

EXECUTIVE

Tuesday 6 July 2021

Present:

Councillor Bialyk (Chair)

Councillors Wright, Foale, Ghusain, Harvey, Morse, Sutton and Wood

Apologies:

Councillors Pearson and Williams

In attendance:

Councillor A. Leadbetter (as an opposition group Leader)

Councillor D. Moore (as an opposition group Leader)

Also present:

Chief Executive & Growth Director, Director Net Zero Exeter & City Management, Corporate Manager Democratic and Civic Support, Deputy Chief Finance Officer, City Surveyor, Liveable Exeter Programme Director and Interim City Development lead, Active & Healthy People Programme Lead and Democratic Services Officer (HB)

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MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 June 2021, were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

The Chair, in responding to an issue in respect of Min. No. 48 raised by Councillor D. Moore, speaking as an opposition leader, undertook to ensure her point was recorded – see below.

Councillor D. Moore's questions at Executive on 1 June 2021 had been correctly set out in the appendix to those minutes. The second question, the accuracy of which was the point at issue, is set out below taken from the appendix:-

"The officer confirmed that the Council's Development Company Exeter City Living will be included in the Local Plan process in the same way as any other developer. Please can the Portfolio Holder clarify the status of the Liveable Exeter programme in relation to the development of the Local Plan and how the role of Council as leading this programme will be managed distinct from the Council's role as planning authority?"

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DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests were made.

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QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC UNDER STANDING ORDER NO. 19

No questions from members of the public were received.

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GENERAL FUND CAPITAL MONITORING 2020/21 AND REVISED CAPITAL PROGRAMME FOR 2021/22 AND FUTURE YEARS

The Executive received the report on the Council's overall financial performance of for the 2020/21 financial year. The report also sought approval for the 2021/22

revised capital programme and its commitments, which had been carried forward from 2020/21.

The Deputy Chief Finance Officer made particular reference to:-

- the restrictions implemented in response to the Covid-19 Pandemic had a significant impact on delivery of the programme during the year, as a result the total General Fund capital expenditure was £27.6 million during 2020/21 against a £71 million programme, with the majority of balances carried forward to future years; and
- the Next Steps Accommodation Programme which had enabled a number of properties to be acquired to accommodate rough sleepers..

RECOMMENDED that Council approve: -

- (1) the overall financial position for the 2020/21 annual capital programme; and
- (2) the amendments and requests for further funding to the Council's annual capital programme for 2021/22.

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OVERVIEW OF GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2020/21

The Executive received the report on the overall financial position of the General Fund Revenue Budget for the 2020/21 financial year. The report further sought approval for the General Fund working balance, a number of supplementary budgets and the creation of new earmarked reserves.

The Deputy Chief Finance Officer made particular reference to:-

- an overall net transfer to Earmarked Reserves of £23.9 million with reserves significantly higher than most years most notably due to the setting aside of £17.4 million in respect of business rates;
- the decisive action taken by the Council in July 2020 in passing an Emergency Budget along with additional funding and compensation schemes provided by the Government in response to the Covid-19 Pandemic, had enabled the Council to set aside one-off amounts of:-
 - £4 million to protect the Council against income volatility during 2021/22;
 - £1 million to address the Council's Net Zero ambitions; and
 - £1 million to support the Council as a client of Exeter City Living to help bring forward sites for housing developments.

Councillor Vizard attended the meeting and spoke on this item having given notice under Standing Order No 44.

Councillor Vizard referred to the concerns of residents in respect of the fencing off of a part of Bull Meadow Park as a result of South West Water seeking to transfer its responsibility for the maintenance of the culvert in the Park.

The Director Net Zero Exeter and City Management confirmed that South West Water (SWW) were seeking to divest their responsibilities of certain public surface water sewers on to landowners in the city, the one running through the Park being one of those in dispute with the Council. The Council has robustly defended its position by providing evidence to show that the culvert was a public surface water

sewer paid for by public money and constructed under the Public Health Act. Negotiations with SWW were progressing in respect of a scheme to abandon the section of a poor condition culvert in the Park to enable the whole of the Park to be accessible to the public again. Pricing details were awaited from South West Water with a 50% contribution being offered by the Council.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes and approves (where applicable):-

- (1) the net transfer of £23,901,227 to Earmarked Reserves as detailed in paragraph 8.11 of the report;
- (2) the supplementary budgets of £5,602,710 and budget transfers as detailed in paragraph 8.13 of the report;
- (3) the Earmarked Reserves at 31 March 2021;
- (4) the Council Tax account and collection rate;
- (5) the outstanding sundry debt, aged debt analysis and debt write-off figures;
- (6) the creditors payment performance; and
- (7) the overall financial position of the Council, the General Fund working balance at 31 March 2021 of £4,696,280.

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2020/21 HRA BUDGET MONITORING REPORT – OUTTURN

The Executive received the report which advised Members of the major differences between the approved budget and the outturn for the financial year up to 31 March 2021 in respect of the Housing Revenue Account and the Council's new build scheme's revenue and capital budgets.

The Deputy Chief Finance Officer made particular reference to:-

- the outturn position of the HRA showing a significant underspend of £6.8 million for 2020/21 as a result of the HRA not using revenue to fund capital projects in 2020/21, most notably the deferral of £5.2 million of revenue contributions to capital;
- the revenue contribution toward capital financing would still be required in future years, resulting in no overall impact on the Medium Term Financial Plan; and
- capital expenditure of £16.1 million including £7.3 million towards investment in existing stock and £8.8 million investment in the provision of new council homes.

In response to a question from a Member, the Deputy Chief Finance Officer, confirmed that the HRA was a ring fenced account with no cross subsidy to the General Fund.

RECOMMENDED that Council approve (where applicable): -

- (1) the supplementary budgets of £333,000 as detailed in paragraph 8.4 of the report;
- (2) the HRA financial position for 2020/21 financial year; and

- (3) the revision of the HRA Capital Programme to reflect the reported variations detailed in Appendix 4 of the report.

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TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2020/21

The Executive received the report on the current Treasury Management performance for the 2020/21 financial year and the position of investments and borrowings at 31 March 2021.

The Deputy Chief Finance Officer stated that the outturn position was broadly in line with the original budget rather than the Emergency Budget as the Council's cash flow had not been negatively impacted by the Covid-19 Pandemic, as first feared. This was largely due to Government support measures including the Sales Fees and Charges Compensation Scheme in conjunction with the Council borrowing earlier than planned to secure low interest rates.

Councillor D. Moore, as an opposition leader, enquired whether consideration was given to climate change when reaching decisions on investment opportunities.

The Leader advised that the enquiry should be put separately to officers in order for a response to be provided.

RECOMMENDED that Council note the content of the Treasury Management report.

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DEPOT RE-LOCATION

The Executive received the report which provided an update on the work undertaken to amalgamate depot functions at Exton Road by relocating Public and Green Spaces functions from their current location at the Belle Isle Depot. The work had also addressed issues at the existing Exton Road facilities and funding was being sought to bring the project forward and appoint a professional team.

The City Surveyor made particular reference to:-

- the update to a previous feasibility study on the efficiency and effectiveness of the Belle Isle Nursery depot with particular regard to the safe working of staff;
- confirmation that the amalgamation of all public realm activity onto the Exton Road depot was deliverable;
- the proposal would also improve the operational efficiency of the Exton Road campus; and
- an indicative budget of £3.5 million with Exeter City Living to be engaged as the delivery agent.

The Portfolio Holder for City Management welcomed the proposal as it would significantly improve working conditions of staff especially after the Health and Safety Executive had identified the Belle Isle site as inappropriate and would ensure improvements in overall operational efficiency.

RECOMMENDED that Council approve the allocation of an indicative budget of £3,500,000 to deliver the Depot relocation and improvements at Exton Road Depot.

**LIVEABLE EXETER – GARDEN COMMUNITIES AND ONE PUBLIC ESTATE
FUNDING AWARDS**

The Executive received the report on the Liveable Exeter programme, which provided a high-level update on recently secured grant funding and approval to spending grant funding to progress the Liveable Exeter programme. The report further sought approval to create new posts within the Liveable Exeter programme team in order to increase capacity to support the progression of the programme utilising the approved funding.

The Project Director Liveable Exeter and Interim City Development Support made particular reference to:-

- the utilisation of two funding opportunities – the Garden Communities capacity funding of £475,000 and One Public Estate funding to progress feasibility and technical work on Marsh Barton;
- the significant contribution the proposal would make to the overall Liveable Exeter Programme including providing additional resources to the Liveable Exeter team;
- aiming to achieve the delivery trajectory for 12,000 homes and communities in line with the 2040 vision;
- contributing towards active and sustainable travel patterns and help the city achieve its Net Zero ambitions; and
- the proposal was also fundamental in supporting the development of the Local Plan.

Councillor D. Moore, as an opposition leader, enquired about the extent of the marketing of the proposals and, in line with Garden City principles established by its founders, asked that consideration be given to how existing neighbours and new community members would be able to actively contribute to the formalisation of plans for the Liveable Exeter sites.

The Portfolio Holder for City Development referring to the recent briefing on the Liveable Exeter Plan asked that this be extended to all Council Members.

RECOMMENDED that Council approve: -

- (1) the successful application and receipt of Garden Communities capacity funding to support the Liveable Exeter programme and a budget of up to £475,000, to be funded by an earmarked reserve, to progress work related to the Liveable Exeter programme;
- (2) the successful application and grant of One Public Estate funding to support the progression of feasibility and technical work on Marsh Barton in line with the Liveable Exeter vision and approval of a budget of up to £150,000, funded by claims to Devon County Council as lead partner, to progress the work; and
- (3) the creation of two new, fixed-term posts within the Liveable Exeter team to be funded utilising a proportion of the Garden Communities capacity funding.

The Executive received the report on the proposed continuation of the Wellbeing Exeter programme and associated governance review alongside the strategy and resource plan for delivering the programme to March 2024.

The Active and Healthy People Programme Lead made particular reference to:-

- Wellbeing Exeter was a partnership of public, voluntary and community sector organisations working together to support the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities, the key strategic funders pooling resources being Devon County Council, Exeter City Council, Sport England and the city's four Primary Care Networks;
- the programme being managed by local delivery partner Devon Community Foundation;
- Sport England had awarded Exeter City Council a lottery funding agreement of £1,759,000 to expand Wellbeing Exeter and embed active lifestyles within the programme as part of the national Local Delivery Pilot scheme, being part of the Exeter and Cranbrook 'Live & Move' programme;
- Wellbeing Exeter had played a key role in the Council's community response during the Covid-19 Pandemic. Resulting from this, the strategic partners had reviewed the programme delivery and committed to a new three year strategy. A key aim for the re-designed Wellbeing Exeter model was to respond to the challenges identified through Covid-19 and deliver a programme that supports those residents and communities suffering the greatest health impact as a result of the Pandemic;
- strategic partners across the city identified the Wellbeing of Exeter residents and communities as one of the key priorities of the Liveable Exeter Place Board in delivering its Covid-19 City Recovery Strategy; and
- the proposals included robust governance arrangements.

Councillor D. Moore, as an opposition leader, welcomed the partnership approach embedded in the proposals. She sought confirmation that financial contributions would be forthcoming prior to the year end to ensure that there would be no delay in the delivery of schemes. In terms of governance arrangements, she referred to the absence of the voluntary sector in the Wellbeing Exeter Commissioning Board and to the role and reporting arrangements of the Liveable Exeter Place Board in the overall structure. She suggested that greater transparency in the governance structure should be provided prior to consideration of the proposals by Council.

Councillor Leadbetter, as an opposition leader, supported the report and, in particular, the recommended governance arrangements. He stated that the level of Member involvement was to be welcomed and that the project would be of great benefit to Exeter and its residents and highlighted the value of partnership working.

During the discussion the following points were made:-

- cross party support for the initiative is welcome;
- the partnership approach has been vital in bringing the scheme to the forefront of the health agenda across the country, in helping change people's lives in Exeter and in attracting additional financial support to the city; and
- through the work of the Community Builders and Community Connectors communities, as well as the lives of residents, have been enriched.

The Chief Executive & Growth Director stated that the Exeter Wellbeing initiative was one of the most impressive projects he had been involved with. The Council's commitment to community support and development had grown exponentially over the years from the engagement of a single community development officer to a £3.4

million investment programme committed to supporting the health of its residents. This commitment to the health agenda was particularly impressive for a District Council, a commitment which had led to the £1.4 million investment by Sport England for the Council to become one of the partners in this pioneering pilot project in promoting active and healthy lifestyles. It was an excellent example of an Asset Based Community Development approach which embraced many partners in helping promote healthy lifestyles in addition to the social prescribing role of GP's.

The Chair referred to the following elements delivered by the Programme:-

- four Primary Care networks covering 17 GP practices in the city referring patients;
- 16 Community Connectors supporting individual residents to improve their wellbeing, expanded to include children and young people 11+ and families;
- 13 Community Builders covering every ward in the city, identifying social resources, stimulating activity and helping those communities to thrive and develop; and
- four Community Physical Activity Organisers supporting individuals and communities to be more active in their everyday life.

The Chair, in commending the governance arrangements, emphasised that Members would be invited to twice annual briefings by the Programme Lead alongside the Portfolio Holders where updates would be provided on the progress of Wellbeing Exeter, its ongoing impact with Members provided with opportunities to engage further with the programme.

RECOMMENDED that Council approve:-

- (1) the recommendations as set out in Appendix 1 of the Wellbeing Exeter Review report;
- (2) the Director Transformation and the Service Lead – Active and Healthy People be granted delegated authority, to enter into a contractually binding agreements with strategic partners to deliver the Wellbeing Exeter programme for 2021-2024;
- (3) the Director Transformation and the Service Lead – Active and Healthy People in agreement with the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Culture be granted delegated authority, to spend earmarked Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds amounting to £794,682 in respect of the Wellbeing Exeter programme from the Neighbourhood Portion of the CIL for the period from 2021 to 2024. This would form part of the full proposed programme budget of £3,385,516 with pooled resources provided by strategic programme partners as follows:
 - Devon County Council (£729,766);
 - Sport England (£1,428,500); and
 - Local Exeter Primary Care Networks (£410,568); and
- (4) the adoption of the new governance proposal for Wellbeing Exeter as set out in Appendix 2 of the report.

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 2 and 3 of Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Act.

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IMPROVEMENTS TO THE RE-CYCLING COLLECTION SERVICE

The Executive received the report on the recommended changes to the refuse and re-cycling service as a result of Covid-19 Pandemic, changes to Government guidance and changes to people's demands on the service.

The Director Net Zero Exeter and City Management explained the rationale for reviewing and proposing a changed re-cycling collection service to that agreed in October 2019 prior to the onset of the Covid-19 Pandemic. As a result of the Pandemic (Min. No. 93 of Executive of 8 October 2019 and Min. No. 14 of Council of 15 October 2019 refer), it had been necessary to take account of the changes in people's shopping, work and re-cycling habits and lessons had also been learnt from the challenges being faced by neighbouring authorities in their collection service. It was considered that the revised service proposed would result in improved environmental outcomes compared to the current service, increasing the Council's re-cycling rate and reducing net carbon emissions. It would also meet the expectations from Government and residents that food waste and, possibly glass, be included in the kerbside re-cycling service.

The Portfolio Holder for City Management, in commending the report, advised that in putting forward the changed scheme, regard had been made to the operational implications for staff and to the opportunities for bringing forward training and developmental schemes for employees.

RECOMMENDED that Council rescind its previous decision (Min. No. 93 of Executive of 8 October 2019 and Min. No. 14 of Council of 15 October 2019 refer) to introduce a weekly kerbside-sort recycling collection, incorporating glass and food waste collections with three weekly refuse collections and adopt the following in its place: -

- (1) to retain fortnightly recycling and residual waste collection services and to provide an additional separate weekly food waste collection service;
- (2) to begin a pilot food waste collection scheme in Autumn 2021 in at least one collection area and to use the productivity information to design the full service roll out;
- (3) to wait for further guidance from the Government on the current consultation process for the consistency of collections, to allow the Council to work towards introducing a glass collection service from the kerbside;
- (4) to continue exploring options to improve MRF reliability and strategic long-term options for MRF capacity in the area;
- (5) the investment of £4,514,010 capital and £483,640 net revenue per annum to achieve the successful roll out of the new service; and

- (6) to continue using the remainder of the previously allocated £200,000 revenue budget to fund the roll out of the service changes including project management, publicity and communications.

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DELIVERY OF NET ZERO

The Executive received the report which sought to establish a new team focussed on internal Carbon Net Zero operations. The team would be established by making changes to the existing Growth and Commercialisation and Corporate Energy teams, which would work in partnership with Exeter City Futures to share best practice and help with the delivery of the Net Zero Exeter 2030 Plan.

The Portfolio Holder for Net Zero welcomed the report emphasising that the provision of additional posts and a supporting revenue budget was key to further assist the Council in meeting its Net Zero Carbon targets. Members agreed that the commitment to change from the top was vital to secure buy-in from the general public in meeting the difficult challenges ahead in combating the impact of climate change. The Council itself therefore had an important role in publicising the changes it had made and would be making in the future.

RECOMMENDED that Council approve:-

- (1) the development of a new Exeter City Council Net Zero team, resulting in the creation of two new temporary posts, amending four permanent posts, and the removal of one vacant post from the structure;
- (2) the allocation of a one-off £1 million budget to support activities to deliver Net Zero within the City Council and across the city. Part of the £1 million budget would fund the two new temporary posts and provide a revenue budget for two years to deliver activity;
- (3) support for the establishment of the Exeter City Futures Delivery Group, to enable best practice to be shared across Exeter City Futures partners to support the delivery the Net Zero Exeter 2030 Plan;
- (4) the establishment of Exeter City Council Net Zero Champions within each service area, to assist in delivering Net Zero within the City Council; and
- (5) the implementation of the new structure by 1 August 2021.

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AUCTIONEER'S LEASE AT THE LIVESTOCK CENTRE

The Executive received the report which sought consent to surrender the existing lease at the Exeter Livestock Centre and to grant a new lease with a variance on the terms of the lease which would change the gross income thresholds and the percentage of gross income payable to the Council.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) the Executive Committee noted the contents of the report; and

- (2) the City Surveyor be authorised to agree the new lease and rent reduction as set out in the terms within the report.

(The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 6.52 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 21 July 2021.

DRAFT