

ELECTORAL REVIEW OF EXETER CITY COUNCIL

Submission by Exeter City Council on Council Size

1. Introduction

This submission sets out the Council's response to the Local Government Boundary Commission's invitation to put forward a case for Council size. The issue of Council size is a key factor in determining the scale of the Further Electoral Review (FER).

A FER is triggered where more than 30% of a Council's electoral wards have an electoral variance of more than 10% from the average. In the case of Exeter it has 7 out of 18 electoral wards (38.88%) with an electoral variance of +/- 10% from the average. The data used are the numbers of local government electors (including attainers) in each electoral area as at **1 December 2014**.

The Council's submission has been developed by a cross party Sub-Committee of 7 City Councillors. The Council's submission was approved by the Full Council at a meeting held on Tuesday, 20 January 2015.

2. Overview of Council Size Submission

The Council's submission addresses the key points raised in the LGBCE's technical guidance which stresses the importance of submitting "well-reasoned proposals that are based on the individual characteristics and needs of each local authority area and its communities."

Furthermore, the Council's submission satisfies the Commission's aims of being able to:-

"recommend a council size that allows:-

- the council to take decisions effectively;
- manage the business and responsibilities of the council successfully;
- provide effective community leadership and representation".

3. Summary of the Council's submission

The approach adopted in the submission has been to follow the Commission's guiding principles and address them both in terms of current arrangements and likely future trends and plans.

The last periodic review of electoral arrangements in Exeter conducted in 1998 and completed in 2000 when the number of Councillors increased from 36 to 40.

After considering the evidence, at its meeting held on 20 January 2015, the full Council resolved to submit a case for reducing the existing Council size of 40 Councillors to 39 on the grounds that:-

- the Council wishes to retain its current practice of elections by thirds;
- as a consequence of the above, each City Council ward should be represented by three councillors, so as to ensure a full and equitable representation of the electorate across the City;
- the City of Exeter be divided into 13 electoral wards as this best reflects both of the above, and also community cohesion within the City;
- all out elections on these new proposals be held in May 2016, with the continuing cycle of City Council elections by thirds commencing in May 2018;
- this small level of reduction will not diminish the Council's capacity to deliver effective arrangements for the management and delivery of its business and responsibilities;
- this small level of reduction continues to allow the Council to demonstrate that it has effective, extensive and increasing involvement in community leadership and representation;
- it will ensure that the Council retains sufficient capacity to deliver and enhance its performance in these areas, whilst at the same time being able to respond to the challenges facing local government in general, and in particular the City of Exeter.

Summary of Justification

The Council justifies its case by addressing the Commission's key criteria for Council size (see **Appendix 1** for details as to the Council's submission).

A summary of its justification for the submission is set out below:-

- (1) Exeter City Council has a very good track record of performing as an Authority, as recognised by previous external assessment regimes. Whilst the evidence shows that it continues to innovate and streamline its decision making processes at officer and councillor level, it also aims to ensure that it has capacity to continue to develop the role of the Council.
- (2) The governance arrangements place a statutory duty and responsibility on the non-executive to hold the executive to account and to ensure that regulatory functions are effectively delivered.
- (3) The way in which the non-executive works at Exeter is via three Scrutiny committees, which consider all matters of Council interest before the matter is considered and decided upon by the Executive. In this way, the majority of matters have cross party support as all Scrutiny meetings are chaired by, and include members of the opposition as well as from the ruling political party.

- (4) Even the Council's Executive includes representatives of the opposition parties (usually the Group Leaders), thereby ensuring cross party discussions and decisions at Executive level. This arrangement is believed to be unusual, and shows the importance the Council places on inclusion of all aspects of the City's political spectrum.
- (5) The evidence relating to the Executive arrangements shows that the Council's Executive consists of 8 Councillors, including two representatives from opposition political parties. The Council believes that it is essential for the continued delivery and improvement of services that the non-executive retains the capacity to support the executive through effective scrutiny. The Council must always be in a position where it can effectively review performance and plan and develop future policies in response to the challenges which lie ahead for local government. The current set up of 3 Scrutiny committees each comprising of 12 non-executive yet cross-party Members (and chaired by representatives of opposition parties) provides councillors with the requisite skills, experience and balance of representation to meet these demands.
- (6) To this end, a continual programme of Scrutiny work is determined and developed by Scrutiny chairmen and portfolio holders to ensure that matters under consideration are of Council wide importance and match its corporate objectives and priorities.
- (7) The Council values highly its role in leading the community and working in partnership with external organisations and community groups and its current capacity is integral to future planning and progress in this regards. It is also actively working with its neighbouring authorities to ensure that future development proposals for the greater Exeter area take into account the pressures and demands that these will place on the City itself. To this end, it has recently entered into a Memorandum of Understanding which has been signed by two of its neighbours (Teignbridge and East Devon) to explore an option of establishing a combined authority, with particular focus on the impact of economic and residential development in the broader area and the effects this has on Exeter itself. A joint Executive has been developed to drive this forward. There is, however, no intention or desire to use this as a basis for a unitary authority, as the main principle is to maintain our independence but also to work in a collaborative way.
- (8) Having said this though, it is considered equally important to recognise and develop existing communities within the City boundary, especially during present times of intense development within the City. The City is divided by a number of natural and obvious boundaries (The River Exe; major arterial roads; and topography). These issues will be taken into account when drawing up the new ward boundaries so as to ensure an effective and logical distribution is achieved.

- (9) Whilst the Council is only relatively small in geographical area (approximately 40 square miles in total), the level of investment in it from the retail, employment and housing sectors places it at the top of all cities in England for economic growth over the last 10 years. It is therefore felt that to maintain an acceptable response to these demands, the number of councillors within the City should not materially change. For this reason, a reduction in the number of wards in the City to 13 with each represented by 3 councillors, will ensure a slightly wider perspective of community cohesion, social inclusion and integration than at present, without the loss of individual community identities.
- (10) The challenges facing Exeter City Council in a period of austerity and financial restraint require a Council with the capacity to ensure that the Council continues to provide value for money in the delivery of its services and that it has the capacity to fully engage with, support and lead its partners, voluntary bodies and the communities in Exeter. It must retain sufficient capacity to develop these roles within the community and respond to emerging issues and meet the expectations of the electorate. It is felt that these proposals enable the City Council to achieve this.

ELECTORAL REVIEW OF EXETER CITY COUNCIL - APPENDIX 1
Submission by Exeter City Council on Council Size

Governance and Decision Making – How does the Council manage its business and take decisions across its full range of responsibilities?	
<p>Leadership</p> <p>1.1 What kind of Governance arrangements are in place for the Authority?</p>	<p>The Local Government Act 2000 introduced a requirement for local authorities to move to one of three new political management structures which included the separation of executive and non-executive arrangements. The objective was to deliver greater efficiency, transparency and accountability of the decision making processes. The decision makers were to be held to account in public by overview and scrutiny Committees. At the time, the traditional Committee system was no longer an option other than for smaller district councils.</p> <p>Exeter City Council opted for the Leader and Cabinet model form of governance to improve efficiency and accountability in decision-making.</p> <p>The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 required all local authorities to review their executive arrangements. The Council was required to review its arrangements by 31 December 2010 with any changes being implemented three days after the date of the May 2011 election.</p> <p>The Council formally adopted the new executive arrangements, namely the “Strong Leader” model form of governance on the 9 December 2010.</p>
<p>1.2 How many portfolios are there?</p>	<p>There are six Executive portfolios as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing and Customer Services • Enabling Service • Environment, Health and Wellbeing • Economy and Culture • City Development • Leadership

	Full details of the portfolio responsibilities are set out in Annex A
1.3 Describe how a portfolio holder carries out his/her work on a day to day basis	<p>In addition to reading and researching reports, the day to day work includes:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular briefings with the Chief Executive/ Senior Managers and other officers • Committees and meetings of the Executive • Leading on meetings with key partners and stakeholders • Involvement in working groups and steering groups supporting specific projects/work streams • Meetings of outside bodies • Residents meetings • On site/off site training sessions • Media Interviews <p>A recent survey amongst councillors, to which 4 portfolio holders responded, indicated an average of 30 hours per week being committed to City Council duties by portfolio holders.</p>
1.4 To what extent are decisions delegated to portfolio holders or are most decisions taken by the full Executive? What is the volume of decisions taken? How many decisions are taken by officers?	The decision making arrangements have been structured to ensure that services are delivered efficiently and effectively and Members are not overloaded with what could be considered the more operational decision making. Therefore most operational decisions are taken by officers within the Scheme of Delegation to Officers set out within the constitution.
1.5 Do Executive (or other) members serve on other decision making partnerships, sub-regional or national bodies?	<p>The Leader, Portfolio holders and non-executive Councillors are appointed to a wide range of such bodies, including the Exeter Airport Consultative Committee, the Exeter Canal and Quay Trust and the Exeter Municipal Charities and many others - currently around 40 in total.</p> <p>All of these meet on a regular basis at varying intervals.</p>

	<p>In addition, members also represent the Council on the Shared IT Committee (Strata Joint Executive and Joint Scrutiny Committees) and the Greater Exeter, Greater Devon Combined Authority Steering Group.</p>
<p>1.6 Is the role of the Executive Member considered to be full time?</p>	<p>The role of the City Council as a Principal Urban Area and its ambitions, and the scale of challenge requires a very significant time input by members in both the evening and daytime. Virtually all formal meetings of the Council are held of an evening.</p> <p>A recent survey amongst councillors, to which 4 portfolio holders responded, indicated an average of 30 hours per week being committed to City Council duties by Portfolio holders. In the same survey, the Leader indicated that he is occupied on a more full time basis.</p> <p>See also response to Question 1.14 below.</p>
<p>Regulatory</p> <p>1.7 How does the Council discharge its regulatory functions? How many members are involved in committees?</p>	<p>The Council discharges its Regulatory functions through the following committees:-</p> <p>Planning Committee</p> <p>The Planning Committee determines planning applications which are not dealt with by officers under delegated powers. It comprises 13 Members and meets on a four weekly cycle. All members of the committee must attend at least one training session each year. In addition, regular meetings of the Planning Member Working Group are held to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss issues relating to planning policies and briefs; • Consider proposals prior to planning applications; • Advise on City Development proposals; • Receive reports on development monitoring and service management issues.

	<p>Licensing Committee</p> <p>The Licensing Committee comprises of 14 members and discharges its licensing functions and responsibilities as detailed in the Schedule of Responsibilities within Exeter City Council’s Constitution. In addition the membership of this committee also sit from time to time, as the Licensing Sub-Committee established under the provisions of the Licensing Act 2003.</p> <p>Licensing Sub Committee</p> <p>Licensing Sub Committees comprise of 3 members who are selected from the membership of the Licensing Committee (2003 Act) and are convened as and when required. The Sub Committees deal with reviews of licences issued under the Licensing Act 2003 and Gambling Act 2005. It also considers applications for licences where the applicants for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licenses do not meet the criteria. In the majority of cases they consider applications where individuals or DBS checks have revealed motoring or criminal proceedings. Applicants are invited to attend the meetings and give evidence in support of their application.</p> <p>Audit and Governance Committee</p> <p>The Committee comprises 11 Members and oversees the audit and corporate governance functions of the Council including final accounts, treasury and risk management, internal and external audit reports and programmes, as well as matters of a constitutional nature.</p>
<p>1.8 Describe the arrangements for the delegation of decisions in respect of regulatory functions? To what extent are decisions delegated to officers?</p>	<p>The constitution sets out the delegation arrangements in respect of regulatory functions.</p> <p>The majority of decisions are made by officers under delegated powers. In</p>

	<p>the case of the Planning Committee officers' powers to deal with planning applications is limited by exception. In general only major planning applications, or applications contrary to existing planning policies or applications called in by Councillors, would be dealt with collectively at the Committee. Similarly, in the case of the Licensing Committee all powers are delegated to officers except where objections or an appeal against refusal have been received.</p> <p>The Planning Committee meets every four weeks and considers an average of 4/6 applications per meeting. These applications are normally those which have received a significant amount of public interest either for or against the development.</p>																												
1.9 Is committee membership standing or rotating?	Committee membership is agreed each year and remains for the whole of the Municipal Year.																												
1.10 Are meetings ad hoc, frequent and/or area based? How are the Chairs allocated?	<p>Taking 2014/15 Municipal Year as an example, the following numbers of meetings have been scheduled:-</p> <table data-bbox="835 857 1780 1398"> <tr> <td>Full Council</td> <td>6 (including Annual Council)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Executive</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Scrutiny (Economy)</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Scrutiny (Community)</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Scrutiny (Resources)</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Audit & Governance Committee</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Planning</td> <td>11</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Licensing</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Licensing Sub</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Exeter Health & Well Being Board</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Major Grants & New Homes Bonus Panel</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Employee JCC</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Shared IT Committee (Executive)</td> <td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Shared IT Committee (Scrutiny)</td> <td>6</td> </tr> </table>	Full Council	6 (including Annual Council)	Executive	10	Scrutiny (Economy)	5	Scrutiny (Community)	5	Scrutiny (Resources)	5	Audit & Governance Committee	4	Planning	11	Licensing	5	Licensing Sub		Exeter Health & Well Being Board		Major Grants & New Homes Bonus Panel		Employee JCC		Shared IT Committee (Executive)	6	Shared IT Committee (Scrutiny)	6
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	<p>Greater Exeter, Greater Devon Combined Authority Steering Group</p> <p>Additional meetings are timetabled should business require them.</p> <p>The Chairs of the Committees are agreed each year at Annual Council. All three Scrutiny Committees have Chairs and Deputy Chairs from the opposition groups.</p> <p>All Committees cover the whole of the Council area.</p>
<p>1.11 What level of attendance is achieved? Are meetings always quorate?</p>	<p>Level of attendance at Committees can vary depending on the business being transacted and other factors such as holidays and sickness. However, the level of attendance is very high.</p> <p>Committee meetings are always quorate.</p> <p>In the case of Scrutiny meetings, they are also attended by relevant members of the Executive as and when appropriate (on an observer, non voting basis).</p>
<p>1.12 What future issues may impact on Non-executive councillors will be faced with the challenges of responding to the role of non-executive councillors in respect of regulatory functions? How might the role develop?</p>	<p>Non-executive councillors will be faced with the challenges of responding to issues emerging from the National Planning Policy Framework and its implications in respect of local development and its consequential impact on the adoption and implementation of the Exeter Local Development Framework. The policy framework and adopted plans will be significant in determining planning applications and selecting new sites for development in Exeter. The Localism Act and the NPPF also include powers to allow local communities to shape new development by coming together to prepare neighbourhood plans.</p> <p>The continuing high demand on the City for development (both in terms of housing and commercial) and balancing the impact of such on the City in</p>

	<p>detail, and the Greater Exeter area in general, will require a detailed understanding of many different and competing factors, including the policies and principles in relation to but not exclusive to Exeter City Council.</p>								
<p>Demands on Time</p> <p>1.13 Has the Council defined the role of councillors? Has the Council adopted arrangements for training and developing Councillors and supporting them in their role?</p>	<p>After each City Council election, an extensive induction programme is held for all new councillors although Councillors who have been re-elected are also encouraged to attend these sessions. This includes sessions around quasi judicial and regulatory items such as Planning, Licensing and code of conduct but also includes more general training, around IT and scrutiny for example, to allow members to develop in their roles. In-depth training for particular committees is also provided, such as Scrutiny, Planning and Audit and Governance which provides members with the skills necessary to make sound decisions in these areas.</p> <p>It is a requirement in the council's constitution that members of Planning Committee and Licensing Committee and other quasi judicial matters attend at least one training session appropriate to the work of the committee each year.</p> <p>The Council has also recently been awarded Charter Plus accreditation recognising the importance the Council places on continuing development of its councillors. This is further enhanced by a Member Development Steering Group, which meets on a regular basis to review all aspects of Member Development.</p>								
<p>1.14 Has the Council assessed how much time members spend on Council business?</p>	<p>The Council recently undertook a detailed review of the role of Councillors, which included the time they spent on the various aspects of their role (there was a 50% response to the survey). The findings of this are listed below.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="825 1255 1596 1408"> <tr> <td>Leader</td> <td>Full Time +</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Portfolio Holders</td> <td>Average 30 hours per week</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Group Leaders</td> <td>Average 21 hours per week</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Committee Chairs</td> <td>Average 25 hours per week</td> </tr> </table>	Leader	Full Time +	Portfolio Holders	Average 30 hours per week	Group Leaders	Average 21 hours per week	Committee Chairs	Average 25 hours per week
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	Ordinary Councillors	Average 14 hours per week
1.15 Do Councillors generally find that the time they spend on council business is what they expected?	None of the Councillors who responded to this survey suggested that the time they spent on Council business was unexpected, and was generally in line with their expectations.	
1.16 What is the extent of Councillors representational role on and appointment to outside bodies? How many are involved in this activity and what is their expected workload?	<p>The Leader, Portfolio holders and non-executive Councillors are appointed to a wide range of such bodies, including the Exeter Airport Consultative Committee, the Exeter Canal and Quay Trust and the Exeter Municipal Charities and many others - currently around 40 in total.</p> <p>The majority of councillors attend other community meetings to help identify local issues or answer questions. Many councillors hold other positions such as school governors or are on ward based community groups.</p> <p>A recent survey of Members has suggested that there are a significant number of organisations on which Councillors serve, although not as a consequence of the Council appointing them. It indicated that an average of 1.5 hours per week is spent in this capacity.</p>	
1.17 Does the Council have difficulty in retaining councillors or attracting new candidates?	<p>The Council elects by thirds.</p> <p>In 2012, 41 candidates stood for election. Of the 41 candidates, 11 were councillors standing for re-election. All of those councillors were re-elected.</p> <p>In 2013, 52 candidates stood for election. Of the 52 candidates, 9 were Councillors standing for re-election of which 8 were re-elected.</p> <p>In 2014, 56 candidates stood for election to 13 wards. Of the 56 candidates, 10 were councillors standing for re-election, of which 7 were re-elected.</p>	
1.18 Have there been any instances where the Council has been unable to discharge its duties due to a lack of	No, due to sufficient numbers.	

Councillors?	
<p>1.19 Do Councillors have an individual or ward budget for allocation in their area? If so, how is the system administered?</p>	<p>The Council operates a ward budget scheme, from which each ward has £2,000 per annum to allocate to applicants from their wards. Due to the multi member status of all wards in the City (14 are two member wards; 4 are three member wards), agreement as to which projects receive grants must be obtained from all councillors for the ward. This, in places, includes agreement amongst councillors from different political parties.</p> <p>The Council also operates a City wide grant scheme, where a total of £25,000 per annum is available. This is administered via a small cross party working group.</p>
<p>2. Scrutiny of the Council, outside bodies and Others</p> <p>2.1 What's the structure? How does it Operate?</p>	<p>The structure of the overview and scrutiny arrangements is set out in Annex A which describes the Council's political management arrangements.</p> <p>The Council has a small number of Councillors in the Executive and requires sufficient capacity from Non-Executive Councillors to effectively, extensively and rigorously scrutinise executive decisions and support and develop its policies and strategies. It should be noted that all Councillors are also extensively involved in the work of the Regulatory Committees.</p> <p>The Executive and Executive Councillors are responsible for making the day-to-day decisions concerning the running of the Council. Scrutiny Committees ensure that the Executive are publicly held to account for their actions and seek to promote open and transparent decision making and democratic accountability. They also have a role in researching and scrutinising other bodies, ensuring that the Council's policy and budget framework is respected and realising the key aims of the Council's Strategic Plan.</p> <p>Scrutiny Committees may appoint task and finish groups to examine any issue in more depth.</p>

	<p>Effective external participation has taken place with the involvement of partners, outside organisations and individuals at many of the Scrutiny committees (with regular presentations by outside organisations) as well as direct involvement in some of the Task & Finish Groups (for example the Cost of Living Forum, which included research by Exeter University and membership of the Federation for Small Businesses). Executive councillors bi-annually attend the relevant Scrutiny Committee meetings and provide updates on progress with their portfolios and answer questions.</p> <p>The Leader, Portfolio holders and non-executive Councillors are appointed to a wide range of such bodies, including the Exeter Airport Consultative Committee, the Exeter Canal and Quay Trust and the Exeter Municipal Charities and many others - currently around 40 in total.</p>
<p>2.2 What is the general workload of scrutiny committees? Has the Council ever found that it has had too many active projects for the scrutiny process to function effectively?</p>	<p>Each Scrutiny Committee has a full work programme developed for each municipal year very much in line with the Executive's Forward Plan, as well as matters which have been identified as requiring scrutiny by the Committees themselves.</p> <p>Additionally, an annual work programme meeting is held between Scrutiny Chairs and Deputy Chairs, as well as all Portfolio Holders to agree a work programme of task and finish groups for the forthcoming year (usually 6-8 per year). All councillors are asked to suggest topics for consideration as part of this programme.</p>
<p>2.3 How is its work programme developed and implemented? How many subjects are there at any one time? What's the time-span for a particular study?</p>	<p>As stated in 2.2 above, the work programme for each Scrutiny Committee is developed very much in line with the Executive's Forward Plan. This is a programme of pre Scrutiny (i.e. matters are normally discussed at Scrutiny ahead of deliberations at Executive).</p> <p>A copy of the working programme for 2013/14 is attached.</p>

	<p>There is no specific time period for scrutiny projects. Typically, projects included within scrutiny committees' work programmes will be completed within the municipal year and may include a series of meetings, external visits, taking and gathering evidence and report preparation. Other ad hoc projects may be time constrained depending on the issues under consideration.</p>
<p>2.4 Are Councillors involved in scrutinising external issues?</p>	<p>Not to any great extent, although they are actively involved in the Joint ICT Company committees, the Greater Exeter, Greater Devon Combined Authority Steering Group, a joint Devon County and City Council "Exeter Board", as well as the Exeter health and Well Being Board. All of these have an element of a scrutiny role.</p>
<p>2.5 When not in scrutiny meetings what activities are councillors expected to undertake?</p>	<p>Between attending scrutiny committees councillors read reports, conduct research, attend training sessions/briefings with officers, attend local groups and visit sites. They will also, of course, carry out their regulatory duties and responsibilities and a significant amount of constituency work. There is also an increasing number of task and finish groups which give in depth reviews of particular topics of interest to the Council e.g. Income Generation; Cost of Living, Housing Allocation Scheme, Tackling Community Isolation.</p>
<p>2.6 How will the role of the scrutiny member change? What are the emerging issues and trends?</p>	<p>Scrutiny will continue to have an important role to play in both challenging the Executive and its functions, as well as developing a better understanding of matters which affect the Council in general, and the City as a whole. To this end, Scrutiny will continue to take a view on matters ahead of consideration by the Executive, thereby ensuring that non-executive councillors will continue to be involved in the decision making process. An increasing number of task and finish groups will be arranged to allow non-executive councillors the opportunity to gain a better understanding of matters of interest or importance to the Council. These deliberations will then be taken into account by the Executive.</p>
<p>2.7 What kind of support do scrutiny members receive?</p>	<p>The Democratic Services Team provides Committee and personal support to all Councillors. One member of the team is a dedicated Scrutiny Programme Officer. This officer is responsible for developing an annual work</p>

	<p>programme and coordinating Task & Finish Groups and research.</p> <p>Each scrutiny committee has senior officer support together with officer support from Democratic Services. Following each year's elections, training of scrutiny issues is offered to all Councillors and whilst it is principally aimed at new councillors, all councillors are invited to attend.</p>
<p>3. Representational Role: Representing Electors to the Council</p> <p>3.1 Has the representational role of Councillors changed since the council last considered how many elected members it should have?</p>	<p>The last time the Council considered how many elected members it should have was in 2000 - local government has changed significantly since that time. The last periodic review of electoral arrangements in Exeter conducted in 1998 and completed in 2000 when the numbers of Councillors was increased from 36 to 40.</p>
<p>3.2 In general terms, how do Councillors carry out their representational role with electors? Do members mainly respond to casework from constituents or do they have a more active role in the community?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To represent individual residents and local organisations undertaking casework on their behalf and serving all fairly and equally; ○ To represent ward interests; ○ To be an advocate for the Council in the ward and its communities; ○ To be a channel of communication to the community on Council strategies, policies, services and procedures; ○ To liaise with executive members, other Council members, Council officers and partner organisations to ensure that the needs of local communities are identified, understood and supported; ○ To promote tolerance and cohesion in local communities; ○ To sit on outside bodies as a representative of the Council, ensuring that the Council's interest are maintained, and the working arrangement between the Council and the organisation is developed in a coordinated manner; ○ To sit on Partnership meetings to champion the Council's interests.
<p>3.3 How Councillors engage with constituents? Do they hold surgeries, public meetings, use IT etc?</p>	<p>There is no hard and fast way in which councillors engage with their constituents, but by way of example some produce regular newsletters and hold meetings on specific topics of interest.</p> <p>All councillors are issued with an iPad post election together with a City</p>

	<p>Council email address and it is through these that the majority of communication with constituents is carried out.</p>
<p>3.4 How do councillors generally deal with casework? Do they pass on issues directly to staff or do they take a more in depth approach to resolving issues?</p>	<p>The process for dealing with casework varies. Some Councillors will have the experience, skills and knowledge to resolve constituents' issues, others will refer issues directly to staff.</p> <p>Councillor's formal enquiries are registered in an electronic system which allows monitoring of the enquiry's progress and can be used to avoid repetition of similar queries from members of the public and Members of Parliament.</p>
<p>3.5 What support do Councillors receive in discharging their duties in relation to casework and representational role in their ward?</p>	<p>See response to 3.3 and 3.4 above.</p>
<p>3.6 Has the Council put in place any mechanisms for councillors to interact with young people, those not on the electoral register or minority groups or their representative bodies?</p>	<p>As a major University City (15% of the City's population is estimated to consist of students), the Council regularly meets with the University to discuss aspects of mutual interest, including engagement of the students in electoral registration (particularly following the introduction of Individual Electoral Registration).</p> <p>Regular events, primarily during Local Democracy Week, are held with the local college and secondary schools. These have included question time to local councillors, as well as debating sessions with local councillors contributing views as part of these debates, and proving a valuable tool in engaging the younger community.</p> <p>The Council has also appointed a "Member Champion" for community engagement whose remit is to enhance and develop the way in which the Council (and in particular its councillors) interact with the community as a whole.</p>
<p>3.7 Are Councillors expected to attend meetings of community bodies such as parish councils or resident associations? What is the level of their</p>	<p>There are no Parish Councils within Exeter however many councillors do involve themselves with community groups within their wards.</p>

involvement and what role do they play?	
4. The Future	
4.1 What impact do you think the localism agenda might have on the scope and conduct of council business and how do you think this might affect the role of councillors?	The Localism agenda should encourage a more joined up approach with the City Council's partners, including Devon County Council and local community groups, particularly to identify responses to local need. All councillors will be expected to have a role to play in this, both as a knowledge data base for such groups and their needs, as well as a conduit for discussions between these organisations. This may give rise to capacity and training issues.
4.2 Does the council have any plans to devolve responsibilities and/or assets to community organisations? Or does the council expect to take on more responsibilities in the medium to long term?	The Council recently approved the principle to devolve the management of some of its community assets to various other bodies including the Devon Wildlife Trust.
4.3 Have changes to the arrangements for local delivery of services led to significant changes to councillors' workloads? (For example, control of housing stock or sharing services with neighbouring authorities)	The City Council is a joint owner of a wholly local authority owned company, providing IT services for it and two other authorities. This company has a joint Executive (comprising the Leaders of these authorities) and a joint Scrutiny (comprising three non-executive representatives from each of the three authorities). Similarly, the City Council has recently signed a memorandum of understanding to work towards a combined authority with East Devon and Teignbridge District Councils, principally on future economic and housing development proposals in the greater Exeter area. This again has a joint board comprising representatives from the three authorities involved.
4.4 Are there any developments in policy ongoing that might significantly affect the role of elected members in the future?	The Council has recently undertaken a wide scale public consultation exercise on its future financial pressures – the results of which are currently being analysed. The implementation of the outcomes of this exercise will set the Council's priorities for the medium term and may change the role of elected members in the future. It could well lead to a wholesale review of the committee structure.
4.5 What has been the impact of recent	Periods of austerity and financial restraint are challenging times for local

<p>financial constraints on the council's activities?</p>	<p>government in ensuring that they can continue to deliver key services and make the necessary budget cuts. The drive for value for money, economies, efficiencies and effective performance delivery become ever more critical. In Exeter this has meant that Portfolio Holders and the Executive have had to make some difficult decisions in respect of their portfolio areas e.g. reducing services, with scrutiny of these decisions by the relevant Committees and Full Council.</p>
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Exeter City Council – Model of Local Governance

The Local Government Act 2000 introduced a requirement for local authorities to move to one of three new political management structures which included the separation of executive and non-executive arrangements. The objective was to deliver greater efficiency, transparency and accountability of the decision making processes. The decision makers were to be held to account in public by overview and scrutiny Committees. At the time, the traditional Committee system was no longer an option other than for smaller district councils.

Exeter City Council opted for the Leader and Cabinet model form of governance to improve efficiency and accountability in decision-making.

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 required all local authorities to review their executive arrangements. The Council was required to review its arrangements by 31 December 2010 with any changes being implemented three days after the date of the May 2011 election.

The Council formally adopted the new executive arrangements, namely the “Strong Leader” model form of governance on the 9 December 2010.

Political Management Arrangements

Council

The Council comprises 40 Members. Its functions include:

- Approval of the budget;
- Receiving reports from The Executive, and other Committees which require a decision;
- Providing an opportunity for Members to put questions to any Executive Member or Committee Chair

There are usually 8 meetings of Council each year.

The Executive

The Executive exercises all of the Council’s functions which are not the responsibility of any other part of the authority. It comprises of the Leader and seven other Members, including representatives of the Opposition Parties.

Sub Committees of the Executive

(a) Leisure Complex Programme Board

To decide all matters in respects of the £19.4 million budget for the development of the new leisure complex and swimming pool.

- Membership consists of:-
 - Leader of the Council
 - Portfolio Holder – Economy and Culture
 - Portfolio Holder – City Development
 - Leader of the Opposition (or nominee)

The six **Executive portfolios**, which cover a range of responsibilities, are set out below:-

The Leader – “A stronger city”

- strategic vision and direction of the council
- business transformation
- human resources
- major grants
- new homes bonus
- community engagement and empowerment
- community grants
- commercialisation of the council

Deputy Leader – City Development – “Deliver good development”

- planning policy
- planning and building control
- sustainable development
- district heating
- transport
- engineering
- flooding
- design and heritage
- community infrastructure levy
- land charges
- neighbourhood planning
- register of assets of community value
- infrastructure delivery

Housing and Customer Services – “Provide suitable housing”, “Be a good landlord”, “Help me with my financial problem”, “Make it easy for me to pay you”

- benefits
- council tax
- council housing rent payments
- business rates payments
- one view of debt
- Customer Service Centre
- housing advice and homelessness prevention
- social housing allocations
- private rented sector support
- pre-eviction panel
- supported housing services commissioning
- older persons support
- tenancy support
- rent and service charge setting
- leaseholder services
- right to buy
- consultation and engagement
- community development and governance
- tenancy services arising from landlord obligation
- supply of housing
- housing needs analysis
- housing enabling
- PSL/Extralet procurement
- empty properties
- downsizing support
- ensuring housing is fit for purpose
- landlord support services
- illegal evictions
- supporting people into home ownership
- housing building maintenance
- works to the physical fabric of the housing assets including gas, asbestos and fire safety, disabled adaptations, gardens, walls

Enabling Services – “A well run Council”, “Maintain our property assets of the city”

- contracts
- procurements
- estates
- asset management and property records
- business continuity
- ICT
- equalities
- financial services
- civic Centre facilities
- democratic and civic support
- twinning
- legal services
- communications
- emergency planning
- audit

Environment, Health and Wellbeing – “Keep Place Looking Good”. “Keep me/my environment safe and healthy”

- carbon management
- environmental health
- parks and open spaces
- bereavement services
- CCTV and Home Call
- community patrol
- cleansing
- recycling
- refuse
- waste policy
- licensing
- health and safety
- fleet management
- safeguarding of children/adults
- family intervention
- community safety

Economy and Culture – “Provide great things for me to see and do”, “Help me run a successful business”

- economic development
- city centre
- tourism
- markets and halls
- arts strategy and funding support
- culture/events
- RAMM
- museums
- leisure contract and sport
- car parking
- civil parking enforcement
- waterways

Meetings of the Executive are held twice in an eight weekly cycle on Tuesday evenings, starting at 5.30pm.

All formal meetings are held in public except where matters concern confidential information.

Scrutiny Committees

The Council has three Scrutiny Committees which perform the overview and scrutiny function of the Council. Each committee scrutinises a particular area:

- Community
- Economy
- Resources

Scrutiny Committee (Community)

1. To evaluate and monitor the performance of all housing, contracts, community engagement, environmental health (including cleansing), river and canal, parks and open spaces, bereavement and CCTV/Home Call services.
2. To consider and advise the Executive on draft budget proposals which fall within the remit of this Committee.
3. At the request of the Council or Executive, to consider such papers or issues that are to be presented to the Executive, in order that the views of the Committee are available to the Council or the Executive in making its decision.

4. To monitor the financial performance and undertake stewardship in respect of community and environmental services.
5. To receive audit reports in respect of services within the remit of the Committee.
6. To undertake reviews of the appropriate strategies and policies emanating from the work and functions of the community and environment services in accordance with a work plan agreed in consultation with Council and the Executive.
7. To appoint members to participate in Task and Finish Groups within the remit of this Committee, receive reports from and recommend action arising from these reviews to the Executive.
8. To monitor the effectiveness of the Council's participation in such Partnership and inter-agency initiatives as fall within the remit of this Council.
9. To review such issues that might be appropriate arising from the portfolios held by Executive Members.
10. To request the Executive to reconsider such activities as have been the subject of debate following the use of call-in-powers.
11. To ensure that all services within its remit operate in accordance with the principles of equal opportunities.
12. To undertake any appropriate scrutiny of health issues in Exeter.
13. To discharge the functions of a Crime and Disorder Committee to oversee and scrutinise the work of the Exeter Community Safety Partnership in accordance with the Crime and Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Regulations 2009.

Scrutiny Committee (Economy)

1. To evaluate and monitor the performance of all tourism, economic development, transportation, parking, estates, planning (except purely development control), Markets and Events, leisure and museums and technical (including flooding) services.
2. To consider and advise the Executive on draft budget proposals which fall within the remit of this Committee.
3. At the request of the Council or Executive, to consider such papers or issues that are to be presented to the Executive, in order that the views of the Committee are available to the Council or Executive in making its decision.

4. To monitor the financial performance and undertake stewardship in respect of economy and tourism services.
5. To receive audit reports in respect of services within the remit of the Committee.
6. To undertake reviews of the appropriate strategies and policies emanating from the work and functions of those services within the remit of the Committee in accordance with a work plan agreed in consultation with Council and the Executive.
7. To appoint members to participate in Task and Finish Groups within the remit of this Committee, receive reports from and recommend action arising from these reviews to the Executive.
8. To appoint members to participate in Best Value Service Review Groups within the remit of this Committee and to receive reports from and recommend action arising from Service Reviews to the Executive.
9. To monitor the effectiveness of the Council's participation in such Partnership and inter-agency initiatives as fall within the remit of this Committee.
10. To assist in the process for the adoption and approval of the Exeter Local Development Framework, and for the preparation of other elements of the Development Plan by the Regional Assembly, Devon County Council, and other local authorities.
11. To review such issues that might be appropriate arising from the portfolios held by the Executive Members.
12. To request the Executive to reconsider such activities as have been the subject of debate following the use of call-in-powers.
13. To ensure that all services within its remit operate in accordance with the principles of equal opportunities.

Scrutiny Committee (Resources)

1. To evaluate and monitor the performance of Human Resources IT, Business Transformation, Finance and all central/corporate services.
2. To consider and advise the Executive on draft budget proposals which fall within the remit of this Committee.
3. At the request of the Council or Executive, to consider such papers or issues that are to be presented to the Executive, in order that the views of the Committee are available to the Council or Executive in making its decision.

4. To monitor the overall financial performance of the Council, including stewardship and treasury management.
5. To undertake reviews of the appropriate strategies and policies emanating from the work and functions of those services within the remit of the Committee in accordance with a work plan agreed in consultation with the Executive.
6. To review progress made within the Corporate Plan.
7. To appoint members to participate in Task and Finish Groups within the remit of this Committee, receive reports from and recommend action arising from these reviews to the Executive.
8. To review and advise the Executive on corporate staffing issues, including:
 - Industrial relations
 - Health and safety
 - Equalities
 - Such other staffing issues as directed by the Executive
9. To monitor the effectiveness of the Council's participation in such Partnership and inter-agency initiatives as fall within the remit of this committee.
10. To review such issues that might be appropriate arising from the portfolios held by Executive Members.
11. To request the Executive to reconsider such activities as have been the subject of debate following the use of call-in powers.
12. To ensure that all services within its remit operate in accordance with equalities principles.

Each committee comprises of members who are not members of the Executive. Scrutiny Committees review and scrutinise the discharge of the Executive's functions and the effectiveness of Council policies. Each committee determines its own work programme which is agreed by Council.

Other Committees of the Council

Planning Committee

The Planning Committee determines planning applications which are not dealt with by officers under delegated powers. It comprises of 13 Members and meets on a four weekly cycle. All members of the committee must attend at least one training session each year.

Licensing Committee

The Licensing Committee discharges the Council's licensing functions as detailed in the Schedule of Responsibilities within Exeter City Council's Constitution. The Committee comprises 14 members. In addition, membership of this committee also sits, from time to time, as the Licensing Committee which is established under the provisions of the Licensing Act 2003. All members of the Licensing Committee have to attend an annual training session.

- **Licensing Sub Committee**

Licensing Sub Committee comprises of 3 members who are selected from the membership of the Licensing Committee (2003 Act). Meetings are convened as and when required. The Sub Committee deals with reviews of licences issued under the Licensing Act 2003 and Gambling Act 2005.

Audit and Governance Committee

The Committee comprises of 11 Members and oversees the audit functions of the Council including audit, the regulatory framework and the City Council's accounts, as well as matters of a constitutional nature.

Appointments Panel

The Panel deals with the appointment and remuneration of senior officers.

Employee JCC

The Employee JCC is the recognised forum for consultation between Exeter City Council and its employees.

In addition to the topics outlined above for consultation this forum may be used to provide information on:-

- Recent and probable development of the council's activities and economic situation;
- The situation, structure and probable development of employment within the Council and any measures that may be taken where there is a threat to employment;
- Decisions that are likely to lead to substantial changes in work organisation or contractual relations.