

COUNCIL

Tuesday 13 December 2022

Present:-

The Right Worshipful the Lord Mayor Councillor Mrs Yolonda Henson (Chair)

Councillors Allcock, Asvachin, Atkinson, Bialyk, Denning, Ellis-Jones, Foale, Hannaford, Harvey, Holland, Jobson, Knott, Leadbetter, Lights, Mitchell, K, Mitchell, M, Moore, D, Moore, J, Newby, Oliver, Parkhouse, Pearce, Read, Rees, Snow, Sparling, Sutton, Vizard, Wardle, Warwick, Williams, Wood and Wright

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MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 18 October 2022 were moved by the Leader, Councillor Bialyk and seconded by Councillor Wright taken as read, approved and signed as correct.

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OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS

The Lord Mayor reported that a card, signed by King Charles III, had been received from Buckingham Palace addressed to the Lord Mayor and the people of Exeter in response to the letters of condolence which had been sent.

The Lord Mayor advised that she had attended the following:-

- Diwali celebrations at Matthews's Hall in Topsham on 29 October 2022;
- the Devon Young Farmers Harvest Festival Service at Exeter Cathedral on 30 October 2022;
- the Exeter, East and Mid Devon award and recognition ceremony at the Barnfield Theatre on 3 November 2022 for both serving officers, police staff and members of the public for actions that have gone above and beyond expectations;
- the Remembrance Service in Northernhay Gardens on 13 November 2022;
- the 80th Anniversary of the Polish Flag raising ceremony on 15 November 2022, attended by representatives of the 307 Squadron Project and members of the Brize Norton RAF base;
- the annual dinner of the Incorporation of Weavers, Fullers and Shearman at Tuckers Hall on 18 November 2022;
- the 41st annual Exeter Street Sweepers' and Cleaners' Award held at the Guildhall on 19 November 2022;
- a Fit for a King dinner held at @34 Restaurant at Exeter College on 23 November 2022, where £1,400 had been raised for Exeter Dementia Action Alliance, the Lord Mayor's chosen charity;
- a reception on 26 November 2022 as part of the celebrations for the return of Exeter Carnival which had taken place after a 24 year absence; and
- the Lord Mayor's Carol Service on 28 November 2022 at the Cathedral with the Exeter Railway Band, The Maynard School and the Exeter Police and Community Choir participating in the service.

The Lord Mayor reported the following:-

- the Lord Mayor's coffee morning event would be held on Saturday 17 December 2022 to raise money for the Exeter Dementia Action Alliance;
- St. Sidwell's Point had won the Royal Institute for Chartered Surveyors Environmental Impact Award for inspirational initiatives and developments on 21 October 2022. The ceremony had been held at the Londoner Hotel in London; and
- the nomination of St. Sidwell's Point for the Royal Town Planning Institute Awards Excellence in the Planning for Health and Wellbeing category, the ceremony held on 30 November 2022 at the Mermaid Theatre in London.

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PUBLIC QUESTION

The Lord Mayor reported the receipt of a question from a member of the public.

Question from Peter Cleasby to Councillor Bialyk, Leader.

What lessons for the future has the Council learned from the procurement process relating to the construction of St. Sidwell's Point?

Response

1. When procuring a builder for a project as challenging and complex as St. Sidwell's Point (city centre location, swimming pool engineering, Passivhaus construction), then a two stage tender process with the contractor enables the contractor to fully understand the challenges, risks and solutions, before confirming the price and programme. This collaborative approach helped remove uncertainty and any misunderstanding or misconceptions.
2. Presentations and information sessions about the project during the tender process help the supply chain gain a good understanding of the requirements of the project and key drivers for success.
3. Keeping a clear register and log of all correspondence and information issued during the tender process helps ensure consistency of communication with all tendering parties and avoids the risk of procurement challenge.
4. Complex projects require teams on both sides to understand the priorities of others regarding risk and the processes that need to be managed, including resourcing of risk mitigation.
5. The project is market-leading, so communicating the benefits and additional processes is part of the procurement process and time needs to be allocated to this.

Mr Cleasby asked a supplementary question as to whether, notwithstanding the good practices that had been followed, had the two substantial budget increases in 2018 and 2021 impacted on subsequent Council negotiations with the contractor and that, in spite of these escalating costs, the Council had no option but to continue its commitment to the project so as not to lose face?

The Leader, in responding, stated that very detailed practices had been established with the contractor at the procurement stage of the contract. It was to the credit of the Council to have developed a highly prestigious, successful leisure facility at a time when other leisure centres and swimming pools across the country had been forced to close as a result of the economic conditions brought about by the Covid Pandemic.

61

PLANNING COMMITTEE - 10 OCTOBER 2022

The minutes of the Planning Committee of 10 October 2022 were presented by the Chair, Councillor Morse, and taken as read.

In respect of **Minute No. 40 (Planning Application No. 22/0236/FUL and 22/0237/LBC - The Royal Clarence Hotel, Cathedral Yard, Exeter)**, and in response to a question from a Member and in the absence of the Portfolio Holder for City Development, the Leader advised that, in the event of a deferred contribution mechanism being made on the completion of the commercial and residential units on the Royal Clarence Hotel site, the details would be reported to Members.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 10 October 2022 be received.

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LICENSING COMMITTEE - 24 NOVEMBER 2022

The minutes of the Licensing Committee of 24 November 2022 were presented by the Chair, Councillor Foale, and taken as read.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Licensing Committee held on 24 November 2022 be received.

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AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE - 30 NOVEMBER 2022

The minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee of 30 November 2022 were presented by the Chair, Councillor Wardle, and taken as read.

In respect of **Minute No. 27 (External Auditor's Annual Audit Report on Exeter City Council 2020/21)**, the Leader, in response to Members' questions, advised that:-

- a review of the governance structure of Exeter City Council's companies, including Exeter City Living, was underway to ensure that the Board comprised the right mix of Directors with the necessary skills as well as appropriate shareholder interaction and that, the details of the changes and the composition of the new Board, would be reported back to Council; and
- with regard to other City Council companies, the review of Strata would be progressed by the Strata Joint Executive Committee which was responsible for the strategic governance of Strata with the appropriate scrutiny to be undertaken by the Strata Joint Scrutiny Committee. This was a joint exercise by the three company owners – East Devon District Council, Exeter City Council and Teignbridge District Council.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 30 November 2022 be received.

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STRATEGIC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 17 NOVEMBER 2022

The minutes of the Strategic Scrutiny Committee of 17 November 2022 were presented by the Chair, Councillor Hannaford, and taken as read.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Strategic Scrutiny Committee held on 17 November 2022 be received.

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CUSTOMER FOCUS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 1 DECEMBER 2022

The minutes of the Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee of 1 December 2022 were presented by the Chair, Councillor Vizard, and taken as read.

In respect of **Minute No. 32 (Questions from Members of the Council under Standing Order No. 20)**, the Leader moved and Councillor M. Mitchell seconded the addition of the Earl of Devon in the recommendation requesting that the City's MP's and Bishop Robert Atwell be asked to raise with the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities the Scrutiny Committee's concerns regarding problems of mould and damp in social housing.

Following a vote, the recommendation, as amended, was CARRIED unanimously.

In respect of **Minute No. 34 (Tackling the Ecological Emergency)**, the Chair reported that, in view of the resource implications, the recommendation for the Local Plan team to be requested to lead on the production of a Biodiversity Status Report, a Nature Recovery Plan and a Tree Canopy Cover Action Plan for inclusion within the Local Plan, with specific and measurable targets for Exeter, would be reported to the Executive.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee held on 1 December 2022 be received and, where appropriate, adopted.

66

EXETER HARBOUR BOARD - 26 OCTOBER 2022

The minutes of the Exeter Harbour Board of 26 October 2022 were presented by the Chair, Councillor Williams, and taken as read.

In respect of **Minute No. 21 (Harbour Revision Order Update)**, the Chair reported that she had started to meet informally with water sports associations and other relevant organisations with an interest in the Harbour Revision Order to discuss its implications, including issues around charging.

In respect of **Minute No. 22 (Harbour Master's Report)**, the Chair advised that the Heritage Harbour Route Map had been commissioned by the Exeter Canal and Quay Trust who would decide on the timing of the release of the final version which was currently under preparation.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Exeter Harbour Board held on 26 October 2022 be received.

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EXECUTIVE - 1 NOVEMBER 2022

The minutes of the Executive of 1 November 2022 were presented by the Leader, Councillor Bialyk, and taken as read.

In respect of **Minute No. 111 (Revisions to Street Naming and Numbering Policy)**, the Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendations and following a vote, the recommendations were carried unanimously.

In respect of **Minute No. 112 (The Devon Carbon Plan)**, Councillor D. Moore prior to moving amendments on the recommendations, sought the views of the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change on the following:-

- the County Council goal within the Carbon Plan to achieve Net Zero by 2050 with a 50% reduction in carbon emissions by 2030;
- what was the meaning of the words “reflecting on” in recommendation (2), particularly in respect of transport?; and
- the absence in the Equality Impact Assessment of any evidence that religious organisations were reluctant to improve their buildings, as many were in the forefront of taking action in this respect.

The Portfolio Holder for Climate Change responded as follows:-

- the Devon County Council target for Net Zero 2050 aligns with the national target. Whilst the County Council has challenges to deliver on the target because of the diverse nature of Devon communities, for Exeter, their buildings within the city are set to meet the 2030 Net Zero target;
- transport was 22% of the city’s carbon emissions and was a key target and this issue was being progressed by the City Council’s Exeter Transport Working Group and through Member and officer discussions with their County Council colleagues; and
- a separate written response would be provided in relation to the question on the Equality Impact Assessment.

Councillor D. Moore moved and Councillor K. Mitchell seconded the following amendments to the recommendations:-

- (1) Recommendation (2) to read “reaffirm the commitment to the City of Exeter’s goal of a Net Zero Exeter 2030, given the Devon Carbon Plan target for Net Zero being 2050, in-line with Government’s goal for the country. Transport being one of the largest sources of carbon emissions for the City and County, the consequences of reductions to Net Zero by 2030 were profound and Members may wish to satisfy themselves that the 2050 goal provided a supportive policy context for the city of Exeter’s Net Zero plans. Accordingly, to open urgent and meaningful negotiations with the County Council on Transport and the 2050 target to develop a supportive policy context for the City of Exeter Net Zero plans”;
- (2) to replace the word biannual in recommendation (5) with the words “reports twice yearly”, and;
- (3) an additional recommendation to remove the reference to religious groups in the Equality Impact Assessment as there is no evidence to back up the statement that such groups are reluctant to improve their buildings.

During the discussion, the Leader stated that he was prepared to accept the proposal to negotiate with the County Council on transport but that the wording should be amended to read “ask for” rather than “open” meaningful discussions with the County Council. He also stated that the issue relating to the Equality Impact Assessment would be progressed with the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change as already indicated. As such, two of the three amendments, that is the changed wording to (1) above with the wording “ask for” instead of “open” and the new recommendation set out in (3) above were acceptable but that (2) was not.

Councillor D. Moore accepted the changed wording to (1) above and acknowledged the proposal on how to proceed with the new recommendation.

The amendment in respect of (2) above was voted upon on and LOST.

The recommendations, as amended by (1) and (3) above, became the substantive motion.

The Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded the substantive motion and following a vote, the recommendations, as amended, were CARRIED unanimously.

In respect of **Minute No. 113 (Legal Obstacles to Port Marine Safety Code Compliance)**, and during the discussion the following points were made:-

- the Canal, which had been in the ownership of the City Council for over 500 years, was a valuable asset for the city but which was somewhat overlooked by the general public. It was an important attraction to both residents and visitors alike offering a more carbon friendly, alternative means of transport than some other transport modes;
- the proposal for a Harbour Revision Order was welcomed and would help preserve the Canal;
- the Canal and Estuary were also assets to Topsham;
- thanks were extended to the Harbour Master and his team for their work in carrying out the City Council's Health and Safety and other responsibilities and for arranging Members' fact finding tours of the River and Canal; and
- the recent containment of oil and diesel spillage into the Canal from a 44-ton fishing boat underlined the importance of this service and for seeking the Harbour Revision Order which would give legal powers to instruct owners to remove unseaworthy vessels from Exeter's waterways.

The Leader moved and Councillor Wardle seconded the recommendations and following a vote, the recommendations were carried unanimously.

In respect of **Minute No. 114 (Exeter Playing Pitch Strategy)**, the Portfolio Holder for Leisure Services and Physical Activity, in response to a Member's question, advised that there were a number of funding options for progressing the Strategy, including approaching national funding bodies for grant support and the use of Community Infrastructure Funding (CIL) and Section 106 monies and that all avenues would be explored.

The Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendation and following a vote, the recommendation was carried unanimously.

In respect of **Minute No. 115 (Annual Scrutiny Report 2021-22)**, the Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendation and following a vote, the recommendation was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Executive held on 1 November 2022 be received and, where appropriate, adopted.

The minutes of the Executive of 29 November 2022 were presented by the Leader, Councillor Bialyk, and taken as read.

In respect of **Minute No.119 (Members' Allowances)**, the Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendations and following a vote, the recommendations were carried unanimously.

In respect of **Minute No. 120 (Amendment to the Terms of Reference for the Joint Consultation and Negotiation Committee)**, the Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendation and following a vote, the recommendation was carried unanimously.

In respect of **Minute No. 121 (Working Towards Net Zero - Exeter City Council's Corporate Footprint Report and Carbon Reduction Action Plan)**, the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, undertook to respond to a Member's question in respect of the requirement for a detailed investment plan based on costed proposals to achieve Net Zero 2030.

The Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendations and following a vote, the recommendations were carried unanimously.

In respect of **Minute No. 122 (The Local Household Support Fund - Scheme 3)**, the Portfolio Holder for Customer Services and Housing commended the scheme which would assist those households struggling during the Cost of Living Crisis, the awards to range between £100 and £650, with payments to be made in January.

The Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendation and following a vote, the recommendation was carried unanimously.

In respect of **Minute No. 123 (Mary Arches Street Car Park Re-development)**, the Leader, in response to a Member's question, advised that there was no intention to include properties outside of the indicative red line boundary and that the purpose of the report was to agree a budget for the demolition of the Car Park and requirements for making the demolition possible. He added that there would be a consultation process and that Members could raise issues in advance with the Director City Development.

The Portfolio Holder for Climate Change stated that the cost of the solar canopy arrays had been fully met and that they would be relocated to an appropriate site to continue to generate energy.

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

In respect of **Minute No. 124 (Community Infrastructure Levy - Partial Review consultation)**, the Leader, in response to a Member's question, confirmed that the public consultation on the draft Charging Schedule would follow the Council's Consultation Charter.

Councillor Wood declared a non-pecuniary interest and left the meeting during consideration of the following item.

In respect of **Minute No. 125 (Annual Infrastructure Funding Statements 2022)**, the Leader, in response to Members' questions, provided the following responses:-

- although he understood that it was not a requirement for 25% of a CIL contribution to be allocated to a Neighbourhood Plan area, he would seek further clarification from the Director City Development;

- with regard to the Exeter wide distribution of CIL monies, he recognised the differing demands from the city's wards, some of which had pressing needs in terms of deprivation but that it was important to achieve consensus on the distribution of funds. As it was difficult to discuss issues with all Ward Members, it was appropriate for this matter in particular, to be raised at a Leaders' meeting; and
- the Quay and Water Lane area could also be raised at a Leaders' meeting. Although proposals for the Water Lane Retail Park development might provide an opportunity for funding in the area, the ideas for replacing the former Mallison Bridge had included a wider boardwalk proposal, the cost of which was prohibitive at present. Ultimately, any plans would require inclusion in future capital programmes.

The Deputy Leader apologised for the delay in re-arranging a planned meeting referred to by a co-leader of the Progressive Group.

Councillor Wood having declared a non-pecuniary interest in the previous item had already left the meeting prior to the consideration of the following item, on which he had also declared a non-pecuniary interest. He therefore remained outside the meeting.

In respect of **Minute No. 126 (Pinhoe Community Hub)**, and during the discussion the following points were made:-

- new community facilities were particularly needed in Pinhoe following the significant amount of new housing built in the area in recent years. As well as Pinhoe residents, it was anticipated that the wider community, including the St James and Polsloe areas, would also benefit from the facilities and events;
- the Pinhoe Community Hub incorporated an extension to the library and a café overlooking the play area which would enable parents to supervise their children; and
- the value of CIL contributions to communities across the city, as well as the Pinhoe Hub, was recognised.

The Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendations and following a vote, the recommendations were carried unanimously.

In respect of **Minute No.127 (Overview of General Fund Revenue Budget 2022/23 – Quarter 2)**, the Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendations and following a vote, the recommendations were carried.

In respect of **Minute No. 128 (2022/23 General Fund Capital Monitoring Statement – Quarter 2)**, the Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendations and following a vote, the recommendations were carried.

In respect of **Minute No. 129 (HRA Budget Monitoring Report - Quarter 2)**, the Leader, in response to a Member's question, undertook to request the Director Net Zero Exeter and City Management to provide an update on the position in respect of the allocated budget for replacing trees lost as a result of Ash Dieback.

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

In respect of **Minute No. 130 (Treasury Management 2022/23 Half Year Update)**, the Leader, in response to a Member's question, undertook to request the Director

Finance to provide an update on the impact of climate change on the City Council investments, in particular in relation to banking activity.

The Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendation and following a vote, the recommendation was carried.

In respect of **Minute No. 133 (Live and Move Strategy and Governance Proposals)**, the Chair of the Strategic Scrutiny Committee, in response to a Member's question, advised that the Strategy fell within the Portfolio for Leisure Services and Physical Activity and that progress on the Strategy would be reported to the Committee.

The Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendations and following a vote, the recommendations were carried unanimously.

In respect of **Minute No. 134 (The Exeter Community Lottery)**, Councillor Read moved and Councillor D. Moore seconded the following amendment:-

“to remove recommendations (1) to (4) and to replace with two recommendations:-

- (1) to produce, prior to a decision being taken to proceed, a feasibility report on the financial impact for the Council, impact on the voluntary sector, and the likely impact of gambling on those people and households who buy tickets; and
- (2) if deemed feasible, to then consult with the public and voluntary sector on the establishment of a local lottery for Exeter in line with the Consultation Charter and report back to Council on these findings.”

In presenting the amendment, Councillor Read stated that the proposal for an Exeter lottery could drive a wedge between communities as some would be unable to access the lottery fund, whilst others could. It was also incompatible with a Notice of Motion passed by the Council on 18 October 2022 (Min. No 56 refers) on the Cost of Living Crisis as lotteries take a higher percentage of their income from low income families. She asked if there had been any research on the impact on existing lotteries such as those of the Royal Devon and Exeter, NHS Trust and schools and whether smaller organisations who run lotteries would also be compromised. She also enquired if there had been any modelling undertaken on multiple members of a household purchasing tickets and how much the scheme would cost the Council?

The Portfolio Holder for Communities and Homelessness Prevention made the following points:-

- he had offered to share research through a briefing, but it had been unfortunate that not all Members had been able to attend, the briefing in effect being part of a consultation process;
- there were 163 organisations in the city who had benefitted from funding such as Exeter Cathedral via the Heritage Lottery Fund and Exeter Communities Together who supported a wide range of organisations across the city which indicated that there was widespread knowledge of lottery opportunities;
- the proposal was a sustainable way of getting extra community funding for organisations in the city and it was not a barrier, but an additional way of grant supporting bodies, allied to the Council's existing grants scheme;
- significant consultation had already taken place and there was ongoing discussions with Exeter's community partners such as Exeter Community

Initiative and St. Sidwell's Community Centre, all of whom were excited with the planned Exeter lottery;

- it was an incentivised giving scheme offering the public the opportunity to contribute to good causes which, in turn, would help those organisations, large and small alike, to combat the cost of living crisis; and
- it was not a ground breaking initiative as other local authorities had been able to set up community lotteries and there were now over 115 local authority managed lotteries in the UK. Research had shown that 82.5% of those participating came from the ABC 1 social category and not lower income groups.

A Member stated that the opportunity for a briefing had been welcomed but had been called at short notice. She emphasised that it was important for additional time to be made available for a scrutiny process to be undertaken prior to any commitment being made.

Councillor D. Moore, in seconding the amendment, raised the following points:-

- whilst the Portfolio Holder had offered a briefing, it was not a consultation and a report should have been brought first to the relevant Scrutiny Committee;
- it was important to respect the relationship with the voluntary sector and they should be consulted in accordance with the City Council's Consultation Charter as a number of these organisations had received support from the National Lottery and could therefore make a valuable contribution to this issue;
- some organisations in the city had not been able to participate in lottery funded projects because of their values and beliefs, one organisation having pulled out of a project for this reason;
- there was a need to be fully inclusive, as some organisations have not been aware of this scheme;
- the proposal had not been fully costed and there was a need for information on how it would be funded, what the financial return would be each quarter and an understanding of how the scheme would work with the City Council's grants system. It was important to ensure that funds would be available to those organisations who do not wish to benefit from the scheme;
- a significant amount of money would go to the organiser and there should be other ways to incentivise many in the city who were very generous by offering alternative opportunities to give, such as through Trusts; and
- request a full feasibility study to understand the true cost to the Council and a fundamental consultation with the voluntary and community sectors to help shape the proposed lottery.

During discussion the following points were raised:-

- the scheme was self-funded and there was no cost to the Council as it was being undertaken by an outside provider. It would offer the opportunity for people to give back to their community;
- the opposition to the proposal would only lead to delay in its implementation when many other Councils had been running such schemes for years;
- it was not a regressive taxation or big scale on-line gambling;
- data showed that it was not the most deprived in the community who took part and there would be safeguards in place; and
- there were creative ways to ensure that certain communities who had reservations with lotteries could still benefit.

The Portfolio Holder responded further with the following comments:-

- the money would be separate to the grants scheme and it was not the intention for those who had benefited from the grants scheme to receive further support from the new scheme; and
- costs would be £1,173 to cover the Lottery Gambling fees and, as estimated in consultation with other Councils, two to three hours of officer time per week. External lottery managers would be used as they would bear the risk in relation to the prize fund.

Councillor Read, in exercising her right of reply, stated that there had been insufficient consultation as a number of community organisations were unaware of the proposal and she called for the proposal to be properly scrutinised.

The amendment was put to the vote and LOST.

Councillor Jobson, as an opposition group leader, spoke on this item stating that the briefing session provided had been useful. She was also concerned that there would be multiple member households participating, potentially spending over £20 a week, at a time, when families were economically stretched in other areas. She did not feel that assurances had been given that there were adequate safeguards in place. Similarly, it was unclear how to stop under 16's joining the scheme.

During further discussion, the point was made that it was unclear how much of the lottery fund would be used towards administration, how much would go to the lottery provider and whether there would be any contribution to Gambling Aware.

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

In respect of **Minute No. 135 (Major Capital Projects Budgets : Edwards Court Extra Care Scheme and Exeter Bus Station and St. Sidwell's Point Programme 3)**, the Leader, in response to a Member's question, stated that the total cost of the Bus Station and St. Sidwell's Point Leisure Centre project was £54.8 million. He added that St. Sidwell's Point had been upgraded since the initial stages in 2014 and that the target of 10,000 members across all of the Council's Leisure facilities within three years of the opening of St. Sidwell's Point had already been exceeded, with 12,000 members now signed up.

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

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Executive held on 29 November 2022 be received and, where appropriate, adopted.

The meeting adjourned at 8.10 pm and re-convened at 8.18 pm.

**NOTICE OF MOTION BY COUNCILLOR PEARCE UNDER
STANDING ORDER NO. 6**

Councillor Pearce, seconded by Councillor Wright, moved a Notice of Motion in the following terms:-

Armed Forces Act 2021

This Council:

- Stands firmly behind our UK Armed Forces and fully supports the aims of the Armed Forces Covenant.
- Welcomes the new Armed Forces Act but sees the legislation as a missed opportunity to improve the lives of veterans in Exeter.
- Notes with disappointment that the Act which makes Exeter City Council and local public bodies legally bound to have “due regard” to the Covenant when providing support to Forces communities but exempts central government from any such duty, creating a two-tier Covenant for veterans.
- Notes with further disappointment that Labour led proposals backed by service charities and ex-Service chiefs to enshrine the Covenant fully into law but Conservative MPs voted down these plans to improve Armed Forces accommodation, employment support and pensions and to end the scandal of visa fees for the families of Commonwealth and Gurkha personnel.
- Resolves to continue the campaign with Forces charities to see the Government strengthen the Covenant and improve vital services to veterans.

Councillor Jobson, as the leader of an opposition group, made the following comments, stating that she would not be supporting the Motion:-

- the Conservative Group supported the Armed Forces and the Armed Forces Covenant, the Armed Forces having made many sacrifices to fulfil their duties and to keep people safe. The Armed Forces were likely to be asked to step in to ensure that essential services continue to be provided during strike action;
- the Armed Forces and their families deserve the Armed Forces Covenant as part of the promise made to them that they would not be disadvantaged and that their sacrifices would be recognised;
- the Secretary of State for Defence had expressed his gratitude to the thousands of organisations across the country who supported the Armed Forces to ensure that they and their families were not disadvantaged as a result of the sacrifices made; and
- the Covenant was to ensure that support continued into the future and the Conservative Group supported this legislation but could not support the recommendation.

In presenting his motion, Councillor Pearce made the following points:-

- it was a very important recommendation for the South West as there were more veterans in the South West than anywhere else in the country and, in particular in Exeter, 3.9% of the population were veterans, many of whom being reservists who worked at the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital;
- the Royal British Legion had expressed the view that the Armed Forces Bill would, for the first time, place the Covenant on a legal footing. Whilst the majority of the public believed that it was the responsibility of the Government to deliver, it was exempted from the new provisions. The Legion had stated that the responsibility for many of the issues concerning the Armed Forces community rests with the Government; and
- support for the Armed Forces was a Government responsibility and it should be taking the initiative and not relying on Local Councils who already do what they can to support the Armed Forces community. The Government should not be abrogating themselves from their responsibility.

Councillor Pearce commended the Motion to Council.

The Notice of Motion was put to the vote and CARRIED.

**NOTICE OF MOTION BY COUNCILLOR WOOD UNDER
STANDING ORDER NO. 6**

Councillor Wood, seconded by Councillor Parkhouse, moved a Notice of Motion in the following terms:-

Plant-Based Food

1. This Council recognises the importance of accessing a whole-food plant-based diet [1, 2] and the effect dietary choices can have on individual carbon footprints.
2. This Council recognises the importance of a balanced diet as well as individual choice and catering for all dietary requirements. Increasing awareness of dietary choices and resulting impact to individual carbon footprint can allow individuals to make more informed choices.
3. The special report on climate change and land by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) describes plant-based diets as a major opportunity for mitigating and adapting to climate change - and includes a policy recommendation to reduce meat consumption. [3]
4. The National Food Strategy recommended cutting meat consumption by 30% in a decade. [4]
5. When we talk about emissions, we usually think of carbon dioxide (CO₂). But livestock's emissions also include methane, which is up to 34 times more damaging to the environment over 100 years than CO₂, according to the UN. [5]
6. Beef produces the most greenhouse gas emissions, which include methane. A global average of 110lb (50kg) of greenhouse gases is released per 3.5oz of protein. Lamb has the next highest environmental footprint but these emissions are 50% less than beef. Cattle produce more methane than poultry, which rely more on imported feed than cows, generating a carbon footprint offshore, says Professor Margaret Gill. [6]
7. The plant-based food market is booming. With one-third of UK consumers choosing to actively reduce their meat consumption, the demand for plant-based innovation is growing at a rapid pace. [7]
8. Plant-based food contributes to Exeter City Council corporate priorities, including our Net Zero 2030 target through to personal wellbeing.

Council asks Executive to:

1. Ensure that by the Exeter City Council Annual Council in May 2023, food provided at catered internal Council meetings will be plant-based and that it will showcase plant based foods at catered events.
2. Ensure that all Council run external sites including Leisure Centres, cafes and restaurants have plant-based options available as part of their regular catering offer and advertised clearly on their menu.

3. Set up a cross-party Task and Finish Working Group, chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, of officers, elected Members including other relevant Portfolio Holders and invited experts to promote and embed these principles in Exeter City Council's food provision where practicable.

References

[1] The term "whole" in whole foods plant based diet describes foods that are minimally processed. This includes whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and legumes.

[2] The term "plant-based" refers to vegetables, grains, pulses, or other foods derived from plants, rather than animal products.

[3] IPCC Special Report on Climate Change and Land. Accessed on 24th November 2022: <https://www.ipcc.ch/srccl/> [4] National Food Strategy: An Independent Review for Government. Accessed on 24th November 2022: <https://www.nationalfoodstrategy.org/the-report/>

[5] United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. Methane Management: The Challenge. Accessed on 24th November 2022: <https://unece.org/challenge>

[6] BBC Climate change: Do I need to stop eating meat? Accessed on 24th November 2022: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/explainers-59232599>

[7] Vegan Society. A third of shoppers report they are cutting down on meat or ditching it completely in a response to the cost-of-living crisis. Accessed on 24th November 2022: <https://www.vegansociety.com/news/news/third-shoppers-report-reducing-or-ditching-meat>.

In presenting his motion, Councillor Wood made the following points:-

- the purpose of the Motion was to make people aware of the impact on the Climate Change crisis of the choices they make in deciding what to eat;
- there was a shared understanding in society that there should be less consumption of meat and there was a significant amount of information on the environmental and health benefits of choosing plant based foods;
- with greater awareness of the crisis, people ask how they can help and one action would be to eat plant based foods;
- the Motion did not seek to prevent the consumption of meat, but rather to encourage the eating of meat on fewer days of the week;
- farmers and food producers also faced challenges in combatting Climate Change and they could be supported by the public who could choose locally sourced quality food which benefitted the local economy; and
- the Council was asked to play a role in raising awareness of plant based foods and to support the changes society needs to make to protect the planet.

Councillor Parkhouse, in seconding the Motion, made the following points:-

- decisions made every day had an impact on Climate Change and the future of the planet;
- the Council had enacted bold and ambitious policies to combat Climate Change in line with its declaration of a Climate Emergency in 2019 and the target of Net Zero 2030;
- science had made it clear that society needed to consume less meat;
- the impact on society of Climate Change would be greater than that of the recent Covid Pandemic;
- the Motion did not seek to ask people to become Vegan or Vegetarians, but to make the choice of cutting down on meat consumption; and
- there were significant health benefits in eating more plant based foods at every life stage.

During the discussion the following points were made:-

- whilst broadly supporting the measures to achieve Net Zero 2030, there were unintended consequences of promoting plant based foods. If the Motion was taken to its logical conclusion of greatly reducing meat consumption there would be an economic impact on businesses such as restaurants which were significantly meat based, on charities as well as the Council. Both the Livestock Centre and the Famers Market could see a reduction in income and there may be a reduced demand for the use of the Guildhall for weddings if there was a restriction on caterers' menus. A further Council revenue stream could also be lost if licences were no longer issued to mobile catering businesses which were largely meat based;
- the Council should seek to raise awareness of this issue, recognising that it was a matter of choice. Although, in some cases, it was not medically advisable to eat plant based food, it would still be beneficial to showcase plant based foods at external events;
- restaurants offering plant based foods would be more attractive to groups who counted Vegans or Vegetarians in their numbers;
- Members were encouraged to participate in Vegan January to help promote understanding of this issue;
- at recent Licensing Sub Committee meetings there had been applications from mobile catering businesses seeking licences and offering a choice of menu to include non-meat and vegan options. One application had not considered a vegan option and had still been granted a licence;
- it was important that many local meat producing outlets such as butchers and Darts Farm use quality local produce and know the source of the meat they sell;
- the proposed Task and Finish Group should also examine wider procurement issues not just the food offer at internal and Council supported events;
- an entire plant based approach could feed the whole of the world's population;
- a more plant based diet could help reduce allergies, with dairy products one of the main causes of allergies in the UK;
- how would the proposal in not offering the choice of alternatives to plant based food at internal Council meetings be progressed?; and
- the welfare of animals in food production, notably pigs and chickens, should also be considered and bad farming practices eliminated.

Councillor Wood, in concluding, stated that the Motion was not seeking huge changes in people's behaviour as, ultimately, consumers and the market itself would be the main determinant. Whilst options would be available, the Motion was predicated on showcasing and promoting plant based food. The Task and Finish Working Group would be examining procurement issues and would also focus on the promotion of, and messaging around, plant based food.

Councillor Wood commended the Motion to Council.

The Notice of Motion was put to the vote and CARRIED.

**NOTICE OF MOTION BY COUNCILLOR ATKINSON UNDER
STANDING ORDER NO. 6**

Councillor Atkinson, seconded by Councillor Oliver, moved a Notice of Motion in the following terms:-

State Pension Inequality

Council notes that:

- In the 1995 Pensions Act, the Government increased State Pension age for women from 60 to 65, with a further increase to 66 in the 2011 Pensions Act.
- The change was not properly communicated to 3.8 million women born in the 1950's until 2012, giving some only one year's notice of a six year increase in their anticipated retirement age. Nearly 6,000 of the affected women are in our own authority area.
- The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) has found that the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) was guilty of maladministration in its handling of the State Pension Age increase for women born in the 1950's.
- The All Party Parliamentary Group on State Pension Inequality for Women (APPG) has concluded that "the impact of DWP maladministration on 1950's-born women has been as devastating as it is widespread. The APPG believes that the case for category six injustice is overwhelming and clear. Women have had their emotional, physical, and mental circumstances totally obliterated by a lack of reasonable notice."
- Research commissioned by the campaign group Women Against State Pension Inequality (WASPI) has found that by the end of 2022, more than 220,000 1950's born women will have died waiting for justice since the WASPI campaign began in 2015.
- WASPI's figures show that over the course of the two year COVID pandemic, 1 in 10 women who died were affected by these uncommunicated changes and lost both their state pension income and the opportunity to make alternative retirement plans.
- Despite the Ombudsman's findings and the rapid death rate of those affected, the Government is choosing to wait for further reports before taking any action.

Council believes this injustice has not only had a profound effect on the individuals involved but on the wider community in Exeter and on local government, not least because:

- Women who would have looked after older relatives or partners are unable to afford to do so, with a knock-on impact on local social care.
- Women who would have retired and engaged in caring responsibilities for grandchildren are having to continue working, increasing the childcare burden on the state locally.
- Women who have been left in poverty are struggling to meet their housing costs, with a knock-on impact on local housing stock.
- There is a broader impact on voluntary services of all kinds locally, which are missing out on able, active volunteers who would otherwise have been able to retire from full-time work as planned.
- Our local economy is negatively affected by the reduced spending power and disposable income the uncommunicated State Pension Age changes has brought about among women born in the 1950's.

Council supports:

- The conclusion of the APPG on State Pension Inequality that women born in the 1950's have suffered a gross injustice, affecting their emotional, physical and mental circumstances in addition to causing financial hardship.
- A swift resolution to this ongoing injustice before more and more women die waiting for compensation.
- The WASPI campaign for an immediate one-off compensation payment of between £11,666 and £20,000 to those affected, with the most going to women who were given the shortest notice of the longest increase in their state pension age.

Council asks:

- The Leader of the Council to write to Local Members of Parliament, and to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to outline the effects of the injustice to 1950's women on the community in Exeter and to seek their support for an immediate compensation package.

In presenting her Motion, Councillor Atkinson made the following points:-

- the changes in the state pension age had impacted some 3.1 million women in the UK, with 6,000 in Exeter and it was estimated that over 200,000 women had died since 2015 as a result of the changes;
- there had been no progress on state pension entitlement by the Government since a Motion on this topic was supported by the City Council on 26 July 2016, (Min. No. 48 refers);
- the WASPI campaign is fighting this injustice, with many women having lost up to £50,000 in state pension after the retirement age was raised to 65. As a result, women born in the 1950's could not properly plan for their retirement;
- the Pensions Ombudsman found that the DWP had failed to take adequate account of the need for targeted and individual tailored information when communicating the changes in state pension age;
- there were many heart-breaking stories with some women selling their homes and forced to live on benefits for the first time in their lives, many having responsibilities for looking after family members. Women born in the 1950's feel betrayed as they had supported their families but did not benefit from maternity or childcare support and also would have missed out on equal opportunities in pay, training and career advancement;
- there was a sense of urgency in calling for those women to receive some justice in this regard and to be fully compensated for the last 10 years; and
- the current cost of living crisis also impacted on women. The Director of Communications from the Independent Age Charity had stated that, before the Pandemic, 20% of women over the age of 65 years were already living in poverty and this would now be exacerbated with inflation at 12% and rising energy costs.

Councillor Oliver, in seconding the Motion, expressed her concern that the changes had been brought in at such short notice and at the injustice caused.

A number of Members provided evidence of how they, or their spouse, had been impacted by this injustice and Members also made the following comments:-

- support for the Motion would help combat this injustice as many women were unable to adequately plan financially for their future because of the speed the

legislation was brought in and the lack of communication around it. Whilst there were arguments in favour of equalising retirement age, when the original state pension legislation came in, life expectancy on working men and women had been different;

- there were very telling statistics that women were suffering and had died before there was an opportunity to benefit from any compensation. Nearly a ¼ million women had died waiting for this injustice to be addressed; and
- in the 1950's and 1960's many women could not join a pension when younger if they worked part time due to family commitments and when there was limited childcare provision. Many were also in low paid work and may not have taken the opportunity to join a pension because of the costs.

Councillor D. Moore, as a co-leader of an opposition group, welcomed the Motion and commended WASPI for the dignified way it was promoting this issue.

Councillor Atkinson commended the Motion to Council.

The Notice of Motion was put to the vote and CARRIED unanimously.

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

No questions had been received from Members.

(The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and closed at 9.22 pm)

Chair