARY 2020

The minutes of the Executive of the 14 January 2020 were presented by the Leader, Councillor Bialyk, seconded by the Deputy Leader, Councillor Sutton, and taken as read.

In respect of **Minute No. 4 (Commercial Strategy)**, the Leader moved and the Deputy Leader seconded the recommendations and they were carried unanimously.

In respect of **Minute No. 5 (Environmental Enforcement Pilot Scheme Results and Future Options)**, the Leader moved and the Deputy Leader seconded the recommendations and they were carried unanimously.

In respect of **Minute No. 6 (Flood Protection Schemes 2019-2022)**, the Leader moved and the Deputy Leader seconded the recommendations and they were carried unanimously.

In respect of **Minute No. 7 (Structural Inspection Programme of Exeter City Council Bridges)**, the Leader moved and the Deputy Leader seconded the recommendations and they were carried unanimously.

In respect of **Minute No. 8 (Housing Rents and Service Charges 2020-21)**, the Leader moved and the Deputy Leader seconded the recommendations and they were carried unanimously.

In respect of **Minute No. 9 (2020/21 Budget Strategy and Medium Term Financial Plan)**, the Leader moved and the Deputy Leader seconded the recommendations and they were carried unanimously.

In respect of **Minute No. 11 (New Performance Venue and Redevelopment of the Corn Exchange)**, the Leader confirmed the Council's commitment to re-develop the Corn Exchange and of the intention to consult the relevant Scrutiny Committee.

In respect of **Minute No. 12 (Minutes of the Leisure Complex and Bus Station Programme Board)**, the Leader, responding to Members' queries, confirmed that full consideration had been given to the options in respect of a long distance coach waiting facility including consultation with the Devon and Cornwall Police on public safety matters such as anti-social behaviour and that the minutes of the Programme Board set out in detail the reasons for not seeking to deliver this facility.

In respect of **Minute No. 13 (Loan to Exeter City Living for Clifton Hill Development)**, the Leader explained:-

- the rationale behind the establishment of Exeter City Living (ECL);
- the need to provide ECL with a loan to ensure it would be able to deliver the Council's aspirations to provide high quality homes at eight sites across the city together with the proposed residential element for the Clifton Hill site;
- the Council's commitment to the retention of open space and of the two leisure facilities - the Golf Driving Range and the Ski Slope - at Clifton Hill; and
- the Council was opposed to student accommodation on the site.

The Leader responded as follows to Members' queries:-

- in order to ensure a balanced budget for the Council a mixed residential provision, rather than 100% social housing, had been identified as the preferred option for the Clifton Hill site;
- ECL, as a Council owned development company, would ensure the housing mix brought forward for the Clifton Hill site accords with Council requirements;
- vacant building credit would offset the shortfall in affordable housing provision;
- the sale of the proposed 44 units would be via the open market and therefore available to local people; and
- there would be full consultation with the local community on all aspects of the proposals as they are brought forward, including use of the protected green space, landscaping and developing and supporting biodiversity.

During discussion the following points were raised:-

- Members welcomed the plans for the Clifton Hill site;
- the Council had always been committed to the protection and development of green open spaces, parks and valley parks across the city with several examples referred to;
- strategies for trees and woodlands, play and parks and open spaces were currently being developed reflecting the Council's commitment to its green agenda; and
- future proposals for open space areas would be considered on merit.

The Leader moved and the Deputy Leader seconded the recommendation and it was carried.

In respect of **Minute No. 16 (Clifton Hill Site)**, the Leader responded as follows to Members' queries:-

- should the Secretary of State not consent to the disposal of land, an Extraordinary meeting of the Council would be called to discuss the way forward; and
- details of the vacant building credit mechanism were available from the Section 151 Officer and the ECL Managing Director.

The Leader moved and the Deputy Leader seconded the recommendations and they were carried.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Executive held on 14 January 2020 be received, and where appropriate, adopted.

5 **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL UNDER STANDING ORDER NO. 8.**

In accordance with Standing Order No. 8, the following question was put by Councillor Hannaford to the Portfolio Holder for Council Housing Development and Services.

Question –

Can the Executive Member for Council Housing Development and Services please update Council on the current progress being made to deliver the additional hundred council homes through its £18 million pound investment programme?

Answer

The Portfolio Holder for Council Housing Development and Services confirmed that the Council is making considerable progress towards the delivery of the initial phase of its Housing Revenue Account (HRA) development programme. Specifically, completion of the first 9 three bedroom houses at Thornpark Rise will be in April 2020. This will be followed by a further 10 three bedroom houses at Bovemoors Lane in December 2020 and 21 one and two bedroom flats at Hamlin Gardens in July 2021. Additionally, a planning Application has been submitted for 92 properties at Vaughan Road, of which, 60 are proposed as social rent and shared ownership as part of the HRA development programme.

In support of the activity outlined above, positive meetings have been held with Homes England Officers to explore opportunities for securing development grant alongside the Council's investment proposals. Final investment planning is now underway which will determine the timing of a grant funding application.

Resourcing the substantial development plan has been a primary focus of the recent Assets Team restructure and additional resources have now been agreed by the Council – primarily the post of Social Housing Delivery Lead – and will be recruited to during February/March 2020.

Councillor Hannaford asked a supplementary question seeking information on the progress of the retrofit programme for the Council Housing stock which would help tackle climate change and fuel poverty.

The Portfolio Holder responded that she, together with the Leader and the Chief Executive and Growth Director, had visited six properties where retrofit work was nearing completion. The work included new exterior wall panels, roofs and solar panels. The six properties were part of a pilot to retrofit properties, offering a self-funding model to improve energy efficiency and reduce future maintenance costs. Residents would benefit from a warm, comfortable and more energy efficient environment with a reduced demand on the electricity grid and would also gain financially. This initiative would also assist the Council in its goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2030.

(The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and closed at 7.07 pm)

Chair