



Exeter City Council

A meeting of **EXETER CITY COUNCIL** will be held at the **GUILDHALL, HIGH STREET, EXETER** on **TUESDAY 25 FEBRUARY 2025**, at 6.00 pm, at which you are hereby summoned to attend.

If you have an enquiry regarding any items on this agenda, please contact Mark Devin, Democratic Services Manager on 01392 265477.

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN TO VIEW AMENDMENTS TO BUDGETS PROPOSED BY OPPOSITION GROUPS

The following business is proposed to be transacted:-

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5 Budget 2025/26	
To pass the following resolution:-	5 - 12

RESOLVED:-

- 1) That the following, as submitted, be approved:
 - (a) the Revenue estimates for 2025-2026;
 - (b) the Capital programme for 2025-2026;
 - (c) the Fees & Charges for 2025-2026;
 - (d) the Treasury Management Strategy for 2025-2026;
 - (e) the Prudential indicators for 2025-2026 (incorporating the Minimum Revenue Provision Statement); and
 - (f) the Capital Strategy for 2025-2026
- 2) that it be noted that, at the meeting of the Executive on the 14 January 2025, the Council calculated the figure of 39,852, as its council tax base for the year 2025-2026 in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012 made under Section 33(5) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992;
- 3) that the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2025-2026 in accordance with Sections 31A of the Local Government and Finance Act 1992:-
 - (a) £125,161,660 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2)(a) to (f) of the Act;
 - (b) £117,758,752 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3)(a) to (d) of the Act;

- (c) £7,402,908 being the amount by which the aggregate at (3)(a) above exceeds the aggregate at (3)(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its council tax requirement for the year;
- (d) £185.76 being the amount at (3)(c) above divided by the amount at 2 above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year;
- (e) Valuation Bands

A	B	C	D
£123.84	£144.48	£165.12	£185.76
E	F	G	H
£227.04	£268.32	£309.60	£371.52

Being the amount given by multiplying the amount at (3)(d) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

- (4) That it will be noted that, for the year 2025-2026, Devon County Council, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Devon and Cornwall and the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority have stated the following amounts on precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 83 of the Local Government Act 2003, for each of the categories of the dwellings shown below:-

Devon County Council

A	B	C	D
£xxx.xx	£xxx.xx	£x,xxx.xx	£x,xxx.xx
E	F	G	H
£x,xxx.xx	£x,xxx.xx	£x,xxx.xx	£x,xxx.xx

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Devon and Cornwall

A	B	C	D
£192.13	£224.16	£256.18	£288.20
E	F	G	H
£352.24	£416.29	£480.33	£576.40

Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority

A	B	C	D
£69.79	£81.42	£93.05	£104.68
E	F	G	H
£127.94	£151.20	£174.47	£209.36

- (5) That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at (3)(e) and (4) above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby set the following amounts as the amounts of council tax for the year 2025-2026 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

Valuation Bands

A	B	C	D
£x,xxx.xx	£x,xxx.xx	£x,xxx.xx	£x,xxx.xx
E	F	G	H
£x,xxx.xx	£x,xxx.xx	£x,xxx.xx	£x,xxx.xx

Standing Order 30

Members are asked to note that a recorded vote is required to approve the budget and to set the Council Tax in accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014. Standing Order 30 refers.

Date: Monday 17 February 2025

Bindu Arjoon
Chief Executive

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Progressive Group Alternative Budget amendments

Our priorities aim to secure: good governance, meet our communities' needs, protect our environment, and maintain front line services.

Our balanced budget proposal looks to invest in generating appropriate income in order to protect front line services. It has been reviewed by the S151 officer as a balanced budget.

This budget It will result in saving and generating £2.25m of the £2.3m savings required. Close monitoring and review will be necessary to consider the impact on next year's budget (which could have a £760,000 deficit) and the medium term final plan. The General Fund working balance will be £3.2m.

We support Exeter City Council remaining in the Business Rates Pool (£900,000). Given the national pressure from Government on Local Authorities the Council's assumption to keep in reserve an additional £300,000 for the pay award is not included as it is not expected to be awarded.

Amendment 1: Good Governance

A. Scrutiny officer (Grade H £51,800) to progress the scrutiny function as set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance - hold the Executive to account & help secure value for money. The post would be funded 50% by General Funds and 50% HRA uncommitted working balance so that all the work of the Council is covered. This would be funded by the removal of the recently approved additional Comms Officer post (£58,000) and reduction to a print version of the Citizen to once a year. The Citizen continues to be covered by advertising.

B. Over the year the use of **external consultants** where the expenditure is outwith approved budgets would not be permitted.

C. To undertake a **review of projects with funds earmarked by CIL and S106 funds** to ensure progress, viability and to set a deadline of December 2025 for commencement and March 2027 for completion of any remaining earmarked funds.

D. To fund any costs of **Local Government Reorganisation** required in 25-26 from the 'transformation reserve' of £308,000 to avoid impact on front line services.

Amendment 2: Meeting our Communities' Needs

A. In addition to support with office costs, a grant of £50,000.00 to support **Citizens Advice Service** while it develops alternative income sources. To negotiate a contract based on savings to Council as a result of CA's work to bring in additional money to the council e.g. rents and council tax and other bad debts.

B. Improve Management of HMOs - immediately review and adjust fees to ensure the service breaks even and can provide support to improve standards in the HMO sector. This would generate an additional £99,000.00. A reduction in fees for those landlords meeting nationally recognised standards for HMO licensing will be offered. In future years develop and implement a selective local licensing scheme from the additional income generated from the new scheme rates

C. To support and develop Exeter's work on **climate change**. Sell carbon literacy training sessions and move £7k from an old earmarked fund for work on climate change with communities. This will generate £27,000.00

Amendment 3: Protecting our environment

A one 1 year project to enable the development of a **Biodiversity Strategy for Exeter**. (£45,000.00) This would be led by the Council working with an open partnership of community organisations and partners (supported by a one year part time post Grade H (0.5 - £29,000 over the year). Specialist ecologists would be commissioned to inform the strategy development. To be funded by repurposing 'old' earmarked funds: (Countryside) of £15,000 and (Habitat Assessment) £30,000. The strategy would be able to be used in future years to inform Biodiversity Net Gain opportunities from developers.

Amendments 4: maintaining our front line services

A. To protect and maintain the very limited number of **public toilets** (£0.15m). To operate a **doorstep glass collection and recycling service** £850,000 a year running costs from 26-27, to be funded by income below sale of glass / commercial glass collection contracts and reduction in general fund surplus in year 2+.

B. To **generate income to reinvest in front line services such as street cleaning** and protect services from further cuts and meet rising demand by increasing income: Discretionary Services Additional Marketing income £25,000.00; Ringo transaction charge passed to Customer £80,000.00; Introduce fees at free car parks £50,000.00; Introduce commercial activity in car parks using managing agents (e.g. APCOA) £50,000.00; Introduce an emissions/weight parking charge in city councils to reduce pollution and reduce structural impact on the Council's multi-storey car parks: £320,000.00. Move Howell Road and Triangle car parks to central zone parking - £370,000.00. Additional income at Matford Centre £30,000.00; and capitalising appropriate salaries Engineering infrastructure revenue capitalisation £70,000.00.

C. Undertake a **leisure services review** to protect leisure services from closure. For leisure centres operating at where income is less than 50% of costs undertake a review to increase casual users, including reducing charges for children and introduce new activities to increase use to improve financial performance to achieve income at 50% of costs over three years. Expected to generate £15,000.00 in year 1 minimum. For leisure centres operating where income is more than 50% of cost undertake a review to increase income to break even over two years. Expected to generate £25,000.00 in year 1 minimum. Reinvesting the increased financial performance in year 1 in specialist advice (£40,000) to improve business performance in future years.

D. Corn Exchange With the introduction of a new management structure in 2024 and increased activity - including third party ticket sales, increased performances, ticket sales & the introduction of a left luggage facility for visitors at the box office to the city should result in increase income - with a target of £100,000 surplus in 2025 - 26 and thereafter generate a similar surplus.

E. Reallocate £200,000.00 ECL - Corporate Property Support (required for bringing forward sites for sale) back into General Funds from earmarked reserves. Future development of any sites to be funded on a case by case basis by grant or refunded from sale of property..

F. To reduce General Fund operating surplus to 14% or £3.2m of General Fund balance (whichever is lowest p.a.) to allow reserves of £3.2m and enable funding of frontline services £874,000.00. Stop budgeting for Pension Contributions where an individual are not in the Pension scheme £100,000.00. Remove the duplication of funding in Culture: £200,000.00 Complete move to digitalisation over 3 years saving the Council £300,000.00

G Additional income as a result of Government laying legislation to double **planning fees** from 1 April 2025 is noted and expected to generate an additional £252,000.

General fund capital programme Amendment 1

Introduction of **doorstep glass collections** - set up costs Estimated Glass collection startup costs (First 12 months) Scenario 4 - 12 tonne electric RCV. Funded by capital receipt available and /or grant. It is assumed year 1 (25-26) is set up costs only. £2,000,000.00

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Budget Amendment from the Conservative Group.

Proposed by: Anne Jobson OBE

Seconded by: Peter Holland

We note the budget put forward, but would wish to make the following amendments
In the knowledge that there is a potential significant funding gap of £3.5m together with the bulk of the increase in National Insurance contributions. The amendments below will be funded as set out in the TABLE ONE.

- (i) A grant of £50,000 for the year 2025/26 is proposed to fund the CAB with on-going work being undertaken to ensure that grant funding is available in future years. For the avoidance of doubt this is in addition to any rent relief already proposed to CAB.
- (ii) Car Parking in Exeter is expensive and is considered a deterrent to coming into the City. Sunday is the quietest day and by reducing Car Parking to £2.50 for 4 hours it is considered that this will encourage residents and visitors into the City, which should benefit the retail and hospitality sectors.
- (iii) The loan repayments totalling £671,000.00pa in respect of St Sidwell's Point are funded entirely from ECC Revenue without contribution from St Sidwell's Point. It is believed that over a 5 year period St Sidwell's Point should increase its revenue so that at least 25% of the loan repayments are met from St Sidwell's Point Income. Therefore, an increase in income of £30,000 is proposed for the current year
- (iv) CIL Charging does not charge developers who seek to build co-living units at the same rate as PBSA's. It is considered that both should be charged the same and that developers who wish to build housing for couples and families and particularly social and affordable housing should be encouraged. It is acknowledged that this will have to go through the necessary consultation and is unlikely to be introduced until Q3 and therefore a modest increase of £55,000 is proposed for the current year.
- (v) PBSA's contribute nothing by way of business rates to the City. Any PBSA should at least be paying the appropriate amounts in Trade Waste to ECC (regardless of whether they use the service). In the event that Co-Living units become largely council tax exempt as they are occupied by students then consideration in the future should be given to charging them the same. For the avoidance of doubt this does not apply to accommodation run by and managed by Exeter University. No figure has been added, but work should be undertaken immediately with a view to bringing in any additional charges at the earliest opportunity.
- (vi) It is with regret that the closure of Northbrook Pool is proposed. It is hoped that Trade Waste Charges can be ascertained and if significant enough that Northbrook Pool can be reprieved.
- (vii) That there be a reduction in the grant to the Phoenix Arts Centre of £20,000. This is in view of their increasingly commercial operation.

TABLE ONE

Funding Gap – Budget Gap

Savings required	£3,500,000
CAB – grant	£ 50,000
National Insurance (net)	£ 531,000
TOTAL	£4,081,000

Funded by

Membership of Business Rates Pool	(£ 900,000)
Reduce pay award by 1% to 3%	(£ 300,000)
Straightforward Options* ¹	(£ 600,000)
Use EPR Tax	(£1,410,000)
Service Review Proposals* ²	(£ 420,280)
Other Income increase* ³	(£ 50,000)
Car Parks* ⁵	(£ 50,000)
Changes to CIL Charging	(£ 55,000) – only after Q3
Adjustment to Leisure Budget	(£ 286,000)
Reduction in Grant to NPO * ⁶	£ 20,000
TOTAL	(£4,097,280)

*1 – Straightforward Options

- (i) Stop budgeting for Pension Contributions where individual is not in pension scheme (£100,000)
- (ii) Remove duplication in Culture (£200,000)
- (iii) (Implement digitalisation (£300,000)

*2 – Service Review Proposals

- (i) Cease cash collection & petty cash across ECC (£78,500)
- (ii) Additional HMO Income following fee review (£20,000)
- (iii) Additional Market Income (£25,000)
- (iv) Additional Tourism Reduction (£29,000)

- (v) Guildhall Income – only required if borrowing (£166,000)

***3 - Other Income Increase**

- (i) £30,000.00 being 1st in a 5 year programme to raise income at SSP to cover at least 25% of cost of loan repayments of £671,000.00
- (ii) Carbon Literacy training sessions are sold raising an estimated £20,000.00pa
- (ii) A question has been raised as to the amount PBSA's pay in respect of Trade Waste and it is proposed that all non University owned/managed PBSA pay a trade waste charge. No figures are available but once known this figure should be inserted prior to sale/disposal of assets.

***4 - Adjustment to Leisure Budgets**

- (i) Closure of Northbrook Pool £286,000

***5 – Car Parks**

- (i) commercial activity in car parks eg Distribution Storage/Vending Machines (£50,000)
- (ii) Sunday is the quietest day for parking and there is a general view that parking is too expensive and is acting as a deterrent for people who would otherwise come into the City. It is proposed that on a Sunday parking charges be reduced to £2.50 for 4 hours (1-day = £5.00) which it is hoped will encourage better use. This is hoped will increase income by a minimum of £50,000. However no allowance has been made for the current year.

***6 – NPO**

- (i) The Phoenix currently receives £51,000 in rent relief and a £57,000 per annum grant. It is increasingly operated as a commercial venture. It is considered that the rent relief ensures that the public service use of the various studios can continue, but that the grant should be reduced by £20,000.00

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