



Exeter
City Council



Building a stronger sustainable city

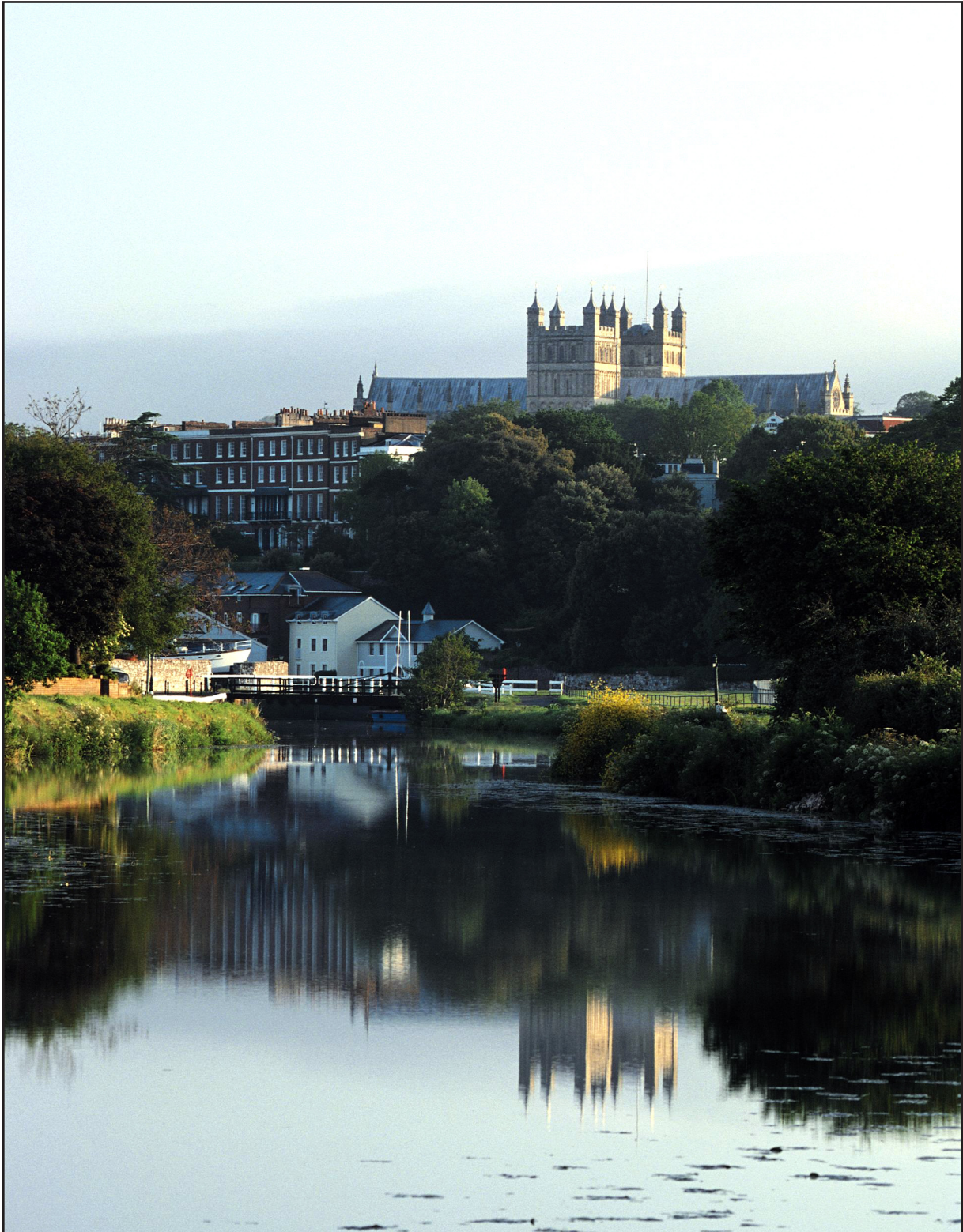
Corporate Plan 2014 - 15 Update



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Message from the leader of the council

Cllr Pete Edwards



In 2012 we published our corporate plan, *Building a Stronger Sustainable City*, which set out an ambitious programme to improve the social, economic and environmental aspects of the city. We also highlighted our emphasis on meeting customers' needs with value-for-money services.

As regards the strength of the city, there is no doubt that Exeter weathered the recession better than most parts of the South West. In spite of reductions in public sector funds, the private sector has grown and business confidence has been restored; indeed it is stronger than it has ever been. Significant investment by the University of Exeter and housing and commercial developments to the east of the city have enhanced Exeter's growing reputation. And the success of the Exeter Chiefs in national and European rugby competitions has brought unprecedented attention to the city.

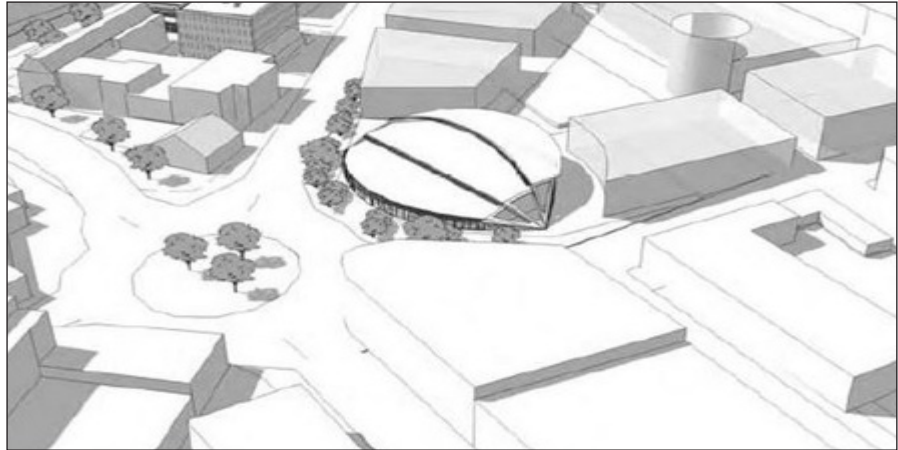
Against a backdrop of continuing reductions in resources - including a fall in government grant from £12 million to £7.7 million - it is clear that our various projects, initiatives and decisions are having a very positive impact on the city and we have become a more efficient business. For me, there are two headline measures of success:

- ▶ Since April 2012 we have made savings of £4.7 million by prioritising spending on front-line services, eliminating waste, redesigning our processes and investing to save, for example, in energy saving measures. At the same time we have invested in the future of the city by contributing £3 million to the flood defence scheme and £1m to the Exeter Science Park. Our external auditors have confirmed that the Council has proper arrangements in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.
- ▶ In August 2014, Exeter's continuing success received national recognition when it was named in a Sunday Times 'hot list' as one of Britain's top 10 places to live and work during the economic recovery. In addition, the most recent survey by the Exeter Chamber of Commerce shows that business confidence is at its highest since the recession of 2007.

As we look forward, maintaining this progress, and receiving ongoing endorsement of our success, will be increasingly challenging. A further reduction in our government grant to an anticipated £5 million in 2017/18 means finding savings of £4 million over the next three years. Clearly this requires difficult decisions in both prioritising investment and identifying savings.



In terms of prioritising investment, the future prosperity and wellbeing of the city, and increasingly the council's own spending power, are directly linked to a successful economy. For this reason, growing the Exeter economy will be our number one priority and we will be focusing on:



- ▶ working with our neighbouring councils to realise even greater economic growth through transition to a knowledge-based economy;
- ▶ progressing the building of a new swimming pool and leisure complex as part of a significant city centre development to provide a high-quality cultural and leisure experience to attract people to the city;
- ▶ hosting a successful Rugby World Cup 2015 and bringing wider economic and social benefits to the city and the region.

In terms of identifying savings, it is clear that we will need to do some things differently and stop doing some things altogether. With this in mind a public consultation exercise will start in autumn 2014 to ensure that everyone can have a say on the way forward and inform our spending proposals and the content of a new corporate plan from 2015. Difficult decisions will need to be made but it is important that those decisions are guided by well-informed stakeholders who have a critical role to play in building a stronger and sustainable Exeter.

Against this backdrop of progress and clear plans for the future, I am confident that Exeter and the council will continue to prosper. The council is only one contributor to this success, but I am grateful to the employees and members of the council who play such a critical role.



The challenges we face

The financial position of the council

The council is facing challenging times. Reductions in government spending and additional spending pressures mean that the council needs to save £4 million over the next three years in order to balance the budget. Since 2010-11 the council has made savings of £7.5 million in order to meet reductions in grant from government and to fund new additional expenditure. Most of these savings have been made without a significant impact on front line services, however this cannot continue indefinitely.

To demonstrate the scale of the challenge facing the Council:

- In 2010-11 Exeter city council received £12.09 million in government grant
- By 2014-15 this has reduced to £7.71 million (a reduction of 36%)
- By 2017-18 it is estimated that this will reduce to £5.07 m (a reduction of 58% from 2010-11).

In order to meet the challenge over the next three years, fundamental changes to the way services are delivered in Exeter will be needed. The council is looking at a number of different options to make the savings required yet still provide the services that our residents rely on. From the autumn of 2014 the council will consult on proposals affecting a range of its services to understand what stakeholders really feel is important to them. It will help shape the future of the council and enable us to design services that are fit for purpose and meet the needs of our residents.

Local government finance is changing. As well as the reductions in central government grant set out above, there are opportunities to grow our income. Additional funding streams have been made available to councils; but these are allocated on the basis of growth in both the economy and in housing. Therefore councils are in competition with each other to secure this growth in their area.



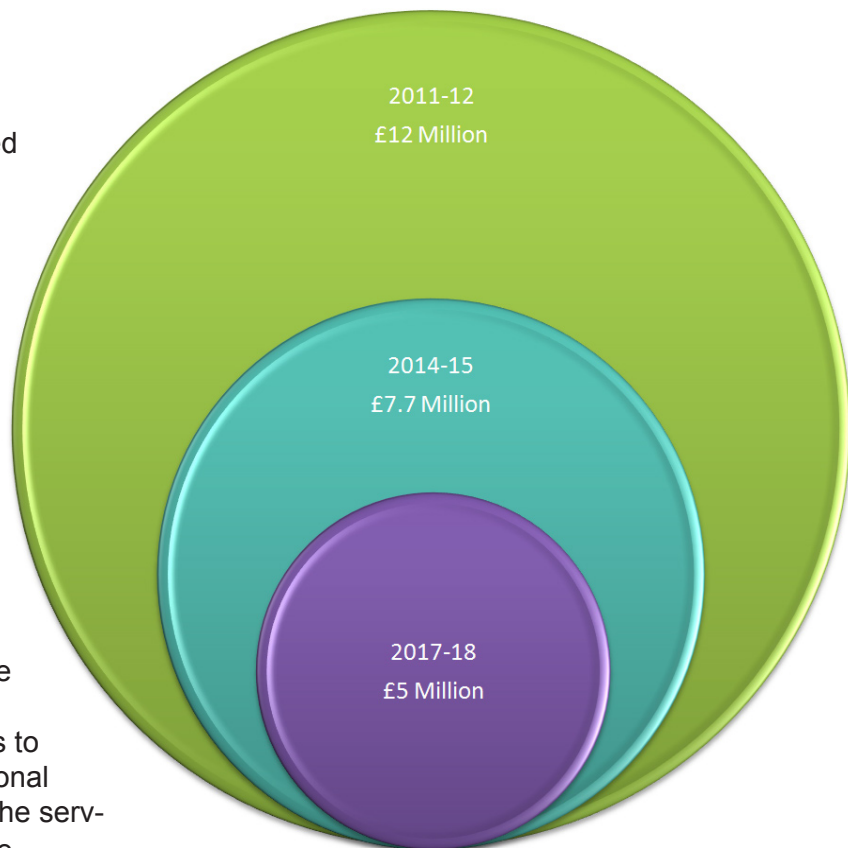


District councils such as Exeter are allowed to keep 40% of the additional Business Rates they generate above the level the Government believes they should be getting. In 2014-15 it is estimated that this will be worth £1 million to Exeter City Council. This additional Business Rates income will allow the savings we need to find to be kept to a minimum.

New Homes Bonus gives councils an incentive to allow new houses to be built in the area. For every new home built, the Government will match the council tax raised pound for pound for a period of six years. To date, the council has received £6.69 million.

We are therefore looking to services such as Economic Development and Tourism, to ensure that we can continue to attract new businesses to the city and continue to generate additional funding.

To this end we have decided to fund a new, high-quality leisure complex to improve the leisure offer in the city. The ambition is for the complex to be at the heart of a new leisure quarter on the site of the bus station, dovetailing with a new mixed development of restaurants, retail and leisure to further enhance the city centre. In this way can we continue to support the growth that will enhance the city's reputation as the regional capital, allowing us to continue to generate additional funding, which will protect the services we provide in the future.



The anticipated reduction in the council's grant from central government

Playing our part

Karime Hassan, chief executive & growth director

It has been an exciting and eventful year since I started my role at the city council - full of challenges, but I do believe that the city is getting stronger and we are moving in the right direction.

Responding to financial challenges, we have introduced a different way of operating, eliminating waste and enabling us to focus on the purpose of each of our services. Now in our organisational structure, front-line services report directly to me as Chief Executive but my role also looks at the growth of the city. The change in role ensures that we continue to grow the local economy in order to generate the income that delivers the services that meet the needs of customers needs.



Like many other authorities, we are also having to work in a more collaborative way. Working with public sector partners and others across traditional boundaries we are able to address customers' needs. So, for example, we have re-designed our housing and financial services around the needs of the customer and we have co-located with the Citizens' Advice Bureau to provide debt advice. And through, changes in government funding, we are incentivised to form strategic alliances with other councils to support growth and deliver efficient services, as we have done in forming a joint IT service.

As a council, we are here to meet the needs of our citizens and customers. These vary in size and complexity, for example: a family needing help finding a home; a shopkeeper seeking new premises; children looking for somewhere to play; a major company looking to build a shopping complex; and a group of neighbours setting up a community group. Responding to needs like these is why we are here – our purposes!

If we are to succeed in the future against such a challenging backdrop we must continue to apply our values to all that we do:

- ▶ Meet customers' needs with high-quality services
- ▶ Be flexible and have a can-do approach
- ▶ Show trust and respect
- ▶ Tell people what is going on, listen and respond to their views
- ▶ Be proud to work for the city and the council





Making a difference

Some of our achievements since 2012

Housing

- **Affordable homes** - 19 wheelchair-accessible affordable homes are currently under construction. This exceeds our target of delivering at least 5% of all new affordable homes that meet our wheelchair design standards.
- **Improvements to properties** - We have worked with Wessex Home Loans to enable low income households to maintain their homes. Up to the end of March loans to the value of £123,141 have been paid out with a further £192,500 committed.
- **Energy efficiency** - We have worked in partnership to help families in Exeter to have a warmer home this winter. Co-syDevon is an energy saving scheme that is offering up to 7,000 free or subsidised insulation and heating measures for Devon's homes, supporting local jobs and saving an estimated 156,000 tonnes of CO₂.



Culture / Leisure

- **A first class museum** - The Royal Albert Memorial Museum will continue to be supported under the Arts Council England's Renaissance Major Grants Programme until 2018. One of only 21 successful applications nationally, the award recognises the Museum's commitment to excellence and innovation, its central position in the cultural life of the South West and the strength of local support.



Play and sports facilities

- **A new water park** - We have replaced the paddling pool at St Thomas Pleasure Ground with a brand new water splash play area and built a new skate park at Flowerpot Playing Fields. The new skate is one of the leading wheeled-sports facilities of its kind in the region, attracting skate fans and BMXers from far and wide.



Green city

- **Low carbon travel** - We have installed eight new electric vehicle charging points in the city to encourage more people to use electric vehicles. The free charge points have been funded thanks to our successful bid for funding from the Office for Low Emission Vehicles. We've also underlined our green credentials by purchasing two Nissan LEAF electric cars for staff to use when out and about.



Economy / Supporting businesses

- **Science Park becomes a reality** – Two businesses have set up on this new business location by Junction 29 on the M5, and the new Science Park Centre will provide accommodation and support to grow new and existing businesses providing opportunities to create jobs and attract higher paid employment. The Science Park is a joint initiative with East Devon District Council, Devon county Council and the University of Exeter.

Safer city

- **Support for rough sleepers and homeless people** - Stencilled messages have been sprayed onto the pavement at key spots in Exeter city centre in an attempt to stop aggressive and intimidating begging. The initiative, which uses biodegradable chalk, helped to explain to members of the public how much support there is for people who sleep rough in the city and how members of the public can help. The scheme proved to be a success and is likely to be replicated in other cities across the country.
- **A safer night-time economy** - We have been working in partnership to reduce alcohol-related violence, disorder and nuisance and make Exeter safer and more pleasant at night by introducing a Taxi Marshal scheme, two new taxi ranks, a multi-agency Help Zone in the city centre, targeted premises that sell alcohol to under 18s and encouraged more effective management by security staff outside of premises.



Environment / Public realm

- **Street scene improvements** - We completed environmental enhancement schemes at London Inn Square and Cowick Street and finalised the scheme for Central Station.
- Reducing the risks of flooding - Work has begun on Exeter's multi-million pound flood defence scheme with our partners, the Environment Agency and Devon County Council, to reduce flood risk to over 3,000 residential and commercial properties. We also reinstated and strengthened the flood defence bank along the River Clyst frontage following damage caused by the storms and coastal surge in January and February 2014. These raised defences provide protection to nearby properties and businesses as well as the RSPB reserve at Bowling Green Marsh.

Customer focus

- **Support for people with financial problems** - Visitors to our Customer Service Centre who have financial and housing problems will now be seen by one single team which takes an overall view of debts to the city council and the customer's ability to pay. The Exeter Money Advice Partnership run by CAB has also been established to support customers.
- **Great communication** - We are expanding our use of social media and mobile technology to engage more residents and provide timely information. We now have over 9,000 followers on our main corporate Twitter account and were named by The Mirror as one of the top councils in the country for using social media to engage with our residents.
- **Support for local decision-making** - St James' ward was the first to adopt a neighbourhood plan in June 2013 and work continues to help residents shape their areas through the planning process.



Key actions

Some key actions for 2014

HOUSING OUR COMMUNITIES

- Continue to require that all new housing developments include 35% social and affordable housing.
- Build 20 new council houses on council-owned land and continue to look for funding to increase this number.
- Explore new solutions to providing affordable homes, including co-operative housing and self-build housing.
- Introduce schemes to improve the quality of private, rented accommodation.

SUPPORTING BUSINESS & ECONOMIC GROWTH

- Continue to work towards the redevelopment of the Bus & Coach Station and the delivery of a new energy-efficient swimming pool that is fit for a growing population and future climate change.
- Support the development of a local currency (e.g. Exeter Pound) to support local small businesses and independent traders.
- Work with the University and others to develop the knowledge economy to create more graduate and higher paid jobs and help businesses and residents benefit from developing, attracting and retaining a highly skilled workforce
- Recognise the contribution that Arts & Culture make to the Exeter economy and encourage initiatives to support the city centre.

SHARING THE BENEFITS OF GROWTH

- Promote the Living Wage amongst Exeter employers.
- As part of the planning application process, negotiate with developers to employ local workers and provide training opportunities for local people.
- Work with employers and training providers to make sure local residents have the right skills to take advantage of new jobs at the Exeter Science Park and other areas of growth.
- Continue to offer apprenticeships, develop work experience for those with disabilities, mental health problems and other barriers to work, and work with employers to expand these schemes.

BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES

- Continue to invest in community projects through community grants and the Local Infrastructure Grants schemes, and work with communities to build the capacity for new projects in the future.
- Continue to protect our parks and play areas as important community hubs, and work with communities to explore creative uses for parks and other open spaces.
- Develop a register of local assets to be protected for the benefit of the community, such as pubs and community centres, and explore opportunities to support community groups through collective purchasing of insurance, energy, maintenance and other goods and services.
- Work with the partners to increase access to affordable and ethical credit.
- Maintain an up to date adopted Development Plan.
- Undertake a Community Halls Review.

A GREEN AND HEALTHY CITY

- Develop a strategy to become an energy-neutral council (by 2030) and continue to work with other local authorities and organisations to improve recycling rates in the city.
- Work with partners to improve public transport in the city and ensure adequate public transport provision for areas of significant housing development in the East and South West of the city.
- Work with partners to protect and improve habitats for wildlife across the city, protect allotments and explore the use of public open spaces for community food production.
- Work with the Exeter Health & Wellbeing Board and other partners to increase levels of physical activity in the city and promote the sustainable use of the river, canal and other green spaces for outdoor leisure activities.
- Support initiatives to develop viable proposals for district heating schemes at Monkerton, South West Exeter and the city centre.
- Develop a Low Emissions Strategy to improve the air quality of our city and reduce harmful air pollution.

A WELL-RUN COUNCIL

- Develop a business case for enhancing the way that customers can access the council's services.

We will identify measures of success to track progress against each of our key actions. These will be reviewed and reported to members.

Exeter city council political management

The leading members of Exeter city council



Cllr Peter Edwards
Leader



Cllr Rachel Sutton
*Portfolio Holder
City Development
Group Deputy Leader*



Cllr Rosie Denham
*Portfolio Holder
Economy and Development*



Cllr Keith Owen
*Portfolio Holder
Environment, Health & Wellbeing*



Cllr Ollie Pearson
*Portfolio Holder
Enabling Services*



Cllr Rob Hannaford
*Portfolio Holder
Housing & Customer Access*

Exeter city councillors

Exeter city council comprises 40 councillors (27 Labour, 10 Conservative, 3 Liberal Democrat). The wards that they represent are shown below.




Exeter city council management structure

Senior Management Structure

Customers - Service Users

Assistant Director Public Realm

System Lead:
Keep Place Looking Good



Sarah Ward
01392 265215

- Public Safety
- Bereavement services
- Parks and Allotments
- Street Scene
- Public conveniences
- Parking
- Highways, footways and drainage
- Engineering
- Waterways

Assistant Director Environment

System Lead:
Keep Me/My Environment Safe & Healthy




Robert Norley
01392 265170

- Carbon Management
- Health and Wellbeing
- Health and Safety
- Environmental Health
- Recycling
- Waste Policy
- Licensing
- Fleet Management

Assistant Director Customer Access

System Lead:
Customer Access Help me with my housing & Financial Problem



Bindu Arjoon
01392 265199

- Customer access strategy
- Digital strategy
- Welfare reforms
- One view of debt
- Housing benefit
- Council tax
- Housing advice
- Business rates
- Housing rents collection
- Council tax support

Assistant Director Housing

System Lead:
Help me find somewhere to live Maintain our property assets



Roger Coombes
01392 265468

- Housing Strategy
- Housing Development
- Private Sector Housing
- Housing Landlord
- Building Maintenance

Assistant Director City Development

System Lead:
Deliver good development




Richard Short
01392 265219

- Planning Policy
- Building Control
- Design/ Development
- Neighbourhood Planning
- Transport
- CCFL
- Land Charges

Assistant Director Economy


System Lead:
Provide great things for me to see and do Help me run a successful business



Richard Ball
01392 265140


- Economic Development
- Tourism
- Culture/Events
- Markets/Halls
- City Centre
- Museum
- Leisure Contract

Corporate Manager Policy / Comms Community Engagement




Bruce Luxton
01392 265166

Assistant Director Finance



David Hodason
01392 265292

Corporate Manager Legal



Baan Al-Khafaji
01392 265874

Corporate Manager Democratic Civic Support




John Street
01392 265106

Corporate Manager Property



Michael Carson
01392 265169

Business Manager Human Resources



Caroline Hall
01392 265896

Leader



Cllr Peter Edwards
Building a Stronger City

Chief Executive & Growth Director

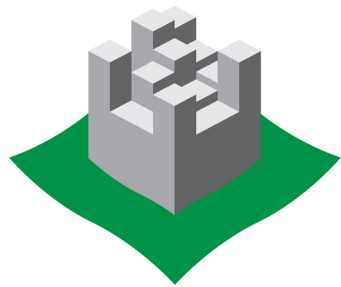


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Deputy Chief Executive



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