

COUNCIL

Tuesday 15 October 2024

Present:-

The Right Worshipful the Lord Mayor Councillor Kevin Mitchell (Lord Mayor)

Councillors Allcock, Asvachin, Atkinson, Banyard, Bennett, Bialyk, Ellis-Jones, Foale, Fullam, Haigh, Harding, Holland, Hussain, Jobson, Ketchin, Knott, Miller-Boam, Mitchell, M, Moore, Palmer, Parkhouse, Patrick, Pole, Read, Rees, Rolstone, Sheridan, Snow, Vizard, Wardle, Williams, M, Williams, R, Wood and Wright

Also Present

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EXECUTIVE - 1 OCTOBER 2024

The minutes of the Executive of 1 October 2024 were presented by the Leader, Councillor Bialyk, and taken as read.

In respect of Minute No.97 (Chairs Announcements) Councillor Ketchin asked for an indication of whether there had been any interest in, or offer on the Clifton Hill site? He also enquired about the Mary Arches car park sale and closure of Exeter City Living and what debt remained.

In his response the Leader stated that there would be no shortfall, all debt had been paid and detail of this would be part two information. He also stated that nothing had come forward so far for Clifton Hill.

Councillor Mitchell asked of the Leader was in favour of 2-tier local government to which the Leader answered that his party were opposed to local government re-organisation but that there would be papers to share in due course.

In respect of Minute No. 99 (Air Quality Annual Status Report) Councillor Moore asked to what extent air quality improvement was as a result of actions taken.

Councillor Moore moved and Councillor Ketchin seconded, an additional recommendation that the Council refer the report to the Director of Public Health for a response.

Councillor Read spoke in support of the recommendation. Councillor R Williams explained that discussion would take place following the Air Quality report, management area and plan for 2024, data for which would not be available until the middle of 2025 and DEFRA had suggested that the current plan be continued for another year. Councillor Williams also clarified that she had alerted DCC officers of this today and supported this recommendation.

Councillor Pole congratulated the Council for going beyond the scope of DEFRA and believed that there was a shared aspiration for Devon to be a healthy ageing area.

In summing up Councillor Moore welcomed Councillor R Williams' support and wished the two councils to discuss together.

Following a vote the additional recommendation was CARRIED.

The Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendations and following a vote was CARRIED unanimously as amended.

In respect of Minute No. 101 (Overview Of General Fund Revenue Budget 2024/25 – Quarter 1) Councillor Moore expressed concern at a trend in budget and impact on services. She asked what consideration the Portfolio Holder would give to supporting staff and building a resilient council as officers were under severe pressure.

The Leader responded saying that he was unable to answer immediately but would welcome discussion with Councillor Moore the next time they met.

The Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendations and following a vote were CARRIED.

In respect of the Minute No. 102 (2024/25 General Fund Capital Monitoring Statement – Quarter 1) Councillor Banyard and Councillor Read asked about RAMM roof and City Wall repairs including the possibility of re-opening the Rougemont archway.

The Leader advised that detail was needed about the City Wall and that he was confident that could be obtained. He requested that Councillor Read email him to ensure that a better report could be sought.

The Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendations and following a vote were CARRIED.

In respect of Minute No. 103 (2024/25 HRA Budget Monitoring Report – Quarter 1) the Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded and following a vote were CARRIED.

In respect of Minute No. 104 (Approved Projects Options Report) Councillors Rees and Pole asked for an update on the progress of the Vaughn Road development.

The Leader advised that he had news of the Brownfield Release Fund of which the Council would be a beneficiary, allowing decontamination and other improvements. Exeter would receive over £860,000 to develop in the region of 37 homes. The Portfolio Holder for Housing, Homelessness Prevention and Customer Services, Councillor Asvachin thanked the Leader for this news and added that the Council continues to review the financial viability of Whipton Gardens.

In respect of Minute No. 105 (Household Support Fund Scheme 6) the Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendation and following a vote was CARRIED.

In respect of Minute No. 106 (Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme 3b Project – Ramm & Riverside Leisure Centre) Councillor Harding asked if the Leader was approached with a view as to whether the project could be completed on time and to budget. Councillor Mitchell asked what lessons had been learnt.

Councillor Vizard reflected that thanks were due to officers for their diligent hard work. Councillor Miller-Boam noted that costs associated had been absorbed. Councillor Moore asked as solutions were not viable, were there additional expense and also how much extra preparation was needed for the new bid.

The Leader responded making the following points:

- that discussion was needed as the Council was waiting for the next PSDS
- he had not been approached by officers;
- that the management-led approach had worked efficiently;
- he had confidence in officers and had been briefed on progress;
- it would have been a mistake if it had come to March 2025 and he had to ask the Council for additional funds;
- that there had been learning from the process; and
- that the £871,000 allocated in the budget remained.

In respect of Minute No. 108 (RAMM Business Plan for Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation Extension Year 2026-27) the Leader moved and Councillor Wood seconded the recommendations and following a vote were CARRIED unanimously.

In respect of Minute No. 109 (Food Law and Health and Safety Enforcement Service Plan 2024- 2025) the Leader moved and Councillor Wood seconded the recommendation and following a vote was CARRIED unanimously.

In respect of Minute No. 110 (Tree and Woodland Maintenance and Inspections Contract) the Leader moved and Councillor Wood seconded the recommendation and following a vote was CARRIED unanimously.

In respect of Minute No. 111 (Honorary Aldermen – Mr Richard Branston) the Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendation and following a vote was CARRIED unanimously.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Executive 1 October 2024 be received.

(The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and closed at 9.59 pm)

Chair

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Response from Director of Public Health to the Interim Joint Director for Environment, Waste and Operations and Portfolio Holder for City Management in relation to air quality

RESPONSE: Had a bit of time to work through the report and does all look good and moving in a positive direction. I have been provided with some more detailed feedback which I include below which hopefully you will find useful.

Page 4 first paragraph – perhaps reword to include ‘external’ and ‘location’ i.e. “...small number are still exposed at their home location to external levels above the objective”. [this is because there may be other factors influencing internal air quality].

It would seem reasonable to adjust the AQMA order using the proposed process and timetable, with a view to adjusting the AQMA in line with the report.

Page 7 please include Public Health Devon in the list of partners.

Drawing attention to a previous reply to the Transportation Strategy and Road Safety Manager and the Senior Environmental Technical Officer following query on exceedances:

“Given the number of exceedances it would be difficult to attribute causality. Previous UK studies have sought to consider high pollution events with hospital admissions episodes, but require careful statistical modelling as there may be lag between episode and rise in admissions, and other confounders to consider.

However, there is clear international evidence for a ‘dose response effect’ where on average a 10 µg/m³ increase in NO₂ concentrations (previous day) was significantly associated with increased risk of total (0.46%), cardiovascular (0.37%), and respiratory (0.47%) mortality. The concentration-response curves were almost linear, even below the current WHO air quality guidelines (There is no ‘safe’ level, with disagreement between UK Government’s higher limits, and the World Health Organisation as to appropriate and achievable limits). Around 1 in 20 deaths in Exeter were attributable to air pollution (NB. old modelling, updated 2022, data now available states 3.1%).

We need to be clear there are acute and chronic effects of air pollution, including nitrogen dioxide; exceedance is only one part of a complex picture. Long-term exposure can cause chronic conditions through systemic inflammation, whilst acute episodes can exacerbate existing conditions, such as asthma. Exposure to traffic pollution can create overall effects, such as reduction in lung function in population, with an increase in prevalence of, for example, children with clinically relevant declines.

It should be borne in mind that there are a number of other pollutants from vehicles that can cause additional harms such as, of those studied, benzene or particulate matter. Whether NO₂ is a good proxy is open to debate, particularly when the proportion of PM is increasing due to heavier electric vehicles.”

It is for this reason we welcome the continued measures to improve air quality and population exposure, with cobenefits for the environment, and health, including in relation to increased activity through active travel, and other initiatives.

Noting that there are a number of internal pollutants within enclosed environments (i.e. car or home), that may need exploring further, but currently outside the scope of these reports. We are working with housing and other colleagues in relation to issues such as damp/mould, and will consider other sources, such as cooking, in relation to retrofit or other interventions.

Assuming liaising with Transportation Strategy and Road Safety Manager so they can compare proposals highlighted in the AQ report with those actions highlighted in the draft Local Transport Plan, due for consultation later this year.

If looking to engage early and seek to develop behaviour change around initiatives, please get in touch. Although, like many have dwindling resources, can see where we can work together to seek better outcomes. This also goes for work around the Local Plan. Welcome the Equalities Impact Assessment for the AQMA review; please let us know if any further information required from our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, or other data we may have access to. This could for example consider where there may be higher vulnerable groups within given geographical areas (and any mitigations that may be put in place, inform planning decisions etc.).

Director of Public Health and Communities