

COUNCIL
HELD AT EXETER COLLEGE

Tuesday 22 February 2022

Present:-

The Right Worshipful the Lord Mayor Councillor Trish Oliver (Chair)

Councillors Allcock, Atkinson, Begley, Bialyk, Denning, Foale, Ghusain, Hannaford, Harvey, Holland, Jobson, Leadbetter, Lights, Mitchell, K, Mitchell, M, Moore, D, Moore, J, Morse, Newby, Pearce, Sheldon, Sills, Sparkes, Sparling, Sutton, Vizard, Wardle, Warwick, Williams, Wood and Wright

1

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs Henson, Quance and Packham.

2

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 14 December 2021 were moved by the Leader, Councillor Bialyk and seconded by the Deputy Leader, Councillor Wright taken as read, approved and signed as correct.

3

OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS

The Lord Mayor passed on her condolences, and those of Council Members, to the family and friends of Ivor Doble who had passed away. He was a popular and well-known figure in Exeter, known for both his role as Chairman of Exeter City Football Club and within the local business community through his well-established jewellery businesses.

The Lord Mayor also reported the following:-

- Exeter's recognition in a national survey as being the second cleanest city in the country and also the second highest ranked location having pride in its neighbourhoods, a testament to the hard work of all of those involved in caring for the city and why, each year, every Lord Mayor recognises and hosts the sweepers' lunch; and
- the attendance on her behalf by Councillor Mrs Henson at a Choral Evensong service in the Cathedral on 6 February 2022.

The Lord Mayor passed on her congratulations and those of Members to the Chief Executive & Growth Director, Karime Hassan, who had been made a Member of the British Empire (MBE) for services to Local Government in the New Year's honours list.

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

- the Holocaust Memorial Service on 27 January 2022, with the Leader, Honorary Aldermen and the Chief Executive & Growth Director in a moving service in Exeter Cathedral;

- an exhibition at the Guildhall on 6 February 2022 to mark the 70th accession to the throne of Queen Elizabeth II;
- the King's Squad passing out parade and the formal opening of the CTCRM's new outdoor social area on 3 February 2022 at Lympstone Marine Camp, having had the honour of meeting Rear Admiral Jude Terry OBE; and
- the re-opening of the McDonalds restaurant at Marsh Barton on 3 February 2022, at which, David Shawyer, the franchisee of McDonalds Exeter, had made a contribution of £2,000 in aid of the Lord Mayor's charity, "Inclusive Exeter".

The Lord Mayor also advised of the regular coffee mornings at the Guildhall in aid of "Inclusive Exeter", the next being held on 26 February 2022 and to her intention to attend a Fairtrade Coffee Morning also in the Guildhall on 5 March 2022. She reminded Members of the Lord Mayor's Curry Evening at the Ganges Restaurant, Fore Street, Exeter on 8 March 2022 in support of her charity.

The Lord Mayor thanked Councillors for taking lateral flow tests prior to the meeting.

4

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Lord Mayor reported that there were no further questions from the public, the question from Mr Cox having been received and responded to at the Extraordinary meeting of Council immediately preceding this meeting.

5

LICENSING COMMITTEE - 1 FEBRUARY 2022

In the absence of the Chair from this meeting and as the Deputy Chair had not attended the Licensing Committee on 1 February 2022, the minutes of the Licensing Committee were presented by Councillor Warwick, a Member of the Committee, and taken as read.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Licensing Committee held on 1 February 2022 be received.

6

COMBINED STRATEGIC SCRUTINY AND CUSTOMER FOCUS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 10 FEBRUARY 2022

The minutes of the Combined Strategic Scrutiny Committee and Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee of 10 February 2022 (with the exception of minute numbers 4, 5, 6 and 7 which had been considered at the Extraordinary Council meeting immediately preceding this meeting) were presented by the Chair of the meeting, Councillor Denning, and taken as read.

The Chair reported that the second resolution of Min. No. 7 should read "that a recommendation be made to the Executive and Council that Link Group include consideration of the climate impacts of investments and banking activity within their advice provided to Council". The minute would be amended accordingly when the next meeting of the Combined Strategic Scrutiny Committee and Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee is held.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Combined Strategic Scrutiny and Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee held on 10 February 2022 be received.

STRATA JOINT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE - 19 JANUARY 2022

The minutes of the Strata Joint Executive Committee of 19 January 2022 were presented by the Leader and Chair of the Joint Committee, Councillor Bialyk, and taken as read.

In respect of **Minute No. 6 (Terms of Reference)**, the Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendation and following a vote, the recommendation was carried unanimously.

In respect of **Minute No. 8 (Strata Business Plan)**, the Leader undertook to respond to a question from a Member who, in making reference to the three Strata partnership authorities having declared a climate emergency, asked whether the new business plan would include an assessment of the carbon emissions of the business activities and measures to offset the impact of Climate Change.

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

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Strata Joint Executive Committee held on 19 January 2022 be received and, where appropriate, adopted.

EXECUTIVE - 11 JANUARY 2022

The minutes of the Executive of 11 January 2022 (with the exception of minute number 8 which had been considered at the Extraordinary Council meeting immediately preceding this meeting) were presented by the Leader, Councillor Bialyk, and taken as read.

In respect of **Minute No. 6 (Strategic Case for the Exeter Development Fund)**, the Leader, in response to a Member's question seeking clarification as to whether the Council would be looking at how retro-fitting would be undertaken for non-Council owned property, reported that it was the Council's intention to form a retrofit company at a time when it was appropriate to do so.

The Leader added that:-

- it was not currently the intention to develop business cases through Exeter City Living in respect of a consultancy company and a retrofit company because of limitations on resources; and
- important elements in forthcoming reports to Executive and Council on the Exeter City Living Business Plan 2022-23 and a Business Case for the creation of a Residential Property Company would seek to progress the green skills agenda.

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

In respect of **Minute No. 7 (2022/23 Budget Strategy and Medium Term Financial Plan)**, the Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendation and following a vote, the recommendation was carried.

In respect of **Minute No. 9 (Housing Rents and Service Charges 2022/23)**, the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Council Housing Development and Services in response to a Member's question, advised that it was not possible to delay implementing the rent rise by a quarter to allow people to pay winter fuels bills as the HRA budget had been approved by Council. It had also been considered by the

Council Housing and Development Advisory Board. Officers however would be available to advise and offer support to those Council tenants on universal credit or not in receipt of benefits but on low incomes to help them to combat rises in the cost of living.

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

In respect of **Minute No. 10 (Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2022-23)**, a Member welcomed the support being provided through the scheme for the vulnerable and low paid in the city.

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

In respect of **Minute No. 13 (Options Report for Rennes House)**, the Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendations and following a vote, the recommendations were carried unanimously.

In respect of **Minute No. 14 (Edwards Court Options Report)**, the Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendations and following a vote, the recommendations were carried unanimously.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Executive held on 11 January 2022 be received and, where appropriate, adopted.

9

EXECUTIVE - 8 FEBRUARY 2022

The minutes of the Executive of 8 February 2022 (with the exception of minute number 20 which had been considered at the Extraordinary Council meeting immediately preceding this meeting) were presented by the Leader, Councillor Bialyk, and taken as read.

In respect of **Minute No. 19 (Organisational Change Programme: One Exeter)**, the Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendations and following a vote, the recommendations were carried.

In respect of **Minute No. 21 (Capital Strategy 2022-23)**, the Leader, referring to a question raised by a Member at the Executive on 8 February 2022 in respect of community asset transfer, undertook to ensure that a response was provided.

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

In respect of **Minute No. 22 (The Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (Incorporating the Annual Statement of Minimum Revenue Provision))**, the Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendations and following a vote, the recommendations were carried unanimously.

In respect of **Minute No. 23 (Treasury Management Strategy Report 2022/23)**, the Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendation and following a vote, the recommendation was carried.

In respect of **Minute No. 24 (Wonford Health and Well Being Centre Feasibility Proposal)**, a Member requested clarification on part of a response she had received from the Leader to her question at Executive on 8 February 2022 in

respect of the carbon impact of demolition and construction in bringing forward the proposal. The Leader asked that this request be put to him in writing.

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Physical Activity welcomed the proposal for the Health and Wellbeing Centre which would be of great benefit to the local community.

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

In respect of **Minute No. 25 (Exeter Local Plan: Issues Consultation Summary Report)**, the Portfolio Holder for City Development, in response to a Member's question, confirmed that the new Local Plan would help support the Council's approach, through Exeter City Living and its own house building programme, to help achieve carbon reduction and neutrality targets within Net Zero Exeter 2030 ambitions.

In respect of **Minute No. 26 (Annual Pay Policy Statement 2022/23)**, the Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendations and following a vote, the recommendations were carried unanimously.

In respect of **Minute No. 27 (Gender Pay Gap Report)**, the Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendations and following a vote, the recommendations were carried unanimously.

In respect of **Minute No. 28 (Review of the Council's Contaminated Land Strategy)**, the Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendation and following a vote, the recommendation was carried unanimously.

In respect of **Minute No. 29 (Proposed Variation of the Public Spaces Protection Order)**, the Portfolio Holder for Transformation and Environment stated that, since the introduction of the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO), issues around homelessness, the street attached and anti-social behaviour remained significant. There had been 12 homeless related deaths since the PSPO had been introduced and it was estimated that there were approximately 500 individuals in the city who were extremely vulnerable. The life expectancy for homeless men and women was estimated at 45 and 43 years respectively.

In response to a Member's query on recording and monitoring the use of the PSPO on those with no fixed abode, the Portfolio Holder for Transformation and Environment confirmed that this was a Police role and that liaison took place with the City Council on this matter.

During discussion the following points were made:-

- anti-social behaviour such as aggressive begging, illegal encampments, urinating in doorways and abandoned bedding had a detrimental impact on the quality of life of the city;
- businesses had contacted the Council seeking sufficient resources to enforce the PSPO;
- there was a distinction between people sleeping rough and those who were street attached;
- particular areas of the city centre could be intimidating to the public and discourage them from coming to the city centre, especially during the evening and at night time;

- age profiles were maintained for younger persons identified as homeless/living on the street to ensure that they were not already affected; and
- it was important to maintain a balance between respecting the human rights of those with complex needs whilst not compromising the safety and enjoyment of the city for the wider public.

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

In respect of **Minute No. 30 (Authorisation of Legal Services Officers to attend the Magistrates' and County Courts and Changes to the Scheme of Delegation for Legal Services)**, 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 8 February 2022 be received and, where appropriate, adopted.

10 **CHANGE IN MEMBERSHIP - HARBOUR BOARD**

The Lord Mayor reported that Simon Adams has been put forward as a Member of the Exeter Harbour Board taking the place of Paul Labistour who had passed away last year.

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

Councillor Wardle, seconded by Councillor Pearce, moved a Notice of Motion in the following terms

“This Council is concerned to learn from Stagecoach about the reductions to bus services in Exeter from 24 January 2022 and also from South Western Railway (First Group) to broadly half the number of trains and make a change of trains at Salisbury necessary for passengers to and from London Waterloo from 17 January 2022, noting that these reductions are apparently due to staff shortages related to Covid.

However, this Council also notes the imminent lifting of restrictions by HM Government and the encouragement to employees to return to their workplaces rather than working from home. These developments, along with the continuing expansion in the area, are very likely to encourage car usage to at least pre-Covid levels and, in consequence, a rise in congestion and emissions running counter to Council policies on carbon reduction.

This Council considers that radical solutions are needed to public transport in Exeter in addition to the reversal of the above named cuts. It calls for a wide ranging examination by the Exeter City Council Transport Working Group of the possibilities, for example, of Council run bus services (as existed in Exeter 1904-1970), bus and train performance contracts, electric buses, a city wide tram system, emission charging for road vehicles and workplace parking levies to fund transport improvements.”

In presenting his Motion, Councillor Wardle, highlighted the following:-

- South Western Railway First Group had re-instated the hourly train service to Waterloo;
- Stagecoach had reduced their day to day service in Exeter and the service remained expensive and unreliable;
- Government support for bus transport was set to be reduced and it was unknown what support would be available for a Bus Service Improvement Plan;
- increasing car usage post Covid and the continuing housing expansion in the area were likely to increase car usage to at least pre-Covid levels leading to a rise in congestion and carbon emissions contrary to Net Zero Exeter 2030 ambitions;
- further new towns were planned in the travel to work area and the former Greater Exeter Strategic Partnership had planned for 53,262 houses across 38 sites;
- figures from the 2021 Census would be published shortly and needed to be assessed in respect of transport issues, which could be undertaken by Exeter City Futures in conjunction with the University of Exeter; and
- the Reading bus service was run by the local authority and Nottingham's tram system was funded by a Workplace Parking Levy. Exeter should also investigate solutions to transport issues.

Councillor Harvey, the Chair of the Exeter Transport Working Group, made the following points:-

- the Government was set to withdraw 30% of funding to Bus Companies;
- Devon County Council was looking to reduce support for concessionary fares due to a lack of take up which could result in further reductions in services. Rail Companies had also suffered a downturn during the Pandemic;
- the Pinhoe Access Strategy highlighted the need for improved bus services; and
- the remit of the Transport Working Group was to influence Devon County Council as the Highway Authority to seek true alignment with the City Council's own transport visions.

Councillor Sparling referred to the importance of ensuring that the safety of women and vulnerable groups getting around the city, especially at night, would also be an important consideration and that other issues should not take precedence.

Councillor Harvey gave an assurance that this would be the case.

The Leader referred to the Transport Act 1968 that had enabled municipal bus companies to transfer ownership to the National Bus Company; the 1985 Transport Act which had deregulated the bus industry in the UK; and to Stagecoach's unsuccessful bid for funding for electric buses. He also referred to the competing demands on the Council's limited resources.

Councillor Pearce, in seconding the motion, emphasised the need for an improved frequency in the bus service, cheaper fares and carbon friendly vehicles.

Councillor Wardle, in commending the motion to Council, expressed his concern that the views of many seemed to suggest that public transport in the city was in a poor state. He asked that the matter be considered by the newly created Exeter Transport Working Group in conjunction with the Highways Authority.

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

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

In accordance with Standing Order No. 8, the following question was put by
Councillor D. Moore to the Leader

**Exeter City Council is a member organisation of Exeter City Futures (ECF).
Who will be appointed on behalf of the Council to the Exeter City Future's
Board - now that the Council's nominated Board member has been seconded
to lead ECF?**

The Leader advised that he had given consideration to the matter of the Council's appointment to Exeter City Futures. He fully intended to have the Council fully represented and, like many other decisions on Council appointments to Boards, would be determined by Council following the upcoming local elections.

Councillor D. Moore, asked a supplementary question as to whether the Leader would have a discussion with her and the other Group Leaders about what is considered best practice and that the Council should consider setting up a Shareholder Advisory Committee to oversee the work of the Council's representatives on its own and other significant companies?

The Leader asked for the request to be emailed to him for consideration.

(The meeting commenced at 8.35 pm and closed at 9.46 pm)

Chair