



Exeter City Council

A virtual meeting of **EXETER CITY COUNCIL** will be held on **TUESDAY 20 OCTOBER 2020**, at 6.00 pm. via Zoom (the Press and Public can contact the Democratic Services Officer on 01392 265107 for further details) as legislation has been passed to allow Council's to hold meetings remotely.

If you have an enquiry regarding any items on this agenda, please contact John Street, Corporate Manager Democratic & Civic Support on 01392 265106.

During the Corona Virus outbreak, meetings will be held by virtual means. The live stream can be viewed here: <https://www.facebook.com/exetercitycouncil/live/%E2%80%99> at the meeting start time.

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To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2020.	5 - 20
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3 Public Questions	
Details of questions should be notified to the Corporate Manager Democratic and Civic Support at least three working days prior to the meeting - by 10am on Thursday 15 October 2020. Further information and a copy of the procedure are available from Democratic Services (Committees) (Tel: 01392 265115) with details about speaking at Council to be found here: Public Speaking at Meetings .	21 - 22
To receive minutes of the following Committees and to determine thereon:-	
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Office of Corporate Manager Democratic & Civic Support			
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13 Notice of Motion by Councillor D. Moore under Standing Order No. 6
Making Votes Matter in Local Elections

Council notes that:

1. The electoral system used for local elections in England and Wales, First Past the Post (FPTP), is not a fair system, because it means that votes do not have equal weight and many votes are wasted. Exeter is no exception.
2. The alternative to FPTP is a system of Proportional Representation (PR), where votes cast for parties translates more or less directly into seats won. There are many variants of PR. The Single Transferable Vote System (STV) variant of PR is already in use for local elections in Scotland and Northern Ireland. With this system, voters rank candidates in order of preference and those who receive the most backing (including second and subsequent choices) are elected to serve in multi-member wards.
3. Exeter City Council (in common with most other district councils) already has multi-member wards and thus the transfer to a proportional system would be easier than if the wards were single-member.
4. The introduction of PR for local elections in Scotland has led to an increase in turn-out, which was 47% at the last elections held in 2017. In contrast turn-out in the Exeter City Council election in 2019 was 36%. This suggests that the improved representation offered by PR encourages greater engagement in local democracy.
5. That PR should be introduced as the voting system in any further Government devolution, and reorganisation of local government, in order to improve democratic participation and accountability in local government.

Council believes:

There should be a move to the use of a system of proportional representation for local elections as soon as is practicably possible as this would boost turn-out and elect a council which is more representative of the range of political views of Exeter's residents.

This Council resolves:

1. To call upon Her Majesty's Government to
 - a. commit to changing electoral law to permit such a move.
 - b. Introduce such a system of voting in any reforms to local government presented to Parliament.
2. Write to Exeter's two MPs to ask them to call for a change to electoral law to permit such a system and promote the matter for debate in Parliament.

15 Further postponement of the 2020 Annual General Meeting

In accordance with Part 2, Regulation 4 (2) of The Local Authorities and Police Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020, it is:-

RECOMMENDED that:-

- (1) the Annual General Meeting originally scheduled for 19 May 2020, which had previously been postponed until at least December 2020, be now further delayed until May 2021, subject to the necessary Government guidance being received before that time, that it is appropriate to hold such a meeting; and
- (2) as a consequence of (1) above, all current appointments for Lord Mayor, Deputy Lord Mayor, Committee Chairs and Deputy Chairs, continue until the meeting identified in paragraph (1) above takes place.

16 Questions from Members of the Council Under Standing Order No. 8.

Date: Monday 12 October 2020

Karime Hassan
Chief Executive &
Growth Director

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COUNCIL

Tuesday 21 July 2020

Present:-

The Right Worshipful the Lord Mayor Councillor Peter Holland (Lord Mayor)
Councillor Mrs Yolonda Henson (Deputy Lord Mayor)
Councillors Atkinson, Begley, Bialyk, Branston, Buswell, Foale, Foggin, Ghusain, Hannaford, Harvey, Henson, D, Lamb, Leadbetter, Lyons, Mitchell, K, Mitchell, M, Moore, D, Moore, J, Morse, Newby, Oliver, Owen, Packham, Pattison, Pearson, Martin, A, Quance, I, Sheldon, Sparkes, Sutton, Vizard, Wardle, Warwick, Williams, Wood and Wright

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MINUTES

The minutes of the Ordinary meeting of the Council held on 21 April 2020 were moved by the Leader, seconded by the Deputy Leader Councillor Sutton, taken as read and approved for signing as correct at the earliest possible convenience.

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APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Sills.

25

OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS

The Lord Mayor passed on his condolences, and those of Council Members, to Councillors Atkinson and Wood, whose fathers had recently passed away.

The Lord Mayor also:-

- reported that Alderman Landers had recently celebrated his 90th birthday and had been presented with a clock as a mark of the Council's appreciation for his work when a Councillor and his continued service to the city in his role as Alderman;
- advised of the cancellation of the annual Exeter Armed Forces Day Parade scheduled for 20 June because of Covid-19, the celebration having being held virtually through the City Council's social media pages on Facebook with messages sent to various dignitaries, affiliated Armed Forces, cadets and veterans. A total of 18 video clips were received, which had been broken down into three videos and placed on Facebook reaching 13,171 people;
- reported his attendance, and that of the Leader of the Council, at both St James' Park, and Wembley, in the form of life-size cut-outs, supporting Exeter City in the playoff matches. This initiative had provided fans with the means virtually to attend the games being broadcast on Sky TV and helped generate much needed revenue for the club. Unfortunately, Exeter City had failed to gain promotion on this occasion; and
- receipt of a letter from the new Commanding Officer of HMS Defender, Vincent Owen, writing to advise of his wish to continue the valuable affiliation with Exeter City Council. Commander Owen had referred to the new phase of the ship's operational life and forthcoming deployments and of hopefully meeting in the not too distance future.

PETITION - SAVE OUR HISTORIC EXETER

The Lord Mayor invited Andy Robinson, the petition organiser, to present a petition of 2,081 signatories on "Save Our Historic Exeter".

Mr Robinson stated that:-

- more than 4,200 people have signed a petition titled "Please help us stop developers destroying the city centre" with more than 2,000 having also signed from the EX area which is why this petition qualifies for discussion here;
- the petition asks Exeter City Council to put on hold any significant new developments that effect heritage assets that are not governed by existing policy and for which the City Council has not conducted a needs assessment until the appropriate research and policies are in place;
- it also asks that the Council urgently puts additional resources into the research and development of these policies and to ensure that the approval of historic bodies is gained before buildings are validated for public consultation;
- these policies are needed as, without them, developers will find it far easier to build something that maximises their own profits at the expense of the city, its heritage and citizens;
- the research and policies that are needed are a Housing Needs Assessment, backed by detailed in depth research, research backed policies for every kind of development, including co-living, detailed policies for development in conservation areas including maximum height and mass of buildings, detailed policies for permanent, affordable, sustainable housing and a detailed assessment of the need for a range of student accommodation from affordable to luxury, urgent assessment of infrastructure levies and policies for the protection of green spaces and trees;
- during the process of the Harlequins planning application, it became clear to Exeter residents that there are huge gaps in planning policy and we have seen many buildings going up without any respect for historic Exeter, bringing no public benefit and only benefiting investors who are, in most cases, not based in our city and many not even in the UK. Developers have money to pay for the historic assessments, light surveys, noise surveys and sustainability surveys and Exeter City Council, it seems, does not have the resources to give them proper scrutiny;
- developers' claims and conclusions therefore have to be taken at face value and, inevitably, what is proposed is overwhelmingly about profit. It is not concerned about protecting Exeter, its heritage and its long term vision and it certainly is not about benefitting the people who live here;
- thousands of people who signed the petition want to say – "Stop and find out what is needed, find out what is wanted, create policies to take control of what is allowed and what is not, listen to the people who live and work here and those who visit. We have a right to influence our own environment and we expect it to be improved and not destroyed. Do not build more short term developments that make money for those who already have it and brings nothing to those who have real needs";
- the city's prime real estate should be used to create structures with flair and imagination, with world class architecture and visionary thinking worthy of a historically important city;
- it is believed that the Council lacks the resources to deal with the threat of international developers taking advantage of poor policies, so applications in

- the pipeline should be put on hold where there is not enough independent evidence or information about whether these developments are actually needed or coherent with the Local Plan;
- in respect of co-living, Manchester has quickly responded with a report saying that it will not support it as a response to the housing crisis. There are at least two applications of co-living pending in Exeter but no report into the issue;
- it is assumed that the Council has detailed evidence that co-living will work in Exeter, evidence which should be shared; and
- with a petition of over 4,000, with support on Facebook, it is requested that a group of Exeter residents, historians and local business representatives from Save Our Historic Exeter be formed to be kept up to date on the activities associated with this debate.

The Lord Mayor thanked Mr Robinson for clarifying that there were only 2,081 signatories with an Exeter postcode. The Lord Mayor stated that it was not appropriate for the Council to debate the petition due to the reference to the live Harlequins planning application and proposed that the petition be referred to the Planning Committee in accordance with the Council's petition scheme. The proposal was supported.

The Lord Mayor thanked Mr Robinson for the presentation.

RESOLVED that the petition be referred to the Planning Committee.

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PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Lord Mayor reported the receipt of three questions from the public.

Mr Thompson to Councillor Bialyk, Leader.

Mr Thompson was not present and his question was read out by the Corporate Manager Democratic and Civic Support.

Could the Leader confirm if Planning Applications, for example Planning Application 19/1105/FUL, would have consent reviewed if such applications were presented at Internal Briefings (public excluded), rather than the Planning Committee (open to the public), if it was subsequently considered this procedure had breached the City Council's Planning Code of Conduct.

Response

It is not possible to give a specific response to a general question. Each case would be dealt with based on the relevant facts.

Marilyn Spurr to Councillor Sutton, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Climate and Culture

Given the Council acknowledges the climate emergency, will it give the same prominence on your web site as the Coronavirus information? This would be an inexpensive way to inform the public, encourage them to take action and prepare them for the policies you will need to pursue to achieve your goals.

Response

Yes. Considerable prominence had to be given on social media platforms in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Council website and social media platforms will be utilised to promote the Council's response and ambitions to the Climate Emergency in order for all citizens and visitors to Exeter to respond positively to the challenges ahead.

Mrs Spurr asked a Supplementary question.

Can a timescale be provided?

Response

The website will shortly be updated as part of the Council's Net Zero Carbon ambitions.

Adrian Sargood to Councillor Bialyk, Leader.

Whilst the Net Zero Exeter 2030 Plan is not on the agenda it will be discussed at a 'Place Board'. In view of Exeter declaring a climate emergency, what priority will the Council and Place Board give to the Plan in relation to other plans the Council has, or will, develop?

Response

The minutes of Executive held on the 2 June are being considered by Council tonight with a recommendation that Council adopt the net-zero Exeter 2030 Plan. It should be self-evident that, having adopted the Net Zero Plan, it will inform all priorities of the City Council. It is also recommended that, because the City Council cannot require other organisations to adopt the Net Zero Plan, the Liveable Exeter Place Board be requested to adopt the Plan on behalf of the city as a whole. This would potentially leverage in many more of the city's key organisations and businesses and increase the influence and impact of the Council's decision to adopt the Plan.

Mr Sargood asked a Supplementary question.

Is there any budget being proposed for the implementation of the Plan?

Response

This is a very important issue but, because of the huge financial pressures the Council is under as identified in the Emergency Budget being considered this evening, there is no explicit budget for this purpose. The Council however is committed to working with organisations and communities in the city to achieve its aspirations in the Plan and to address this emergency and is one of only five local authorities in the country with such a Plan. Reports will be made to future meetings of the Executive on progress.

The minutes of the Planning Committee of 16 March 2020 were presented by the Chair, Councillor Lyons, and taken as read.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 16 March 2020 be received.

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PLANNING COMMITTEE - 27 APRIL 2020

The minutes of the Planning Committee of 27 April 2020 were presented by the Chair, Councillor Lyons, and taken as read.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 27 April 2020 be received.

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PLANNING COMMITTEE - 4 MAY 2020

The minutes of the Planning Committee of 4 May 2020 were presented by the Chair, Councillor Lyons, and taken as read.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 4 May 2020 be received.

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PLANNING COMMITTEE - 1 JUNE 2020

The minutes of the Planning Committee of 1 June 2020 were presented by the Chair, Councillor Lyons, and taken as read.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 1 June 2020 be received.

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PLANNING COMMITTEE - 29 JUNE 2020

The minutes of the Planning Committee of 29 June 2020 were presented by the Chair, Councillor Lyons, and taken as read.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 29 June 2020 be received.

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LICENSING COMMITTEE - 26 MAY 2020

The minutes of the Licensing Committee of 26 May 2020 were presented by the Chair, Councillor Owen and taken as read.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Licensing Committee held on 26 May 2020 be received and, where appropriate, adopted.

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CUSTOMER FOCUS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 6 FEBRUARY 2020

The Lord Mayor advised that the minutes of the Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee of 6 February 2020 had already been received at the previous meeting of the Council on 25 February 2020.

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CUSTOMER FOCUS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 25 JUNE 2020

In respect of **Minute No. 16 (Presentation on Covid-19 by Portfolio Holders and Questions from Members and Answers)** the Portfolio Holder for Supporting People, in response to a query from a Member, advised that there were currently six individuals accommodated in the Junction and that Government guidance on social distancing was being followed with strict adherence to safety requirements.

The minutes of the Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee of 25 June 2020 were presented by the Chair, Councillor Vizard and taken as read.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee held on 25 June 2020 be received.

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STRATEGIC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 12 MARCH 2020

In the absence of the Chair, the minutes of the Strategic Scrutiny Committee of 12 March 2020 were presented by the Deputy Chair, Councillor Newby and taken as read.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Strategic Scrutiny Committee held on 12 March 2020 be received.

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STRATEGIC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 2 JULY 2020

In the absence of the Chair, the minutes of the Strategic Scrutiny Committee of 2 July 2020 were presented by the Deputy Chair, Councillor Newby and taken as read.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Strategic Scrutiny Committee held on 2 July 2020 be received.

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STRATA JOINT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE - 16 JUNE 2020

The minutes of the Strata Joint Executive Committee of 16 June 2020 were presented by the Leader, Councillor Bialyk, and taken as read.

In respect of **Minute No. 21 (Strata Business Plan 2020/21 and beyond)**, the Leader moved and the Deputy Leader seconded the recommendation and it was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Strata Joint Executive Committee held on 16 June 2020 be received and, where appropriate, adopted.

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EXECUTIVE - 2 JUNE 2020

The minutes of the Executive of 2 June 2020 were presented by the Leader, Councillor Bialyk, and taken as read.

In respect of **Minute No. 60 (Net Zero Exeter 2030 Plan)**, the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Climate and Culture:-

- commended the Plan to Council as Exeter's visionary approach to the Climate Emergency, being one of the few authorities in the country to have identified the need to respond vigorously at an early stage;
- referred to the many initiatives already being implemented by the Council to reduce its own carbon footprint including the installation of solar panels to generate electricity which, as well enabling the charging of its own vehicles, also provided electricity to the general grid;
- emphasised the city wide objectives of the Plan in conjunction with the Council's many partners in the city;

- the financial challenge the Plan presented in light of the Covid-19 pandemic was recognised but that, nevertheless, the Plan would be front and centre of the Council's future aspirations and would be progressed as part of the Council's post Covid-19 Recovery Plan; and
- in responding to a Member's suggestion for the Council to support the newly created South West Mutual Bank and to lead on the creation of a Community Wealth Fund for local people to buy in and to keep the city's wealth in the communities by creating jobs, establishing a training programme and supporting green businesses to grow and support a sustainable future, the Portfolio Holder confirmed that the Council's Recovery Plan was aimed at helping the city's economy recover as quickly as possible from the pandemic through job creation and support for all businesses;
- responding further to the Member's suggestion, she agreed that it was important not to delay initiatives seeking to reduce the carbon footprint and that encouraging green businesses was an element of this;
- she commended the initiatives put forward by Exeter Community Energy although, in many cases, the Council was already taking a lead in these areas; and
- in conjunction with Exeter City Futures all options would be considered and South West Mutual had briefed lead Councillors.

The Leader moved and the Deputy Leader seconded the recommendations and they were carried unanimously.

In respect of **Minute No. 61 (Priority Asset Investment Programme)**, the Leader stated that six individual schemes totalling over £2.7 million had been identified prior to the outbreak of Covid-19 but had now been put on hold in order to bring forward the Emergency Budget in response to the crisis. Should it be decided to proceed with any of the schemes under the delegated powers sought in the recommendation, Members would be informed.

Councillor J. Moore, in moving the following amendment, made the following points:-

- referred to recent problems caused by travellers and gypsies accessing sites around the city;
- expressed the view that, rather than proceeding with anti-intrusion measures intended to prevent such incursions, safe, temporary sites should be identified for such groups;
- it would also be important to assess the health and wellbeing of these groups and to help meet a public sector equality duty; and
- this approach would make illegal encampments less likely.

Councillor J. Moore moved and Councillor D. Moore seconded the following amendment:-

- (1) the first of the six individual schemes identified as an urgent asset maintenance priority – Parks Anti-intrusion measures - be removed; and
- (2) the Council be requested to undertake an assessment of the needs of the traveller and gypsy communities in Exeter.

During discussion the following points were raised:-

- both this Council and Devon County Council have adopted positive policies in respect of the traveller and gypsy communities. Although sites had been

identified in the city, such as Haven Banks recently and, previously on Haldon Hill, they had been rejected, although a permanent site is located on the Sowton industrial estate. Devon County Council employ a gypsy/traveller liaison officer and other assistance has included educational support for the children of these communities;

- a number of problems have occurred following occupation of sites in the city, including Pinhoe (with three incursions in four years), Stoke Hill, Countess Wear and West Exe. Whilst the rights of these communities should be protected, the groups themselves have responsibilities to the wider community whose rights should also be respected;
- the occupation of open space prevents residents from walking and exercising which has been of particular relevance with the Covid-19 outbreak; and
- the Council has a responsibility under Equalities legislation to work positively with both communities and providing alternative sites could prevent such intrusions in the future, as the travelling community require somewhere to stop before moving on to other destinations.

The amendment was put to the vote and LOST.

The Leader, in responding to queries from Members advised:-

- Members would be notified as and when any of the schemes were implemented; and
- a budget is not available for the installation of solar panels on the Riverside Leisure Centre and any such provision would delay the completion of the refurbishment further.

The Leader moved and the Deputy Leader seconded the recommendations and they were carried.

In respect of **Minute No. 62 (Exeter City Group – Request for Funding for New Company Business Cases and additional financial support)**, a Member in welcoming the high priority being given to providing energy efficient homes and the Council's commitment to providing homes to Passivhaus standards, expressed her concerns that the proposals would not adequately address the need for affordable rented accommodation in the city. She referred in particular to the wage levels of many and to the concentration of rented accommodation in particular wards of the city.

The following responses were provided by the Leader:-

- the feasibility study would examine a number of options for expanding the Exeter City Group's range of subsidiaries, the results of which would be reported back to Members;
- the appointment of a Commercial Finance Manager was important to ensure dedicated support to Exeter City Group and the other Council owned Companies; and
- the goal was to provide good quality rented accommodation for Exeter citizens and that this would be achieved through offering a number of accommodation options including social rented, affordable rented, private rented as well as shared ownership.

The Leader moved and the Deputy Leader seconded the recommendations and they were carried.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Executive held on 2 June 2020 be received, and where appropriate, adopted.

40

EXECUTIVE - 7 JULY 2020

The minutes of the Executive of 7 July 2020 were presented by the Leader, Councillor Bialyk, and taken as read.

In respect of **Minute No. 68 (Post-Pandemic Recovery of Leisure Services)**, the Leader reported that, to secure a long term future for the Council's leisure services, a commitment was to be made to permanently in-source the service to ensure a viable and sustainable long term future. The impact of the pandemic on the leisure industry nationally had been devastating and the in-sourcing model proposed provided more direct control and was considered to be a safer approach given the high level of uncertainty caused by the pandemic. Many other authorities had expressed their admiration that the Council was able to commit to this policy change. He was particularly pleased that the staff would transfer to the Council under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE) and they would have new benefits including access to the council staff pension scheme. The Leader also covered the cost implications as set out in the recommendations.

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Physical Activity, in responding to a query from a Member on the implications of recent Government guidance on the re-opening of leisure facilities, confirmed that it was the intention to re-open facilities from September when it would be safe and practical to do so. No dates could be confirmed at this time as detailed health and safety risk assessments were required to ensure all aspects of the facilities are Covid-19 secure. Any necessary changes would be implemented as soon as possible but that public health and safety would always be paramount. There would be many issues to address including meeting new ventilation and air quality requirements, ensuring safe customer flows throughout facilities and some layouts may have to change within the Leisure Centres to ensure social distancing for both staff and customers.

The Portfolio Holder stated that, bringing the service in-house was an exciting development for the city and that it provided the opportunity to align with the Sport England Local Delivery Pilot as well as the work around the Physical Activity and Built Facilities Strategies for leisure. He referred to the flagship St. Sidwell's Point Swimming Pool and Leisure Centre and the refurbishment of the Riverside Swimming Pool and Leisure Centre, both of which could operate in a Covid-19 secure way.

During discussion the following points were raised:-

- the allocation of £1.5 million was required for the fit out costs for St. Sidwell's Point;
- bringing the Leisure Service in-house was a significant defining step for the City;
- the alignment with the Sport England pilot was important to encourage people to become more active and this encompassed activities in parks and open spaces supported by the City Council;
- the move to bring the service in-house was welcome as it provided greater control for the Council and presented the best opportunity for securing a quality service; and
- the opening of the Riverside Leisure Centre on the completion of the refurbishment would be welcomed by residents west of the River.

The Leader of the Progressive Group expressed his support for bringing the Leisure Service in-house and the Council Leader re-iterated the benefits of the City Council assuming direct control of this valuable service.

The Leader moved and the Deputy Leader seconded the recommendations and they were carried.

In respect of **Minute No. 69 (Overview of General Fund Revenue Budget 2019/20)**, the Leader moved and the Deputy Leader seconded the recommendations and they were carried unanimously.

In respect of **Minute No. 70 (Capital Monitoring 2019/20 and Revised Capital Programme for 2020/21 and Future Years)**, the Leader moved and the Deputy Leader seconded the recommendations and they were carried.

In respect of **Minute No. 71 (2019/20 HRA Budget Monitoring Report – Outturn)** the Leader moved and the Deputy Leader seconded the recommendations and they were carried.

In respect of **Minute No. 72 (Treasury Management 2019/20)**, the Leader moved and the Deputy Leader seconded the recommendation and it was carried unanimously.

In respect of **Minute No. 73 (Emergency Budget 2020/21)**, Councillor D. Moore moved, and Councillor J. Moore seconded, the following amendment:-

To introduce parking charges at all Leisure Centres and public open space car parks in the City, where a charging structure is not currently in place. All income generated after covering the costs associated with introducing the measures are to be earmarked for Housing Needs and Homelessness services.

In moving the amendment, Councillor D. Moore made the following points:-

- in the face of an unprecedented financial crisis, the most vulnerable in society were being hit the hardest and the additional funds from car parking charges would help address the homelessness and housing need situation in the city;
- a charge of £1 or £2 for a three hour period could be appropriate;
- a modal shift away from car use could be an offshoot, as residents would be encouraged to walk or bike to the facilities;
- the proposal would tie in with both the Council's Net Zero Carbon goal and the Sport England pilot and help reduce air pollution; and
- given the uncertainty of Government support in the future, the need to supplement the housing needs and homelessness budget was particularly important.

During discussion the following points were raised:-

- many on lower incomes in less affluent areas do own cars and will not be able to afford the suggested charges and therefore lose the motivation to exercise and enjoy the open spaces. Those without cars could be discouraged in accessing the facilities by bus because of the high fares in the city;
- the suggested total increase for the housing and homelessness service of £20,000 would not achieve a great deal;
- such a move would be contrary to the existing City Council initiatives such as the Sport England pilot and Wellbeing Exeter;
- an additional cost could be incurred in resurfacing the car parks;

- the service has suffered a reduction in its budget of £117,460 and, with the existing number of homeless, the Council cannot afford to cut the budget. Additional funding should be welcome and could be used, for example, to appoint a Complex Needs Officer; and
- guide-lines have been followed in putting forward the amendment, the implications of which have been thoroughly researched.

The amendment was put to the vote and LOST.

Councillor M. Mitchell moved, and Councillor K. Mitchell seconded, the following amendment:-

That any financial assistance from the Government this financial year to compensate for loss of income be allocated to restore the cuts proposed in the pending budget (July 2020). The Executive Committee should determine as funds become available the priorities for restoration within the original approved 2020/21 Budget. That the proposed £1million delegated fund should only be used in regard to reducing the impact of budget reductions or Covid-19 and not be used to fund the development of new projects.

In moving the amendment, Councillor M. Mitchell stated that its intention was to enable the Council to revisit proposals put forward within the original budget should the Government allocation enable it to do so and Councillor K. Mitchell, in seconding the amendment, confirmed the intention to ensure the integrity of the existing agreed budget would be upheld, with the potential for it to be reinstated as agreed earlier in the year.

The amendment was put to the vote and LOST.

The Leader presented the Emergency Budget which set out the proposals to ensure that, despite the unprecedented damage to the city's economy resulting from Covid-19, the huge losses of income and the additional budgetary pressures arising in responding to the pandemic, a revised and balanced budget could still be set. He thanked the Portfolio Holders and Directors for bringing forward the package of measures before the Council to ensure that, unlike some authorities, the City Council would not be facing the possibility of issuing a Section 114 Notice under the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

The Leader highlighted the following:-

- Exeter had received nearly £1.4 million of funding from the Government in two tranches but this would not meet the gap of £11.19 million being faced and which should be viewed in the context of income lost and the need for additional spend;
- some £8.56 million would be lost in the financial year 2020/21. Projected income losses up to June 2020, included lost car park income up to the end of June of £1.9 million, £426,000 from commercial waste and a reduction of £468,000 in income from visitor attractions together with losses also in commercial income;
- the additional spend requirement of £2.62 million included support for rough sleepers, creation of the Exeter Community Wellbeing hub, the provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and safe working arrangements in respect of Cleansing Services;
- the net additional cost of re-housing rough sleepers had been £180,000 (up to July), yet the Government grant received for this purpose had been £23,250;

- together with the Government grant of £1.4 million, measures to balance the budget included using £1.2 million from the General Fund Working Balance, repurposing Earmarked Reserves, offsetting repayment of debts against previous voluntary re-payments, recognising the saving of £300,000 in respect of the successful RAMM business rate valuation appeal and reductions in service expenditure totalling over £1.6 million;
- the Council would still need to make further savings of £5.8 million over the next three years; and
- it remained this City Council's intention to maintain front line services. Exeter was in the top 10 of local authorities predicted to experience a quick recovery. This Council would therefore continue in its role as a driver for the local and regional economy and, crucially, promote job creation and economic growth.

During discussion the following points were raised:-

- the City Council has a record of sound financial management;
- in respect of the Housing Revenue Account, no cuts in services to Council tenants were proposed as money had been saved by putting on hold works during the Lockdown period but, without further Government support, the position would need to be reviewed regularly;
- it is a regret that no additional funding has been identified by the Government to meet the additional costs incurred by the Environmental Health, Licensing and Community Safety Services in response to Covid-19;
- the first tranche of Government support in the sum of £72,737 together with money made available from repurposing the housing budget was utilised to accommodate the homeless;
- Government funding to combat any local outbreaks of the virus will be utilised by Devon County Council as the upper tier authority;
- the Government undertaking to reimburse local authorities 75% of lost income incurred during the crisis should be honoured; and
- it was hoped that, as a result of the crisis, the Government would recognise the vital roles undertaken by local authorities and the misguided stance of successive Governments in underestimating the role of Local Government in supporting their communities.

Both Leaders of the Opposition Groups supported the Emergency Budget.

The Leader moved and the Deputy Leader seconded the recommendations and they were carried.

In respect of **Minute No. 74 (Review of the General Buller Statue)**, the Leader reported that the continued appropriateness of the statue of General Buller and his horse Biffen would be considered by a Task and Finish Working Group comprising Councillors Ghusain, Foggin, Mrs Henson, D. Moore and Quance for report to the Strategic Scrutiny Committee.

In respect of **Minute No. 75 (Council Development Programme)**, and in response to a query from a Member regarding a Government announcement that additional funding would be made available to enable Councils to build Council homes, the Portfolio Holder for Council Housing Development and Services advised that, when the detail was announced, the City Council would be well placed to bid for this, as well as the Government's additional funding opportunity, "green funding", because of the innovative work already commenced within the Housing Assets and Development Team to retrofit the Council's Housing stock. The Council was also working closely with Homes England as part of the development programme.

The Leader moved and the Deputy Leader seconded the recommendations and they were carried.

In respect of **Minute No. 76 (The Introduction of a Council Housing and Development Advisory Board)**, Members noted the importance of engaging with tenants through the proposed Board.

The Leader moved and the Portfolio Holder for Council House Development and Services seconded the recommendations and they were carried.

In respect of **Minute No. 77 (Greater Exeter Strategic Plan: Draft Policies and Site Options Consultation)**, the Leader and the Portfolio Holder for City Development emphasised that the sites within Exeter identified in the Strategic Plan were those set out within the Liveable Exeter initiative and that these, together with all sites identified in neighbouring authorities, would now be put out to public consultation in the Autumn.

The Leader moved and the Deputy Leader seconded the recommendation and it was carried.

In respect of **Minute No. 78 (Greater Exeter Strategic Plan (GESP) : Joint Statement of Community Involvement)**, and in response to a Member's query regarding the availability of resources, the Portfolio Holder for City Planning and Development confirmed the Council's commitment to continue supporting the GESp process as well as developing the Local Plan in parallel. Central to the work was the identification of potential sites for development to support the Council's desire to bring forward purpose built shared accommodation and affordable public sector housing in line with the Council's green agenda and Covid-19 Recovery Plan.

In respect of **Minute No. 81 (Resources Required to Develop Exeter's Local Plan)**, and in response to a reference by a Member to the petition as set out in Min. No. 26 above, the Leader confirmed that a report on the matter would be presented to the Planning Committee.

The Leader moved and the Deputy Leader seconded the recommendation and it was carried.

In respect of **Minute No. 83 (Exeter City Living Ltd. Business Plan 2020/21)**, the Leader moved and the Deputy Leader seconded the recommendations which were carried.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Executive held on 7 July 2020 be received, and where appropriate, adopted.

41

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

- (a) In accordance with Standing Order No. 8, the following questions were put by Councillor D. Moore to the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Climate and Culture.

Please can the Portfolio Holder set out the baseline year being used to measure progress for the Exeter Net Zero Exeter 2030 plan and the

- 1. Net Exeter emissions of carbon dioxide for that year, and*

2. Net Exeter emissions of each of the other targeted greenhouse gases for the year that is the base year for that gas.

Can the Portfolio Holder ensure that this baseline and benchmark is publicised by Exeter City Council and Exeter City Futures alongside the Plan?

The Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder responded that a detailed spreadsheet containing the baseline data and assumptions of the Net Zero Exeter 2030 Plan could be downloaded from this page (by clicking the 'Net Zero Exeter Detail' button further down the page) <https://www.exetercityfutures.com/insights/net-zero-exeter-plan/>.

The Key Facts 2019 document, could be downloaded here: <https://www.exetercityfutures.com/insights/exeter-key-facts-2019/>. This was a summary document that collated existing data and statistics about Exeter (as of the end of 2019) and presenting them under the four key themes of the city's 12 Goals (Energy, Mobility, Sustainability and Capability) in order to identify areas Exeter might improve on.

The Key Facts 2019 document showed the figures around average CO2 emissions in Exeter from the Devon Climate Emergency Recovery Group (DCERG) report commissioned from the University of Exeter's Centre for Energy and the Environment. Their methodology used to generate this figure was available here: <https://www.devonclimateemergency.org.uk/devons-carbon-footprint/>. It was important to note that the Council had not carried out its own analysis on the data included in this DCERG report.

Having robust data was critical to measuring progress towards the city's Net Zero goals, yet carbon accounting, especially for a whole city, was a difficult task. In this sense, Exeter City Futures was consciously and consistently exploring ways in which this could be achieved on a more detailed level for Exeter.

It was confirmed that work was underway with the University of Exeter to establish the City Council's CO2 base line data, taking 2018 as the baseline for the measurement and that, whilst it was important to establish the scientific data as the basis, the key was to attain the goal of becoming net zero Carbon by 2030.

Councillor D. Moore asked a supplementary question on which Body, Board or authority should be tasked to keep account and reporting on the city's annual Carbon budget?

The Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder responded that this information would be obtained through the work being undertaken by Exeter City Futures and the University of Exeter for the City Council, with all proposals to come back through the Council's democratic processes.

(b) In accordance with Standing Order No. 8, the following question was put by Councillor Hannaford to the Portfolio Holder for Supporting People.

Does the Portfolio Holder agree that the Government's untimely re-imposition of benefit sanctions will cause great stress, anxiety, and financial hardship for many of our most vulnerable residents? Furthermore, does the Portfolio Holder agree that, in the midst of a global pandemic, with all the public health pressures and resultant economic depression, with potentially huge job losses, that this is a massive waste of public servants' time that could be much better spent on these other matters of greater significance?

How do these measures comply with the Government's stated aim to do nothing that increases child poverty? Can the Portfolio Holder please confirm what scoping work is being done by the Council with other key partners, to mitigate the detrimental effects on the residents, their families, and the Council, in terms of debt, council tax payments and rent arrears if welfare payments and frozen, cut or ceased?

The Portfolio Holder replied that her day job and her role as Portfolio Holder involved working with those on benefits many of whom had been adversely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic with many who had been furloughed receiving only 80% of their salary entitlement and with some facing redundancies where business are unable to restart. The Government's decision was bad timing as we are still in the pandemic and there will also be an impact on child poverty.

The Department for Work and Pensions, in dealing with the pandemic, is now moving from response to recovery phase. Normally a claim for Universal Credit (UC) would involve working with a Work Coach, signing up to a claimant commitment to look for work, and keeping a journal of progress. However with 3.2 million new claims being received, those steps were omitted initially as the focus of the response phase was to get those claims into payment as quickly as possible to prevent hardship.

Now that volumes of new claims for UC have dropped back to pre-March levels, Work Coaches are returning to their normal role of helping people back into work. Online journals are being created for those still claiming UC and I have been assured that the only reason that sanctions have returned is because they form part of the conditionality for Universal Credit.

The Council works closely with colleagues at Job Centre Plus and they have shared that a reasonable approach to conditionality will be followed as no-one can be sanctioned for not applying for jobs that don't exist.

Officers have been working closely with the other Devon Districts, Plymouth and Torbay Unitary Authorities and Devon County Council to monitor collection and debt levels across all areas of debt. No formal recovery action has been taken against households to date, the focus instead being on outbound calling to offer support to those appearing to struggle.

The Council has always been able to offer support to those in need through the use of discretionary funds including the local welfare support fund which continues to operate, although funding ceased in 2013. The formation of the Exeter Community Wellbeing Hub strengthened the Council's ability to tap into a wealth of support within the City, in order to help residents, and this has been further enhanced by the recent creation of the Exeter Wellbeing Support Fund. The City Council previously put in place a One View of Debt approach to help people pay their bills realistically as well as other support mechanisms. The Council is doing everything it can to prevent this situation.

Councillor Hannaford welcomed the tolerant ethos and climate within the Council and requested an update report to a future Scrutiny Committee.

(The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and closed at 10.12 pm)

DRAFT

AGENDA ITEM 3

PUBLIC QUESTIONS RECEIVED FOR ORDINARY COUNCIL 20 OCTOBER 2020

From Cynthia Thompson

To Councillor Bialyk, Leader

The Audit and Governance meeting reported funding for Pinhoe Hub was approved at Council, although Minutes state -'Whilst the funding has been set aside Council also needs to approve an expenditure budget to enable the funding to be used', - could the Leader advise when the required expenditure budget was presented to Council for approval?

To Councillor Bialyk, Leader

Following the conclusion of the objection to the City Council's 2018/19 annual accounts, could the Leader advise when the findings of the objection noted in The Statement of Reasons by the External Auditor will be presented to the Audit and Governance Committee and made available to the public?

From Marilyn Spurr

To Councillor Sutton, Portfolio Holder for Net Zero Exeter 2030

On 21st July I asked the Council if it would give the climate emergency the same prominence on its web site as the Coronavirus information. From the response I was led to believe that the answer was 'yes' and I expected to see it given a position on the home page. Would the Councillors agree that the site still does not convey a sense of urgency?

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PLANNING COMMITTEE **(HELD AS A VIRTUAL MEETING)**

Monday 7 September 2020

Present:-

Councillor

Councillors Williams, Bialyk, Branston, Foale, Ghusain, Hannaford, Harvey, Mrs Henson, Mitchell, M, Morse, Sparkes, Sutton and Wright

Also Present

Director City Development, Housing & Supporting People, Corporate Manager Democratic and Civic Support, Assistant Service Lead (Planning) City Development, Principal Project Manager (Development) (PJ), Principal Project Manager (Development) (MH), Project Manager (Planning) (LD), Project Manager (Planning) (LP), Project Officer, City Development, Legal Advisor, Principal Project Manager (Strategic Policy) (JD), Principal Project Manager - Housing Delivery, Assistant Highways Development Management Officer (Exeter), Democratic Services Officer (HB) and Democratic Services Officer (MD)

59

CHAIR

Councillor Ruth Williams, the Deputy Chair, chaired the meeting.

60

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 June 2020 were taken as read, approved and signed by the Deputy Chair as correct.

61

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests were made.

62

PETITION REFERRED FROM COUNCIL ON 21 JULY 2020 - SAVE OUR HISTORIC EXETER

The Corporate Manager Democratic and Civic Support presented the report on the petition titled, "Save Our Historic Exeter" which the Council, at its meeting on 21 July 2020, had referred to this Committee in line with the Council's Petition Scheme. At the Council meeting, the Lord Mayor had ruled that any debate of the issue could be considered as pre-determination of a proposed development in the city and it had therefore been deemed appropriate for the matters raised in the petition to be considered by this Committee.

The report detailed the contents of the petition and the policy framework, both nationally and within the City Council itself through the Exeter Local Plan and supporting documents, which set out the existing processes the Council followed in planning matters and in determining planning applications.

Councillor D. Moore, having given notice under Standing Order No. 44, spoke on the item. She raised the following points:-

- congratulate residents on a significant petition of 4,000 signatures with over 2,000 by Exeter residents;

- the essence of the petition relates not to a specific planning application but to planning policy, as residents believe that, notwithstanding the Local Plan and supplementary planning documents, there are gaps in the city's planning policy. The Local Plan does not meet the city's current or future needs;
- although the Local Plan describes Exeter as low rise there are many high rise buildings which fail to respect historic Exeter and these developments benefit only investors. Exeter is one of five historic city centres recognised by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979;
- residents feel that the Council lacks sufficient resources to scrutinise planning applications, many of which impact adversely on their properties especially when these are listed buildings and require mitigation measures;
- developer proposals are overwhelmingly about profit and there is little regard for protecting Exeter's heritage or its long term vision and creating thriving and coherent communities;
- petitioners seek the right to influence their environment and to encourage developments of flair and imagination with world class architecture and visionary thinking worthy of a historically important city and addressing the challenges of the city becoming zero carbon. People want to engage constructively in the future of the city;
- the absence of a Council policy on co-living on which there are two planning applications pending. Petitioners are asking the Council to put these on hold as there is inadequate evidence or information about whether these developments are needed or are in keeping with the Local Plan; and
- residents need to know how communities will be fully involved on the updating of the Local Plan and wish to contribute their local knowledge and to ensure the Council becomes a real advocate for local people

Members expressed the following views:-

- impressed with the petition and the thoughtfulness that went into it and agree with many aspects. The Council does seek to support sustainable and environmentally responsible developments but is constrained by its limited resources and national policies;
- accept growing local concern about the lack of affordable and social housing in the city given the level of student accommodation built. The City Council seeks to build more social and affordable housing in the city but lacks the necessary powers and resources;
- agree the need for planning policies specific to the needs of a historic city like Exeter;
- the current White Paper on planning could become a developers' charter and further erode local checks and balances;
- the Council seeks to lead on social housing provision and has brought forward its target of building 500 social homes in the next ten years to the next five years;
- some of issues are broad and relate to generic planning issues and, with the withdrawal of Mid and East Devon District Councils from the GESP, the Council is progressing the review of the Local Plan;
- Councils are required to undertake extensive public consultation in the development of Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans and will do so in bringing forward the new Local Plan;
- it is noted that over 50% of signatures are from those outside Exeter;
- co living can offer a solution to housing problems and these proposals will be appropriately scrutinised; and
- it is hoped that the two recommendations will address concerns raised and that there will be a positive and structured debate going forward to inform the review of the Local Plan and the preservation of Historic Exeter.

The recommendations were moved, seconded and carried.

RECOMMENDED to Council that:-

- (1) the contents of the petition be noted; and
- (2) the progress being made to ensure robust policies and plans are in place to meet the development demands being placed on the city, be noted and supported.

63

PLANNING APPLICATION NO. 20/0581/TEL - ST THOMAS CENTRE, COWICK STREET, EXETER

The Assistant Service Lead City Development presented the application for prior approval for the installation of a 15 metre high 5G telecommunication monopole with cabinet at base and associated ancillary works. He explained the following different types of telecommunication developments:-

- permitted development, for example, alterations to an existing mast;
- permitted development - prior approval notification, for example, a new mast up to 20 metres; and
- planning application, for example, a new mast over 20 metres; and

set out the following relevant statutory requirements:-

For all Telecommunication developments:-

- National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 116: and
- Local planning authorities must determine applications on planning grounds only. They should not seek to prevent competition between different operators, question the need for an electronic communications system, or set health safeguards different from the International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection guidelines for public exposure.

Prior Approval Notifications:-

- General Permitted Development Order Part 16: The developer must apply to the local planning authority for a determination as to whether the prior approval of the authority will be required as to the siting and appearance of the development; and
- 56 days from receipt to determine and to approve/refuse siting and design.

The Assistant Service Lead City Development set out the following factors which can be considered in relation to appearance as part of the prior approval process including:-

- design, form, shape and dimensions;
- colour and materials; and
- whether there are more suitable sites for the proposed works; and

also set out the factors which can be considered concerning siting including:-

- height of the site in relation to surrounding ground;
- existing topographical features and natural vegetation;
- the effect on the skyline or horizon;
- the site when observed from any side;

- the site in relation to areas designated for scenic value;
- the site in relation to existing masts;
- the site in relation to residential properties

The Assistant Service Lead City Development, through a series of photo montages provided by the applicant, showed from a range of views the location and potential visual impact the mast would have on the street scene within the Cowick Street Conservation Area. He advised that a number of sites in St. Thomas had been considered but rejected for technical reasons and the current site proposed was the only suitable one to achieve the necessary cell radius. Due to operational reasons the mast needed to be located in the St. Thomas area and a location outside of the city was unlikely to provide sufficient coverage. The proposal was required due to acute capacity issues and would facilitate significantly improved 5G coverage in areas that had started to gain this service.

The Assistant Service Lead City Development advised that 12 representations in support had been received, seven from St. Thomas, one from Torquay and four from elsewhere. 342 objections had been received, 50 from St. Thomas. It was noted that, in the interests of highway safety, the site of the mast has been moved away from the bus shelter and pavement.

The Assistant Service Lead City Development responded as follows to Members' queries:-

- the photo montage was the one sent to English Heritage and was considered sufficiently accurate to assess the impact on the view of the Cathedral and other historical assets;
- the view of the Cathedral from the photo montage and including the mast showed that the view of the Cathedral was partly obscured by trees;
- the applicant had advised that the mast would provide the necessary coverage and that they would not seek additional masts in the area;
- as the Government had set permitted development at 20 metres, providers would seek to apply for this height in the first instance;
- other sites considered in the vicinity would not have met the guidelines set by the International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection including a suggested location which would have brought the top of the mast to be in line with passengers waiting on the St. Thomas Rail Halt. The current location would meet the guidelines;
- the mast is unlikely to have an adverse impact on wildlife; and
- not aware of any Tree Preservation Orders in the Cowick Street Conservation Area.

Councillor Packham, having given notice under Standing Order No. 44, spoke on the item. She raised the following points:-

- serious concerns amongst the residents of St. Thomas relating to scale, design and siting of the mast which is out of place within this community setting;
- the mast will dominate the skyline, is an eyesore and will impact adversely on the St. Thomas precinct which is the heart of the local community;
- concerns have also been expressed regarding the impact on the general landscaping and biodiversity of the area. Devon Wildlife Trust have confirmed the presence of Pied Wagtails which are in long term decline;
- applicant had only considered three alternatives which failed to meet the guidelines of the International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection;
- location is too close to residential properties and there have been numerous

- concerns about potential health implications; and
- more than 50 St. Thomas residents are deeply opposed to the mast on grounds of scale, design, siting and bio-diversity.

Councillor D. Moore, having given notice under Standing Order No. 44, spoke on the item. She raised the following points:-

- the mast will have a detrimental effect not only on listed buildings but the Cowick Street Conservation Area as a whole as well as other Conservation Areas such as Central, the Riverside and St. Davids;
- long distance views from the centre of the city looking out towards the hills beyond St. Thomas will also be affected;
- as St. Thomas is at a lower level, the mast will have a detrimental effect on views up to the centre of the city and of the Cathedral;
- the Cowick Street Area Conservation Management Plan states that the post war period after 1945 saw a collection of inappropriate re-development in this part of St. Thomas, fragmenting the townscape and detracting from the special character of the area. The mast and associated cabinets will further detract from the area and its amenity;
- the proposed mast and cabinets will have a poor relationship with the character of the street scene and undermine the Council's efforts to improve the street scene in line with the Conservation Area Management Plan;
- absence of an ecological study into the impact on wildlife; and
- if prior approval is granted, any future proposal for a 20 metres high mast must be refused.

Councillor Newby, having given notice under Standing Order No. 44, spoke on the item. He raised the following points:-

- mast will be located in the vicinity of a number of schools including the Little Saints Pre-School and St. Thomas and Bowhill Primary Schools and there is no guarantee that the mast will meet the requisite standards for telecommunication masts;
- potential disruption to the radio waves of emergency services;
- other providers may seek to add their equipment to the mast; and
- adverse impact on bio-diversity of the area with particular reference to bee hives and the pied wagtail.

Councillor J. Moore, having given notice under Standing Order No. 44, spoke on the item. She raised the following points:-

- wider issues including potential impact on health are also relevant;
- Historic England were misled about the scale of the mast and have suggested that alternative locations should be examined;
- the mast is significantly taller than trees and nearby street lamps and wider at the top than the street lamps and adds to the clutter of the street creating a hard industrial feel to the area;
- photos are misleading with some images not showing the mast in an accurate position and do not show the correct scale and height in some views with a distorted wide angle perspective. Revised photos are required;
- adverse impact on the view of the Cathedral; and
- prior approval should be rejected on grounds of siting and appearance.

Mr Charlie Kay spoke against the application. He raised the following points:-

- hands tied as only able to reject on the grounds of appearance and siting;
- 5G is a toxic pollutant and untested technology, studies showing that it causes biological harm and is a carcinogen impacting immune systems and wildlife;
- being 15 meters high, ugly and an extremely prominent piece of industrial infrastructure dominating the skyline it is not a normal mast;
- the applicant's photos are inaccurate and not properly assessed;
- it impacts the view of the Cathedral and Conservation Area generally from various angles;
- viewed against the existing horizon and skyline, it totally dominates the surrounding community of St. Thomas, including its amenities, businesses and residential properties;
- it is intrusive and overbearing, completely out of scale and three times taller than houses and ground level shops and to live, shop and spend recreational time close to the mast would seriously affect the whole ambiance of the area;
- allowing the application would set a dangerous precedent for other Conservation Areas in a beautiful historic city;
- it will have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area in breach of Exeter City Council's Local Plan;
- contrary to the applicant's proposal, the siting is in close proximity to St. Thomas Primary School, two other primary schools, two pre-schools and a nursery; and
- the siting, design and appearance is therefore completely inappropriate for St. Thomas and the Conservation area.

Before the commencement of the debate the Deputy Chair reminded Members that the application was a prior notification in respect of siting and appearance and was not a planning application and that the principal of the development was permitted by national government regulations. Moreover, as prior approval application required an applicant to seek approval from the Local Planning Authority (LPA) only certain elements of the proposal were acceptable before commencement of work and the LPA could not consider any other matters.

The Deputy Chair further emphasised that the mobile operators did not need to justify the need for the apparatus. National planning policy stated that health implications associated with new telecoms could not be considered. The Council could not therefore consider perception of health risk, or the precautionary principal as the application considerations related to siting and appearance only. The considerations to be taken into account in the determination of prior approval applications were therefore very limited under planning regulations.

The application had to be determined by the Council within 56 days of receipt and the operator had the right to install the apparatus if there was no response within this timescale.

A number of Members opposed the granting of prior approval on the following grounds:-

- the insertion of an alien structure will detract from the Cowick Street Conservation Area and negate the efforts of the Council and the local community to improve the area;
- Historic England have reservations and questioned whether the applicant had seriously examined alternative locations. Alternative sites should be explored;
- a number of trees have been removed in the area and the mast will further detract from the overall landscaping;
- Section 40 of the Natural England and Rural Communities Act 2009 sets out a duty to conserve the biodiversity of areas. The presence of a mast is likely to

- have an adverse impact on wildlife;
- as providers have stated that mast coverage has a greater impact at ground level for mobile phones, a height of 15 metres is unnecessary;
- the mast will have an adverse impact on the unique character of St. Thomas;
- the scale and massing is inappropriate and will dwarf adjacent shops and residential properties and the example of other authorities such as Norwich, Bath, Brighton and Hammersmith and Fulham Councils, who have rejected such applications, should be followed;
- the mast will detract from the view of the Cathedral and also panoramic views in the opposite direction, west to Dartmoor; and
- the mast neither preserves nor enhances the Cowick Street Conservation Area.

The recommendation was for approval, subject to the condition as set out in the report.

The following motion was moved, seconded and carried.

“That the application be refused on the grounds that the mast was not appropriate in a Conservation Area on the basis of its design, location, form and height and was not in keeping with the current topographical features in the immediate vicinity and would neither enhance nor protect the area”

RESOLVED that prior approval for the installation of a 15 metre high 5G telecommunication monopole with cabinet at base and associated ancillary works be **REFUSED** as the proposal is contrary to National Planning Policy Framework paragraphs 127 and 192, policy CP17 of the Core Strategy, policies C1, C2, DG1 and EN7 of the Exeter Local Plan First Review 1995-2011, and policies DD6, DD25 and DD28 of the emerging Development Delivery Development Plan Document because the proposed telecommunications equipment by reason of its height, siting and design would be unacceptably prominent and visually intrusive, to the detriment of visual amenity, street scene and character of the Cowick Street Conservation Area.

64 **PLANNING APPLICATION NO. 20/0809/TEL - LAND AT SIDMOUTH ROAD, EXETER**

The Deputy Chair reported that the application had been removed from the agenda as the applicant had requested an extension of time in respect of their application.

65 **PLANNING APPLICATION NO. 19/0699/FUL - LAND AT HILL BARTON, ADJACENT TO THE BOUNDARY OF THE MET OFFICE, EXETER**

The Principal Project Manager (Development) (PJ) presented the application for residential development of 47 dwellings including all other associated infrastructure works and road access to the site served off Hill Barton roundabout. He highlighted:-

- site situated within the Monkerton and Hill Barton Strategic Residential Allocation as designated in the Core Strategy and was previously granted outline consent for residential development in 2013;
- the scheme would provide 13 open market homes and 16 affordable houses, the latter being a policy compliant level of such provision for the overall number of dwellings proposed;
- concerns raised by local residents in respect of highway matters can be

suitably addressed through planning conditions and/or the Section 106 Agreement;

- access from Heritage Road, Mytlebury Way and a new section of highway;
- the open space for the scheme would be provided at the picturesque ridge line park proposed within the Hill Barton and Monkerton Master Plan; and
- Section 106 contributions are proposed towards transport and education requirements.

•
The Principal Project Manager (Development) and the Assistant Highways Development Management Officer (Exeter) gave the following responses to Members' queries:-

- the proposal for the Monkerton Rail Halt was a significant infrastructure development and there was no timescale at present for its provision. The land for the Halt would be safeguarded by the Section 106 Agreement;
- the footway/cycle way provision at the eastern boundary was adjacent to the Met Office and would feed into the overall footway and cycle way network for the area;
- detailed discussions had been held with the respective developers to develop the picturesque ridgeline park which, it was hoped, would be brought forward within a relatively short timescale as part of an outline planning application for the remainder of the Hill Barton site; and
- the Police Designing Out Crime Officer had provided detailed comments on the layout and were generally satisfied that appropriate surveillance would be provided for the benefit of households, that rear gardens would not be exposed and effective parking allocation identified. A condition would be included to ensure that all rear service alleyways would be gated.

Councillor Oliver, having given notice under Standing Order No. 44, spoke on the item. She raised the following points:-

- welcome provision of 16 affordable homes for the people of Exeter;
- the Council is constrained by existing legal frameworks and, given the support of the highway authority, there are no legal reasons to refuse;
- the Government White Paper on planning is likely to ease existing restrictions on developments;
- it is a misapprehension amongst some residents that the proposed Hill Barton Park is to be built on as part of this planning application;
- although open space will be provided in the ridgeline park, local play spaces are also necessary closer to homes. The provision of a green corridor through the site is welcome; and
- residents are concerned that there is no clear timeline for the provision of the Rail Halt.

The Chair read out a statement from Mr Tal Donahue on behalf of the Hill Barton Residents' Association, who opposed the application, a summary of which is below:-

- the Monkerton Master plan will be 10 years old in three weeks;
- seek assurance as to the extent which the Master Plan and the strategic plan for the Hill Barton development area, approved by Council in 2013, are being followed through in their delivery, particularly in relation to green space, public health and wellbeing;
- the location of the application is almost where the Master Plan earmarks land for the "Hill Barton Park";
- assurances required that such a park will be delivered within a suitable timescale and that it will conform to the goals laid out in the Master Plan;

- a green corridor should be established running across the eastern side of the Hill Barton development area adjacent to and surrounding the Met Office;
- many comments have been made regarding the unsafe nature of the Heritage Road access which has become a single lane road due to street parking;
- this development forms part of next phase of the Hill Barton Consortium's development plan approved in 2013 and these houses, added to the approximately 200 across the rest of Phase 3 and the 300 or so already delivered in Phases 1 and 2, will create dangerous road conditions around Hill Barton; and
- the Monkerton Rail Halt forms part of the wider considerations for the Devon Metro initiative. Residents require clarification on the status of the Rail Halt.

Mr Rudge spoke in support of the application.

- outline permission was originally granted on 29 November 2013 for a mixed use scheme but, as that application had lapsed, a detailed scheme has been put forward covering the same principles;
- have worked closely with the planning authority to address initial concerns with regards to density, storey heights and parking with significant changes including a reduction in the number of plots proposed on the site, creating an inviting vista with railings being incorporated to frontages of properties where they are located in a prominent location and working with the topography of the site to minimise the impact on the wider area. Cycle/pedestrian links have also been provided;
- 35% affordable dwellings will be delivered across the site, which remains policy compliant. The delivery of these units, with a mixture of tenure types, will make a positive contribution towards the delivery of housing within Exeter;
- the applicant is in a position to complete the Section 106 Agreement quickly. In the context of the growth agenda and the national and local need for housing, the application will meet the need for new homes in a sustainable manner and underpin the sustainability of Hill Barton; and
- the County Highways Officer has responded to highway concerns which can be addressed through planning conditions or the Section 106 agreement.

Members expressed the following views:-

- the provision of two access points including another access from the north will increase the strain on an already busy highway network;
- although a rail station is to be provided at Marsh Barton, the timeline for the proposed rail halt as part of the Monkerton Master Plan is unclear and may not occur for many years;
- in line with the Sport England Active Exeter pilot, there should be greater emphasis on the provision of play parks adjacent to houses in addition to the ridgeline park being provided as part of the Monkerton and Hill Barton Master Plan;
- provision of affordable homes is welcome; and
- notwithstanding general pressure on green land in Exeter, further developments are needed and, given the support of the Highway Authority, there are no planning reasons to refuse.

The Principal Project Manager (Development) and the Assistant Highways Development Management Officer (Exeter) advised that the infrastructure proposals allowed for the new cycle/footway provision and a future bus route. The cycleway was part of the strategic cycle route from the north of Hollow Lane to the City Centre and that Stagecoach had agreed in principle to introduce a new bus route to serve the emerging developments. Safety along Heritage Road would also

be improved.

The recommendation was for approval, subject to the conditions as set out in the report.

The recommendation was moved and seconded.

RESOLVED that:-

(1)subject to a Section 106 Agreement under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to secure the following:-

Affordable housing

16 dwellings (11 social rent and 5 intermediate rent) 50% of affordable housing units to be constructed and made available for occupation prior to the occupation of 50% of Open Market units. Remaining 50% of AH units to be constructed and made available for occupation prior to occupation of 80% of Open Market units.

Transport

Safeguard the land for the Monkerton Railway Halt

Financial contributions required as follows:

Pedestrian/cycle improvements £450 per dwelling; bus service £981.82 per dwelling and travel planning £500 per dwelling. Total transport contribution per dwelling of £1931.82

50% of the contribution to be paid prior to open market houses being occupied and remainder to be paid prior to 80% of units occupied.

Traffic Regulation Order - £3,500 (to be paid at Devon County Council's request)

Education

The total education sum will be £64,716 (primary); £98,742 (secondary) and £8,750 (early years) a total of £172,208.

50% of the contribution to be paid prior to open market houses being occupied and remainder to be paid prior to 80% of units occupied.

Open Space

No more than 75% of dwellings shall be occupied until the public open space (alongside the cycleway has been laid out in accordance with the approved plans. Prior to completion of public open space areas, details of management company to be provided.

the Assistant Service Lead City Development be authorised to **APPROVE** planning permission for residential development of 27 dwellings (including 35% affordable housing), access from Newcourt Road, public open space and associated works, subject also to the following conditions:-

- 1) The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date on which this permission is granted.
Reason: To ensure compliance with sections 91 and 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out otherwise than in strict accordance with the submitted details received by the Local Planning Authority on 7 July 2020 (including dwg. nos. HB3-location plan rev E ; HB3-120 P10 Site Layout; HB3-121 P2 Boundary Treatments; HB3-129 P2 Ridge Heights; HB3-130 P2 Garden Areas; HB3-200 P3 Street Scenes; HB3-PL500

P3 Welwyn LTH; HB3-PL501 P2 Hanbury LTH ; HB3-PL503 P2 Hatfield LTH; HB3-PL504 P4 Clayton LTH; HB3-PL505 P3 Souter LTH; HB3-PL506 P3 Chedworth; HB3-PL507 P4 Garages; HB3-PL508 P1 Clayton Corner LTH & HB3-SK3000 P3 Site FFLs & Site Sections.

Reason: In order to ensure compliance with the approved drawings.

- 3) Samples of the materials it is intended to use externally in the construction of the development shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority. No external finishing material shall be used until the Local Planning Authority has confirmed in writing that its use is acceptable. Thereafter the materials used in the construction of the development shall correspond with the approved samples in all respects.
Reason: To ensure that the materials conform with the visual amenity requirements of the area.
- 4) Pre-commencement condition: No materials shall be brought onto the site or any development commenced, until the developer has erected tree protective fencing around all trees or shrubs to be retained, in accordance with the details specified in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment Report prepared by Aspect Tree Consultancy ref 05400 AIA 20.03.20 and accompanying drawing no. 05400 TPP 23.03.20. The developer shall maintain such fences to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority until all development the subject of this permission is completed. The level of the land within the fenced areas shall not be altered without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority. No materials shall be stored within the fenced area, nor shall trenches for service runs or any other excavations take place within the fenced area except by written permission of the Local Planning Authority. Where such permission is granted, soil shall be removed manually, without powered equipment.
Reason for pre-commencement condition - To ensure the protection of the trees during the carrying out of the development. This information is required before development commences to protect trees during all stages of the construction process.
- 5) Pre-commencement condition: No development (including ground works) or vegetation clearance works shall take place until a Construction Method Statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Statement shall provide for:
- 6) Prior to commencement of the development, details shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority of vehicular visibility splays for the development. Development shall not be commenced until such details have been agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and prior to occupation the proposed vehicular visibility splays shall be provided in accordance with the submitted details.
Reason: To provide a safe and suitable access in accordance with paragraph 108 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 7) None of the individual dwellings hereby approved shall be occupied until the cycle storage provision to serve that dwelling of a detail to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority, has been provided and made available for use by the occupant. Thereafter the said cycle

storage provision shall be retained for that purpose at all times.
Reason - To ensure that cycle storage facilities are provided to encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport by the future occupants of the properties.

- 8) Prior to occupation of the development, details shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority of bus stops (including location and type of bus stop) for the development. Development shall not be commenced until such details have been agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Local Highway Authority, and prior to occupation the bus stops shall be provided in accordance with the submitted details.
Reason: To provide a safe and suitable access in accordance with paragraphs 108 and 110 of the National Planning Policy Framework and ECC Core Strategy CP9.
- 9) Prior to occupation of the development, details shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority of the vehicular access radii into the development (between plots 315/316) for the development. Development shall not be commenced until such details have been agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Local Highway Authority, and prior to occupation the vehicular access radii shall be provided in accordance with the submitted details.
Reason: To provide a safe and suitable access in accordance with paragraphs 108 and 110 of the National Planning Policy Framework and ECC Core Strategy CP9.
- 10) Prior to occupation of any part of "Phase 4" of the development, details shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority of the future pedestrian/cycle crossing facilities for the development as indicated on Drawing Number "071-003-001 Rev P4 Section 38 Plan". Development shall not be commenced until such details have been agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Local Highway Authority, and prior to occupation of any part of "Phase 4" the crossing facilities shall be provided in accordance with the submitted details.
Reason: To provide a safe and suitable access in accordance with paragraphs 108 and 110 of the National Planning Policy Framework and ECC Core Strategy CP9.
- 11) No part of the development hereby approved shall be brought into its intended use until the access roads (together with raised table crossing points), vehicular parking spaces and associated turning area as indicated on Drawing Number "071-003-001 Rev P4 Section 38 Plan" has been provided in accordance with details that shall have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority.
Reason: To provide a safe and suitable access in accordance with paragraph 108 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 12) No part of the development hereby approved shall be brought into its intended use until the East-West footway/cycleway connections and North-South footway/cycle connections and associated crossing points as indicated on Drawing Number "071-003-001 Rev P4 Section 38 Plan" has been provided in accordance with details that shall have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local

Planning Authority.

Reason: To provide a safe and suitable access in accordance with paragraphs 108 and 110 of the National Planning Policy Framework and ECC Core Strategy CP9.

- 13) Pre-commencement condition: Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted, a Waste Audit Statement shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This statement shall include all information outlined in the waste audit template provided in Devon County Council's Waste Management and Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Document. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved statement.
Reason for Pre-commencement condition: To minimise the amount of waste produced and promote sustainable methods of waste management in accordance with Policy W4 of the Devon Waste Plan and the Waste Management and Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Document. These details are required pre-commencement as specified to ensure that building operations are carried out in a sustainable manner.
- 14) A detailed scheme for landscaping, including the planting of trees and/or shrubs (in particular in respect of the southern boundary), the use of surface materials and boundary screen walls and fences shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority and no unit shall be occupied until the Local Planning Authority have approved a scheme; such scheme shall specify materials, species, tree and plant sizes, numbers and planting densities, and any earthworks required together with the timing of the implementation of the scheme. The landscaping shall thereafter be implemented in accordance with the approved scheme in accordance with the agreed programme.
Reason: To safeguard the rights of control by the Local Planning Authority in these respects and in the interests of amenity.
- 15) Any trees, shrubs and/or hedges on or around the site shall not be felled, lopped or removed without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority. A photographic record of any trees, hedges on site shall be taken prior to any felling working being undertaken.
Reason: To safeguard the rights of control by the Local Planning Authority in these respects and in the interests of amenity.
- 16) In the event of failure of any trees or shrubs, planted in accordance with any scheme approved by the Local Planning Authority, to become established and to prosper for a period of five years from the date of the completion of implementation of that scheme, such trees or shrubs shall be replaced with such live specimens of such species of such size and in such number as may be approved by the Local Planning Authority.
Reason: To safeguard the rights of control by the Local Planning Authority in these respects and in the interests of amenity.
- 17) No materials shall be brought onto the site or any development commenced, until the developer has erected tree protective fencing around all trees or shrubs to be retained, in accordance with a plan that shall previously have been submitted to and approved in writing

by the Local Planning Authority. This plan shall be produced in accordance with BS 5837:2005 - 'Trees in Relation to Construction'. The developer shall maintain such fences to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority until all development the subject of this permission is completed. The level of the land within the fenced areas shall not be altered without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority. No materials shall be stored within the fenced area, nor shall trenches for service runs or any other excavations take place within the fenced area except by written permission of the Local Planning Authority. Where such permission is granted, soil shall be removed manually, without powered equipment.

Reason: To ensure the protection of the trees during the carrying out of the development.

- 18) Pre-commencement condition: No part of the development hereby permitted shall be commenced until the detailed design of the proposed surface water drainage management system which will serve the development site for the full period of its construction has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. This temporary surface water drainage management system must satisfactorily address both the rates and volumes, and quality, of the surface water runoff from the construction site.
Reason for pre-commencement condition: To ensure that surface water runoff from the construction site is appropriately managed.
- 19) If during development contamination not previously identified is found to be present at the site then no further development, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority, shall be carried out until the developer has submitted, and obtained written approval from the Local Planning Authority for, an amended investigation and risk assessment and, where necessary, a remediation strategy and verification plan detailing how this unsuspected contamination shall be dealt with.
Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation strategy and verification plan, and prior to occupation of any part of the permitted development, a verification report demonstrating completion of the works set out in the approved remediation strategy, and the effectiveness of the remediation, shall be submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority.
Reason: In the interests of the amenity of the occupants of the buildings hereby approved.
- 20) The dwellings hereby approved shall be designed and built to meet M4 2 of the Building Regulations Access to and Use of Building Approved Document M, 2015 edition.
Reason: To increase choice, independence and longevity of tenure in accordance with Policy CP5 point three of the Exeter Core Strategy.
- 21) Pre-commencement condition: Before commencement of construction of the development hereby permitted, the applicant shall submit a SAP calculation which demonstrates that a 19% reduction in CO2 emissions over that necessary to meet the requirements of the 2013 Building Regulations can be achieved. The measures necessary to achieve this CO2 saving shall

thereafter be implemented on site and within 3 months of practical completion of any dwelling the developer will submit a report to the LPA from a suitably qualified consultant to demonstrate compliance with this condition.

Reason for Pre-commencement condition: In the interests of sustainable development and to ensure that the development accords with Core Strategy Policy CP15.

- 22) Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification) no mobile base stations shall be erected within the development.
Reason – To ensure adequate protection to the Met Office satellite reception facility.

- 23) Pre commencement condition: No development related works shall take place within the site until a written scheme of archaeological work has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This scheme shall include on-site work, and off site work such as the analysis, publication, and archiving of the results, together with a timetable for completion of each element. All works shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the approved scheme, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason for pre commencement condition: To ensure the appropriate identification, recording and publication of archaeological and historic remains affected by the development. This information is required before development commences to ensure that historic remains are not damaged during the construction process.

- 24) Pre-Commencement condition - No part of the development hereby permitted shall be commenced until the detailed design of the proposed permanent surface water drainage management system has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority, in consultation with Devon County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority. The design of this permanent surface water drainage management system will be in accordance with the principles of sustainable drainage systems. No part of the development shall be occupied until the surface water management scheme serving that part of the development has been provided in accordance with the approved details and the drainage infrastructure shall be retained and maintained for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: To ensure that surface water runoff from the development is managed in accordance with the principles of sustainable drainage systems.

- 25) No dwelling shall be occupied until details of gates to all rear service alleyways have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and implemented in accordance with these agreed details at all times.

Reason: In accordance with paragraphs 91 and 127 the National Planning Policy Framework in respect of reducing the fear of crime and increased surveillance opportunities.

- 26) Pre-commencement condition - A noise impact assessment shall be

submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to occupation of the development. Any noise mitigation required shall be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority and implemented in full prior to occupation and maintained thereafter.

Reason: In the interest of amenity.

- 27) Pre-commencement condition: No development shall commencement until an air quality assessment has been submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Any mitigation measure required following the completion of the assessment shall be agreed in writing and implemented in full prior to occupation and maintained thereafter.

Reason: Insufficient information has been submitted with the application and in the interests of amenity.

- 28) No dwelling shall be occupied until a lighting assessment has been submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Any mitigation measure required following the completion of the assessment shall be agreed in writing and implemented in full prior to occupation and maintained thereafter.

Reason: Insufficient information has been submitted with the application and in the interests of amenity.

Informatives

- 1) In accordance with Chapters 1 and 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, this development has been screened in respect of the need for an Appropriate Assessment (AA). Given the nature of the development, it has been concluded that an AA is required in relation to potential impact on the relevant Special Protection Areas (SPA), the Exe Estuary and East Devon Pebblebed Heaths, which are designated European sites. This AA has been carried out and concludes that the development is such that it could have an impact primarily associated with recreational activity of future occupants of the development. This impact will be mitigated in line with the South East Devon European Site Mitigation Strategy prepared by Footprint Ecology on behalf of East Devon and Teignbridge District Councils and Exeter City Council, which is being funded through a proportion of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) collected in respect of the development being allocated to fund the mitigation strategy. Or, if the development is not liable to pay CIL, to pay the appropriate habitats mitigation contribution through another mechanism (this is likely to be either an undertaking in accordance with s111 of the Local Government Act 1972 or a Unilateral Undertaking).

- 2) The Local Planning Authority considers that this development will be CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) liable. Payment will become due following commencement of development.

It is also drawn to your attention that where a chargeable development is commenced before the Local Authority has received a valid commencement notice (i.e. where pre-commencement conditions have not been discharged) the Local Authority may impose a surcharge, and the ability to claim any form of relief from the payment of the Levy will be foregone. You must apply for any relief and receive confirmation from the Council before commencing

development.

- 3) A legal agreement under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 relates to this planning permission.
 - 4) In accordance with Paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework the Council has worked in a positive and pro-active way and has imposed planning conditions to enable the grant of planning permission.
 - 5) The applicants attention is drawn to the need to meet the Exeter Airport Aerodrome Safeguarding criteria as contained in the Airport Operators Association 'Cranes and other Construction Issues' Advice Note.
 - 6) The applicant is advised that they should contact the Met Office to discuss specific issues regarding their operational requirements prior to commencement.
- (1) the Assistant Service Lead City Development be authorised to **REFUSE** planning permission if the legal agreement under Section 106 Agreement under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990(as amended) is not completed by 7 March 2021 or such extended time as agreed by the Service Lead City Development

66

ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

The meeting was adjourned for the following items to be considered at a re-convened meeting of this Committee to be held on Thursday 17 September 2020 at 5.30pm.

Planning Application No 20/0293/FUL - 89 Mount Pleasant Road, Exeter;
Planning Application No 20/0437/FUL - Land to the North East of Newcourt Road;
List of Decisions Made and Withdrawn Applications; and
Appeals Report.

(The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 8.26 pm)

Chair

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PLANNING COMMITTEE **(HELD AS A VIRTUAL MEETING)**

Thursday 17 September 2020

Present:-

Councillors Bialyk, Branston, Foale, Harvey, Mrs Henson, Mitchell, M, Morse, Sparkes and Wright

Apologies

Councillors Williams, Ghusain, Hannaford and Sutton

Also Present

Director City Development, Housing & Supporting People, Assistant Service Lead (Planning) City Development, Principal Project Manager (Development) (MH), Democratic Services Officer (HB) and Democratic Services Officer (SLS)

67 **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR FOR THE MEETING**

In the absence of Councillor Williams, the Deputy Chair, Councillor Morse was appointed Chair for this meeting.

68 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made by Members.

69 **PLANNING APPLICATION NO. 20/0293/FUL - 89 MOUNT PLEASANT ROAD, EXETER**

The Assistant Service Lead City Development (RC) presented the application for the change of use from dwelling (Class C3) to House of Multiple Occupation (Class C4).

The proposal related to a two storey three-bedroom mid-terrace dwelling located within a zone where the Council had applied an Article 4 Direction in 2011 to restrict changes of use from Class C3 (dwelling) to Class C4 (House in Multiple Occupation, or HMO). The objective had been to ensure the maintenance of balanced communities and to prevent streets being dominated by short stay student residents, which leaves properties vacant for significant periods outside of the academic terms.

This property was in student HMO use prior to 2013 when the applicant bought the property and, through Permitted Development, converted it back to a Class C3 dwelling. After a period of six years, the applicant has concluded that the dwelling was not suitable for normal family life and therefore wished to move. He sought planning permission for a change of use back to a Class C4 HMO.

Mrs Partridge spoke in support of the application.

- the house has been on the market for over a year. Since June, there had been a lot of interest, but no offers received;
- although consideration had been given to further reducing the price, two estate agents had suggested that the property should be listed at a higher price so the asking price had not been reduced;

- lockdown has been particularly difficult with increased time in close proximity to neighbours in the Salvation Army house with more anti-social behaviour issues such as loud music. The Salvation Army management had been supportive, trying to remedy the situation, but the issue remains;
- the exceptional circumstances in the planning policy is as if it had been written about the house. C4 restrictions in part recognise how difficult it is for home owners to be surrounded by HMO's and are designed to protect them. In this situation it is too late for the policy to make a difference to the immediate area; and
- the feedback is the same - people do not want to buy a house which is surrounded by HMO's. It is not felt that the home is safe for the children to play in the garden and where there is little opportunity for long term relationships to be built with neighbours.

The recommendation was for approval, subject to the conditions as set out in the report and was supported by Members.

The recommendation was moved and seconded.

RESOLVED that planning permission for the change of use from dwelling (Class C3) to House of Multiple Occupation (Class C4) be approved, subject to the following conditions:-

- 1) The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date on which this permission is granted.
Reason: To ensure compliance with sections 91 and 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out otherwise than in strict accordance with the submitted details received by the Local Planning Authority on 28 February 2020 as modified by other conditions of this consent.
Reason: In order to ensure compliance with the approved details.

70

**PLANNING APPLICATION NO. 20/0437/FUL - LAND TO THE NORTH EAST OF
NEWCOURT ROAD, TOPSHAM, EXETER**

The Principal Project Manager (Development) (MH) presented the application for residential development of 27 dwellings (including 35% affordable housing), access from Newcourt Road, public open space and associated works.

The Principal Project Manager (Development) referred to the key issues of design and layout, sustainable construction, economic benefits, flood risk and impact on local highways, heritage assets and trees and biodiversity and highlighted:-

- absence of a five year land supply;
- same access off Newcourt Road as agreed in the earlier planning approval;
- the location was considered to be sustainable and the proposal was acceptable in its design and general visual impact;
- the proposal was not considered to be of any significant harm to neighbouring residential amenity; and
- provision of both affordable and open market homes.

The Principal Project Manager (Development) responded as follows to Members'

queries:-

- materials for the highways were of the necessary standards to cope with refuse vehicles
- play equipment was not proposed for the area of open space as this was not merited because of the size of the development;
- the developer would be encouraged to provide hedgerows early in the development;
- no access was proposed through Yeomans Gardens where the developer did not own the necessary land.
- the developer had brought forward another development in Exeter.

Stella McLarin spoke against the application. She raised the following points:-

- speaking on behalf of many neighbours;
- the development, plus the adjacent one of seven houses; will increase the population of Newcourt Road by about 50%, spoil its country feel and set a precedent for other developments;
- a 19% reduction in CO2 emissions is inadequate;
- there has been a material change in the use of Newcourt Road as a result of Covid-19 with significantly higher cycle and pedestrian use, so the traffic surveys of 2018 and 2019 are out of date. Traffic will increase by 40% as a result of this development;
- the increased number of houses incorporates overt provision for an access to be put through to Yeomans Gardens which will leave dormice colonies potentially isolated and a new biodiversity report is required;
- no account of the requirement to erect an acoustic fence along the boundary with the railway line which is an increasingly important wildlife corridor;
- all objections were referred to in GESP publications;
- hedges may not be retained in the future;
- lorry deliveries should all be outside peak hours as schoolchildren cycle along the road and people walk on the road, not the pavement;
- lack of clarity as to where the two metre wide footpath will be provided;
- covenants are required on the houses to maintain hedgerows in the future;
- clarification required on the provision of a new sewer along most of Newcourt Road as many properties are on septic tanks; and
- the four areas of objection are Traffic, Wildlife/Environment, Sustainability and Infrastructure and the development constitutes significant harm to neighbouring amenities.

Catherine Knee spoke in support of the application. She raised the following points:-

- Strongvox Homes is an award-winning private housing developer building and selling on a number of developments in the south west offering a range of family homes, including affordable properties. All sites are designed to be sympathetic to their surroundings, with homes displaying character and individuality;
- the principle of developing the application site for housing was established in December of last year when outline permission was approved;
- a high-quality design and layout that deliver 27 dwellings on the application site, comprising of a suitable mix of 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 bedroom homes;
- the proposal includes a footpath along the site's frontage which will be of benefit to highway safety and all existing pedestrians using this section of the road. A replacement hedgerow will be provided within the site, setback behind

the new footpath. All other boundary hedgerows will be retained. A central open space will form the focal point of the development. The proposed space standards and garden sizes for all dwellings accord with policy;

- no outstanding objections from statutory consultees, including Devon County Highways and the Local Flood Authority;
- will deliver a policy compliant 35% level of affordable housing and a contribution of £11,322 will be made towards enhancing GP facilities in Topsham; and
- the application accords with City Council policies and contributes towards the Council's five year housing land supply.

One Member was opposed to the development as it would bring additional traffic along Newcourt Road which would exacerbate highway conditions and the safety of pedestrians and cyclists.

The recommendations were for approval, subject to the conditions as set out in the report.

The recommendation was moved and seconded.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) subject to the completion of a Section 106 Agreement under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to secure:-

- affordable housing, including financial contribution in lieu of part unit;
- open space provision, maintenance and public access in perpetuity;
- contribution of £11,322 towards enhanced GP facilities/provision in the locality;
- £250 per dwelling towards sustainable travel measures in the area;
- £3,000 Traffic Regulation Order to extend 20mph zone into the development; and
- all Section 106 contributions to be index linked from the date of resolution.

the Assistant Service Lead City Development be authorised to **APPROVE** planning permission for residential development of 27 dwellings (including 35% affordable housing), access from Newcourt Road, public open space and associated works, subject also to the following conditions:-

- 1) The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date on which this permission is granted

Reason: To ensure compliance with sections 91 and 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2) The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out otherwise than in strict accordance with the submitted details received by the Local Planning Authority on 1st April, 16th June and 10th July 2020 (including dwg. nos. 0702-101, 0702-102 Rev A, 0702-103 Rev A, 0702-104 Rev A, 0701-105 Rev A, 0702-106 Rev A, 0702-107 Rev A, 0702-108 Rev A, 0702-109 Rev A, 0702-110 Rev A, 0702-111, 0702-112, Rev A, 0702-113, Topsham-C-100_002-A- Proposed Site Sections Rev A, 3274_L_LMP_0_01 Rev H, 3274_L_LMP_3_01 Rev B, 3274_L_LMP_3_02 Rev B, Planting Schedule Rev A, 12952/P05, Garden Areas Schedule,

Parking Matrix, 0702-300, 0702-301, 0702-302, 0702-303, 0702-304, 0702-305, 0702-306, 0702-307, 0702-308, 0702-309, 0702-310, 0702-311, 0702-312, 0702-313, 0702-314, 0702-315, 0702-316, 0702-317, 0702-318, 0702-319, 0702-320, and 0702-321) as modified by other conditions of this consent.

Reason: In order to ensure compliance with the approved drawings.

3) Pre-commencement condition: No materials shall be brought onto the site or any development commenced, until the developer has erected tree protective fencing around all trees or shrubs to be retained, in accordance with the details specified in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment Report prepared by Aspect Tree Consultancy ref 05400 AIA 20.03.20 and accompanying drawing no. 05400 TPP 23.03.20. The developer shall maintain such fences to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority until all development the subject of this permission is completed. The level of the land within the fenced areas shall not be altered without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority. No materials shall be stored within the fenced area, nor shall trenches for service runs or any other excavations take place within the fenced area except by written permission of the Local Planning Authority. Where such permission is granted, soil shall be removed manually, without powered equipment.

Reason for pre-commencement condition - To ensure the protection of the trees during the carrying out of the development. This information is required before development commences to protect trees during all stages of the construction process.

4) Pre-commencement condition: No development (including ground works) or vegetation clearance works shall take place until a Construction Method Statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Statement shall provide for:

- a) The site access point(s) of all vehicles to the site during the construction phase.
- b) The parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors.
- c) The areas for loading and unloading plant and materials.
- d) Storage areas of plant and materials used in constructing the development.
- e) The erection and maintenance of securing hoarding, if appropriate.
- f) Wheel washing facilities.
- g) Measures to monitor and control the emission of dust and dirt during construction.
- h) No burning on site during construction or site preparation works.
- i) Measures to monitor and minimise noise/vibration nuisance to neighbours from plant and machinery.
- j) Construction working hours and deliveries from 8:00 to 18:00 Monday to Friday, 8:00 to 13:00 on Saturdays and at no time on Sundays or Bank Holidays.
- k) No driven piling without prior consent from the LPA.

Reason for pre-commencement condition: In the interest of the environment of the site and surrounding areas. This information is required before development commences to ensure that the impacts of the development works are properly considered and addressed at the earliest possible stage. The approved Statement shall be strictly adhered to throughout the construction period of the development.

5) Pre-commencement condition: Before commencement of construction of the development hereby permitted, the applicant shall submit a SAP

calculation which demonstrates that a 19% reduction in CO2 emissions over that necessary to meet the requirements of the 2013 Building Regulations can be achieved. The measures necessary to achieve this CO2 saving shall thereafter be implemented on site and within 3 months of practical completion of any dwelling the developer will submit a report to the LPA from a suitably qualified consultant to demonstrate compliance with this condition.

Reason for Pre-commencement condition: In the interests of sustainable development and to ensure that the development accords with Core Strategy Policy CP15.

6) Pre-commencement condition: Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted, a Waste Audit Statement shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This statement shall include all information outlined in the waste audit template provided in Devon County Council's Waste Management and Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Document. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved statement.

Reason for Pre-commencement condition: To minimise the amount of waste produced and promote sustainable methods of waste management in accordance with Policy W4 of the Devon Waste Plan and the Waste Management and Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Document. These details are required pre-commencement as specified to ensure that building operations are carried out in a sustainable manner.

7) Pre-commencement condition: No part of the development hereby permitted shall be commenced until the detailed design of the proposed surface water drainage management system which will serve the development site for the full period of its construction has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. This temporary surface water drainage management system must satisfactorily address both the rates and volumes, and quality, of the surface water runoff from the construction site.

Reason for pre-commencement condition: To ensure that surface water runoff from the construction site is appropriately managed so as to not increase the flood risk, or pose water quality issues, to the surrounding area and a plan needs to be demonstrated prior to the commencement of any works to ensure that surface water can be managed suitably without increasing flood risk downstream, negatively affecting water quality downstream or negatively impacting on surrounding areas and infrastructure.

8) The development hereby approved shall be implemented and maintained strictly in accordance with the submitted Flood Risk Assessment & Drainage Strategy Report dated July 2020 Rev A prepared by Spring Design.

Reason: To ensure that the scheme is implemented in accordance with an agreed framework and drainage strategy in the interests of ensuring that the drainage impacts of the proposal are acceptable and sustainable.

9) Samples of the materials it is intended to use externally in the construction of the development shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority. No external finishing material shall be used until the Local Planning Authority has confirmed in writing that its use is acceptable. Thereafter the materials used in the construction of the development shall correspond with the approved samples in all respects.

Reason: To ensure that the materials conform with the visual amenity

requirements of the area.

10) The development hereby approved shall be implemented in accordance with the provisions and mitigation measures contained within the submitted Ecological Assessment Report Ref 12952_R01_RR-MM and the Biodiversity Management and Enhancement Plan Report Ref 12952_R02c_JP_HM dated 24th March 2020 prepared by Tyler Grange (as updated by the Bat and Bird Box location plan drawing no. 12952/P05 dated July 2020). Thereafter the mitigation measures specified shall be maintained at all times unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason - To ensure that the scheme is implemented to protect the existing ecological interest of the site through appropriate mitigation and to enhance the ecological value of the site.

11) The development hereby approved shall be implemented in accordance with the submitted 'Method Statement for a programme of Archaeological Work' prepared by AC archaeology report ref no: ACD2231/1/1 dated March 2020.

Reason - To ensure the appropriate identification, recording and publication of archaeological and historic remains affected by the development.

12) All external lighting comprised in the development shall be installed and maintained in accordance with the specifications set out and specified with the Lighting Impact Assessment prepared by Designs for Lighting report ref no: 1409-DFL-LIA-001 Rev D dated 08.07.2020.

Reason - To minimise the potential for light pollution and create an acceptable residential environment for future occupants of the dwellings.

13) None of dwellings comprising plots 9 to 20 shall be occupied until the mitigation measures outlined in Clarke Saunders's Acoustic Design Statement (report ref: AS11066.200326.R2.3, dated 26.0.20), including the specific boundary treatments referred to in paragraphs 4.8.7 and 4.8.8, have been implemented in full and evidence that the mitigation measures have been implemented has been provided to the Local Planning Authority. Mitigation measures shall be maintained thereafter.

Reason - To ensure that a satisfactory environment in terms of residential amenity and protection from noise is created for potential occupants of the properties.

14) In the event of failure of any trees or shrubs, planted in accordance with the landscaping scheme hereby approved by the Local Planning Authority, to become established and to prosper for a period of five years from the date of the completion of implementation of that scheme, such trees or shrubs shall be replaced with such live specimens of such species of such size and in such number as may be approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To safeguard the rights of control by the Local Planning Authority in these respects and in the interests of amenity.

15) If during development contamination not previously identified is found to be present at the site then no further development, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority, shall be carried out until the developer has submitted, and obtained written approval from the Local Planning Authority for, an amended investigation and risk assessment and, where necessary, a remediation strategy and verification plan detailing how this unsuspected contamination shall be dealt with.

Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation strategy and verification plan, and prior to occupation of any part of the permitted development, a verification report demonstrating completion of the works set out in the approved remediation strategy, and the effectiveness of the remediation, shall be submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the amenity of the occupants of the buildings hereby approved.

16) The dwellings hereby approved on plots 11, 21, 22 and 27 shall be designed and built to meet M4 2 of the Building Regulations Access to and Use of Building Approved Document M, 2015 edition.

Reason: To increase choice, independence and longevity of tenure in accordance with Policy CP5 point three of the Exeter Core Strategy.

17) None of the individual dwellings hereby approved shall be occupied until the cycle storage provision to serve that dwelling, as indicate on drawings no's 0702-102 Rev A and 0702-109 Rev A, has been provided and made available for use by the occupant. Thereafter the said cycle storage provision shall be retained for that purpose at all times.

Reason - To ensure that cycle storage facilities are provided to encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport by the future occupants of the properties.

18) No part of the development hereby approved shall be brought into its intended use until the 2.0m footway fronting Newcourt Road, visibility splays, carriageway widening and the vehicular access point as shown on drawing ref. Topsham-C-1300_001-A - S278 General Arrangement Plan have been provided and maintained in accordance with details that shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and retained for that purpose at all times.

Reason: To provide a safe and suitable access in accordance with paragraphs 108 and 110 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy CP9 of the Core Strategy (February 2012).

19) No part of the development shall be occupied until a travel plan (including recommendations/arrangements for monitoring and review) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the recommendations of the travel plan shall be implemented, monitored and reviewed in accordance with the approved document, or any amended document subsequently approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the development promotes all travel modes to reduce reliance on the private car, in accordance with paragraph 111 of the NPPF.

Informatives

1) In accordance with Chapters 1 and 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, this development has been screened in respect of the need for an Appropriate Assessment (AA). Given the nature of the development, it has been concluded that an AA is required in relation to potential impact on the relevant Special Protection Areas (SPA), the Exe Estuary and East Devon Pebblebed Heaths, which are designated European sites. This AA has been carried out and concludes that the development is such that it could have an impact primarily associated with recreational activity of future occupants of the development. This impact will

be mitigated in line with the South East Devon European Site Mitigation Strategy prepared by Footprint Ecology on behalf of East Devon and Teignbridge District Councils and Exeter City Council (with particular reference to Table 26), which is being funded through a proportion of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) collected in respect of the development being allocated to fund the mitigation strategy. Or, if the development is not liable to pay CIL, to pay the appropriate habitats mitigation contribution through another mechanism (this is likely to be either an undertaking in accordance with s111 of the Local Government Act 1972 or a Unilateral Undertaking).

2) The Local Planning Authority considers that this development will be CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) liable. Payment will become due following commencement of development. Accordingly your attention is drawn to the need to complete and submit an 'Assumption of Liability' notice to the Local Planning Authority as soon as possible. A copy is available on the Exeter City Council website.

It is also drawn to your attention that where a chargeable development is commenced before the Local Authority has received a valid commencement notice (i.e. where pre-commencement conditions have not been discharged) the Local Authority may impose a surcharge, and the ability to claim any form of relief from the payment of the Levy will be foregone. You must apply for any relief and receive confirmation from the Council before commencing development. For further information please see www.exeter.gov.uk/cil.

3) A legal agreement under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 relates to this planning permission.

4) In accordance with Paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework the Council has worked in a positive and pro-active way and has imposed planning conditions to enable the grant of planning permission.

5) The applicant's attention is drawn to the requirements of Network Rail set out in their emailed communication dated 29th May 2020.

(2) the Assistant Service Lead City Development be authorised to **REFUSE** planning permission if the legal agreement under Section 106 Agreement under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990(as amended) is not completed by 7 March 2021 or such extended time as agreed by the Service Lead City Development

71

LIST OF DECISIONS MADE AND WITHDRAWN APPLICATIONS

The report of the Director City Development, Housing and Supporting People was submitted.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

72

APPEALS REPORT

The schedule of appeal decisions and appeals lodged was submitted.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

(The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 6.18 pm)

Chair

DRAFT

STRATEGIC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE **HELD AS A VIRTUAL MEETING**

24 September 2020

Present:

Councillor Sills (Chair)

Councillors Atkinson, Buswell, Henson, D, Moore, D, Moore, J, and Owen

Apologies:

Councillors Newby and Pattison

Also present:

Director Corporate Services, Director Transformation, Director Net Zero Exeter & City Management, Director Finance, Corporate Manager Democratic and Civic Support, Democratic Services Officer (SLS) and Democratic Services Officer (MD)

In attendance:

Councillor Ollie Pearson
Councillor Duncan Wood
Councillor Michael Mitchell
Councillor Trish Oliver

- Portfolio Holder for Leisure & Physical Activity
- Portfolio Holder for Support Services & Procurement

18 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Newby and Pattison.

19 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Strategic Scrutiny Committee held on 23 July 2020 were taken as read, approved as correct, for signing by the Chair at the earliest possible convenience.

A Member sought to raise a matter in relation to an invitation to Devon County Council to discuss the Transport Strategy before it was considered by them on 11 November and before the next Strategic Scrutiny Committee meeting. The Chair although stating there was only the opportunity to approve the minutes as a correct record or amend, he would, on this occasion, pass on the question to the Portfolio Holder Net Zero Exeter 2030.

20 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made by Members.

21 Questions from Members of the Public Under Standing Order 19

The Chair confirmed that no public questions had been received.

22 **Presentation on Covid-19 by Portfolio Holders and Questions from Members and Answers**

The Chair referred to the recent change in Portfolio Holders and he introduced Councillor Ollie Pearson as the Portfolio Holder for City Centre and Corporate Services and Councillor Duncan Wood as Portfolio Holder for Leisure & Physical Activity. He invited them to provide a report on their respective area with a focus on the on the Council's Covid-19 recovery stage.

The Portfolio Holder for City Centre & Corporate Services in presenting his briefing note highlighted the following:-

- with appreciation to those officers who were facilitating the democratic process to enable the Council to continue to function and engage with the public, as well as the Human Resources team who, alongside their other duties, have been also been tasked with completing the TUPE arrangements to bring the Leisure Services team back in house. The Council's Legal Team have been particularly busy and along with Internal Audit have provided assistance for Covid related support schemes for various businesses. Strata have continued to support staff remotely and their work will continue to ensure that customers can access the Council's services seamlessly as well as developing opportunities for greater access for all, and
- the efforts made to ensure that the message that the city centre remained open with the help of local businesses, the Business Improvement District (BID), and the City Centre Recovery Group to support businesses and also to help those in the city who face unemployment and other challenges due to the pandemic, which included pulling a number of external services together under the banner of Exeter works.

The Director Corporate Services took the opportunity to reflect on the variety and volume undertaken by her team in the context of the additional challenges brought about, in part by Covid. She also paid tribute to the massive dedication and care by the Guildhall staff who were able to support a socially distanced wedding ceremony which had recently taken place there.

The Portfolio Holder, for City Centre & Corporate Services responded to the following questions from Members submitted in advance of the meeting, together with supplementary questions and responses as set out below:-

Questions from Committee Members

1. **Councillor Keith Owen** - The document circulated to members on the City Centre recovery plan refers to restoring confidence for residents to return to the city centre. From my experience on the morning of Thursday 17 September, this has already been a success. The High Street was extremely busy and personally I would not like to have seen it any busier. One area which has not been successful in my view, based on personal experience, has been signs (including stencils and banners) to encourage social distancing and the use of pedestrian one way systems. Both in the High Street and Longbrook Street for example, approximately 50% of pedestrians (if not more) walk in contravention of the one way signs. Please can the Council consider alternative ways of dealing with this particular problem?

Whilst we have adhered closely to the guidance issued by Government for safer high streets, there are a percentage of people who are not following the signs and directions. We have plans to reinforce the signage at eye level which will help. The

circulation of pedestrians was only guidance and whilst there was no legislation regarding following a one way system with regard to social distancing. The police have some enforcement powers over gatherings of six, which is their focus at the moment. He also briefly clarified that the signage would be at eye level to help avoid any tripping hazards.

The Director for Net Zero Exeter and City Management added that Government's communication around social distancing has not been particularly clear. The change from two metres to one metre plus has caused confusion. One metre plus actually means keep two metres apart unless you have a secondary measure in place such as a mask. We plan to add more eye level signs in the City Centre to help people to follow the one way systems and our signs will continue to state the two metre rule to try and help to make this clear. The signage is advisory and we rely on the good sense of the public to follow them but there are currently no powers of enforcement.

- 2. Councillor Diana Moore** - Is a review of the suitability of polling stations to assess their suitability for social distancing being undertaken and will alternative locations to schools be sought to prevent closure of the school or bringing the public on site?

The Corporate Manager Democratic & Civic Support provided the response to ensure that political neutrality was observed.

Planning for the local elections in May 2021 would continue to be based on advice from the Electoral Commission and the Cabinet Office. Their comments including risk assessments would continue to be followed as well as seeking any early advice, also from the Council's Environmental Health Department. In the meantime, contact has been made with all the 57 polling stations, to assess their availability next May. They will also asked for a copy of the individual venue's Covid-19 risk assessment. Contact has also been made with all of the 13 schools which are currently used, and the policy continues to be not to use schools when there was a suitable and viable alternative. Where schools are used, every effort was made to ensure that both uses as the school and polling station would be able to work alongside each other. On occasion this can lead to the school to decide to close for the day. This situation may well change in 2021, particularly if Covid restrictions are in place. The team would continue to work with schools to make that work, as best as possible, in the circumstances we may find ourselves in.

Supplementary question and response.

If there was an increase in registration for postal votes and would registration for postal voting be encouragement as part of the annual canvass now taking place? There was some concern that people may be put off going out to vote.

The Corporate Manager Democratic & Civic Support stated that the Election team were experiencing an uptake in postal voter registration and they expected that to continue. They would follow the Electoral Commission's guidance to encourage individuals to apply for postal votes and every effort was also being made to encourage early registration so as to avoid a rush at the last minute.

- 3. Councillor Diana Moore** - Will the Council be offering to provide any opportunities for young people to work for the council as part of the Kickstart programme that the Government announced?

The opportunities provided by the Kickstart programme were still under consideration and a briefing was being prepared for the Council's Strategic Management Board,

but this would still need to be considered in light of the Council's significant budgetary challenges as well as providing services to the residents of Exeter. He added that he was looking forward to seeing what the opportunities were for this programme.

Supplementary question and response.

It would be a great opportunity to provide work experience for young people, the Government was covering salaries and national insurance costs as part of this programme, and the Council was a good career option so she would strongly encourage and support participation in that programme as well.

It was important to support young people through the Covid crisis.

- 4. Councillor Diana Moore** - What consideration is the Council giving to meanwhile uses for its vacant offices/retail units to encourage start-ups, especially for creative industries and social enterprises?

The number of vacant units owned by Exeter City Council was extremely low so there was not the opportunity to offer meanwhile uses for vacant property. There had been discussion on the opportunities available on non-council owned property across the city with the BID and the Chamber of Commerce. The Portfolio Holder was aware there were some good examples cross city of other meanwhile uses happening now, but not in Council properties.

Supplementary question and response.

What were the opportunities for such organisations to access those properties and would the Council be open to approaches for the low number of voids that it has.

There were few voids in a competitive market. It was really important to understand that the income derived from the leases for units went towards supporting the Council's services that people rely upon, including those services that have supported the community through the pandemic. Meanwhile use was important and the Council would look at providing whatever information they could, as part of making sure we can support people and organisations in taking those opportunities when they arise. Organisations such as the BID or the Chamber of Commerce would be good organisations to approach, but the Council would be doing everything possible to support uses of properties across the city.

Question from a Non-Committee Member

- 1. Councillor Michael Mitchell** - To what extent has or will the council conduct internal audits in regard to the additional spending, grant and loan allocations made specifically related to the Covid 19 pandemic?

The Internal Audit team had provided the following response of their work which included:-

Additional spending - there was no intention at this point in time for Internal Audit to conduct a specific audit on the additional spending incurred by the Council as a result of the Covid19 pandemic. However, internal controls relating to the additional spending would be covered as part of the creditors and main accounts audits.

Local Government Income Compensation Scheme for lost sales, fees and charges - Internal Audit review and challenge the appropriateness of the claims submitted by the Council under this scheme, in line with the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) guidance. They have confirmed that they will consider relevant internal auditor reviews as appropriate evidence in the assurance process.

Business of Business Grants - the Audit Managers were involved in setting up the process for the business grants to provide assistance with the requirements of government guidance and to ensure that appropriate controls were in place to minimise the risk of fraudulent applications. This process included a number of pre-award checks including running all applications through the Government's counter fraud system known as 'Spotlight' to identify any applications that did not meet the eligibility criteria or were potentially fraudulent. All applications identified by 'spotlight' were then subject to rigorous additional checks prior to processing including asking for additional supporting documentation. Where an application was considered ineligible or potentially fraudulent it was rejected prior to processing. The Audit Managers also assisted in the processing of all types of business grants, mainly undertaking the review of applications where other officers processing the applications had concerns over the eligibility of the applicant.

Internal Audit were in the process of undertaking post award assurance checking on a sample of all business grants awarded, this work had been undertaken by an auditor that had no involvement in the processing of the grant applications, with arrangements in place for any issues arising to be reported to the Director Finance and or to the Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee to ensure a level of independence. The Council will also be participating as normal in the National Fraud Initiative (NFI) which is an exercise that matches electronic data within and between public and private sector bodies to prevent and detect fraud, which this year will also include business grants. The output from this exercise will then be subject to further investigation by Internal Audit with the intention of reclaiming any monies found to have been claimed fraudulently. The Council had also signed up to the UK Finance and Anti-Fraud scheme and were awaiting further guidance on how this scheme will work.

Covid19 Community Action Fund - Internal Audit will be auditing grants awarded under this scheme.

Loan Allocations – Internal Audit had confirmed they were not aware of any loans made by the Council.

Supplementary question and response.

Whether the external funding received in relation to the pandemic crisis would sit inside or outside the City Council's annual accounts and, if it sat within the accounts whether it would be subject to our own external auditors.

It was important to ensure transparency and that this money went to the right people. The Director Finance said that he would clarify the matter with the Deputy Chief Finance Officer, as this also included whether the Council were acting as an agent facilitating payment and he would report back to Members. In any case, External Audit may be given direction to look at this matter. He was pleased to advise that that no fraud had been identified by the Internal Audit team, They had taken on a significant amount of work and had worked closely with the Business Rates team to carry out all necessary checks before any money was paid out.

The Portfolio Holder also responded to points of clarifications from other Committee Members.

It was noted that a question from Councillor Henson on the Playing Pitches Strategy would be answered later in the meeting. However, a question on where Strata staff were working was answered with Strata staff in keeping with other Council staff were mostly working from home. He also confirmed that the former Parkwood leisure staff have been Taped to the Council and would be City Council employees in the first instance. There were currently no precise details of the staffing structure or positions held in the Leisure Services at this time, but the senior officer with responsibility within the Council for Leisure Services was the Director Communications, Culture and Leisure Facilities. The Portfolio Holder also advised that as aspects of the question also crossed the Portfolio of Leisure & Physical Activity, and as he was also at the meeting, he was able to advise that the leisure centres had a timetable for opening safely under the control of the Council. The staffing structure was still being finalised, but he would continue to work with the Director to oversee the early stages of the adoption and then implementation of the Leisure Services.

Councillor Diana Moore asked about what consideration had been given to Safer Streets, to enable safer circulation of people and cyclists during Covid -19, and if the Council was working with Devon County Council to bring forward a coherent plan for safer pavements in the city centre. The Portfolio Holder advised that he was due to meet with Devon County Council and the Director Net Zero and City Management to discuss this matter. The Director also referred to joint networking with Devon County Council, to facilitate social distancing on streets in the city centre and other district centres with information prepared by the City's Engineers, on the basis of the Safer Streets Government guidance.

The Portfolio Holder Leisure & Physical Activity, Councillor Duncan Wood in presenting his briefing note, and with the Chair's permission introduced a short flythrough animation of St Sidwell's Point and the part it would play in the city's recovery from Covid-19. Other areas he wished to draw attention to, were the return of the city's leisure services to an in-house team, the significant and continuing impact of Covid meant that the Sport England Pilot Project, and engagement with the Wonford community all had to be continue to be flexible. It had been impressive how both our own staff and the partners had responded to the challenges. He also paid tribute to Sport England who had accepted the delays and he thanked them for the encouragement given to the Council to repurpose the Pilot funds to enable the Council in their support of the community and mutual support groups during the Covid crisis. He also wished to commend the staff in this area for all of the work they have achieved.

The Portfolio Holder Leisure & Physical Activity responded to the following questions from Members submitted in advance of the meeting, together with supplementary questions and responses as set out below:-

Questions from Committee Members

1. It was noted that a response to a question by Councillor Diana Moore relating to a Council response to the report presented by the mutual aid groups, would be made by the Portfolio Holder Communities & Culture, at the Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee.

2. Councillor Diana Moore - How long is the membership only access for all leisure services requirement expected to be in place for and does this apply to swimming?

Yes, at this point in time it was likely to remain in place until the end of the year and it does also apply to swimming.

Supplementary Question and Response.

Whether the end of the year was December 2020 or March 2021, and she was concerned that the current membership policy would exclude poorer individuals and families with children who could not afford a subscription, and what measures would be put in place to help those who cannot afford a subscription.

The situation was very fluid with regard to Covid 19, in terms of the restrictions that apply and the impact of the current rule of six on what people may have planned to do is significant. Family swimming sessions would present a challenge as to how that will fit in with current and future restrictions that may occur. There were currently no plans to introduce family play sessions at the moment. In respect of the question on price being a barrier, current members were able to use all facilities at no extra cost with their membership cost frozen. New members can join for £15 and a price comparison for sport memberships and swim sessions for facilities in the adjacent local authority area was presented. It was noted that in those instances the City Council were offering a cheaper offer than our neighbouring authorities, but it was not clear how much of a barrier this will be. It was important to get the service up and running in a Covid safe way and that had to include some ability to control the increase in usage. At this stage, the subscription membership was being offered and the cost was not prohibitive if the facilities were used with any real frequency. This approach would enable the service to come back safely and adapt to any new regulations as they come into place and allow the expansion to be people centred.

District	Membership	Family Swim	Adult Swim	Child Swim
East Devon	£39.75	Not Available	£5.20	£4.30
Mid Devon*	No data	£11.00	£4.30	£3.00
North Devon	£37.95	Not Available	£4.80	£3.70
South Hams	£40.00	Not Available	£8.00	None
Teignbridge	£37.80	£13.80	£5.10	£2.80
Torridge	£40.00	Not Available	£8.00	None
West Devon	£40.00	Not Available	£8.00	None

**Not currently offering memberships.*

Councillor Moore asked a point of clarification and whether the £15 was a one off fee or paid every month.

Members of the scheme have not been able to enjoy the benefits of their membership and so their monthly subscriptions are currently frozen. New Members could join for £15 per month.

3. Councillor Diana Moore - Riverside Pool and Leisure Centre Refurbishment -What was the energy performance certificate rating for the Riverside before the Council works and what will it be once work is completed?

It was important to recognise that whilst this was not specifically a Covid related question, but as a valid technical question, he suggested it would be more appropriate to seek a response from the relevant officer. In this instance he would

ask the Director Transformation to offer a full technical response separately in writing to Councillor Moore.

Supplementary Question and Response.

Whether a commitment for the Riverside Leisure Centre to be energy neutral by 2022 and carbon neutral by 2023 could be offered.

He was unable to make such a commitment as building works were still ongoing, but there was a commitment to maximise the efficiency of all such work that is undertaken with regard to our leisure construction projects, and those with a potentially large environmental impact.

The Director Transformation contributed to the response and advised that at this point they could not make a commitment on either of the matters raised in the question, but she would forward a detailed email to Councillor Moore and outline the steps being taken in terms of the refurbishment and efforts to improve the energy efficiency of the building.

4. Councillor Diana Moore -What measures physical and technical measures are being considered to improve this rating?

The Director Transformation continued to offer the following response and advised that the energy efficiency was relatively poor, in part to do with the fundamental construction, the age of the building and the building regulations and standards complied with at the time of the original construction. Where it has been possible to do so, we have instructed the contractors and designers working with us on the refurbishment to make improvements up to and above current building regulations and standards where it is applicable to the fabric of the building. The building will be more energy efficient than it has ever been, because of the steps that we have been taking, through discussion with the Portfolio Holder and the Leader's instruction through the construction and in the way that we will operate the building. The previous contract was let many years ago and had not provided any operator incentives to consider energy efficiency because the Council directly paid the utility costs as part of the historic contractual agreement. Now in direct management of the building, the Council will be able to focus on this and had already started to work on all of the buildings in terms to assess any energy inefficiency. Training had also been undertaken with staff, who have transferred from the previous leisure operator to make clear the expectations and priorities of the business, including energy, the visitor experience and health and safety as the key priorities. She hoped to be able to give further information and the assurances sought by Councillor Moore as soon as possible.

5. Councillor Diana Moore - Playing Pitch Strategy -As well as discussion with the national governing bodies what engagement has there been will there be with professional, and amateur clubs and the wider community in the playing pitch strategy review?

We are following the Sport England methodology which requires authorities to gather a range of views from stakeholders, communities and community sport clubs to inform our 'assessment of need'. We will be surveying formal sports clubs for their views and to gather information about the context of their club such as membership, location and future plans, and then facilitate engagement sessions with other stakeholders such as education providers and wider community groups to seek their views. It is a way that the Council has proven that it works effectively. Although not directly related to the Playing Pitch strategy, he provided an example of a local

football team and users of a pitch in Pinhoe who were successfully consulted over its resurfacing and their and community users contribution to the process. The Council was committed to the consultation process.

Supplementary question and response.

A view on playing pitches was included in the consultation a couple of years ago and in the light of the necessity for this review and additional cost, whether the Portfolio Holder had any thoughts on the approach taken at the time because it encompassed such a broad scope of issues and was very unwieldy.

Although unable to comment on historic consultation, he would be involved with overseeing the consultation, looking at both the practicality and how the consultation would be delivered and use his experience to ensure that the consultation would be meaningful and useful to the process.

- 6. Councillor Diana Moore** - The governance of the Sport England programme has been reviewed and accountabilities set out to other bodies, please can you set out the accountabilities within the Council?

The Sport England Local Delivery Pilot was another effective example of this Council's collaborative working and as such was not directly governed by the Council's constitution. The Delivery Pilot status was awarded to Exeter and Cranbrook as a place, with the Council as the host organisation for the partnership. A formal contract was in place with Sport England and the Council. The Director of the Pilot was accountable for ensuring that the funding is deployed as set out in the various submissions and delivery plans agreed with Sport England. Within the partnership governance the political oversight sits within his role as the Portfolio for Leisure & Physical Activity as well as being a member of the Partnership Oversight Group which included the Leader.

Supplementary question and response.

The Council is acting as the accountable body for the Sport England programme, so in referencing a risk flagged at the Audit & Governance Committee in relation to the delivery of the programme and the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, she felt it was really important that Members understood how the accountability for governance and delivery. She had asked on three occasions for a copy of the Governance review setting out the arrangements and changes to the arrangements but had received no response. She made a formal request for a copy of the review and new governance arrangements, under the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (100F), and suggested that other Members may also wish to see that detail.

An assurance was given that the request would be responded to appropriately.

- 7. Councillor Jemima Moore** -What assessment of the carbon emissions during construction of St Sidwell's Point have been undertaken and can these be published?

Although this was more of a technical question, he was able to provide the detail which included that the principle of the building design was to use technology to provide a healthy building environment. There were reductions in energy usage by 70% and water usage by 50% against industry best practice standards. These combined technologies would have a significant reduction on carbon emissions and running costs year on year.

Passivhaus Certification process was identified as the leading certification and control process, which would ensure that the building design will achieve the exceptional and ambitious outcomes required in energy efficiency of the building.

In high level terms the magnitude of annual energy and carbon savings from implementing the Healthy Building/Passivhaus Strategy when compared to a normal pool will be equivalent to any of the following:

- annual carbon storage of 105 hectare (or 250 football pitches) of managed woodland or
- annual emissions from 750 average UK cars (commuting 40 miles a day) or
- total annual energy consumption of 350 average UK 4 person households or
- enough to make 140 million cups of tea a year

With regard to the construction stage, there were a range of carbon reducing measures being taken, by Kier, due to our requirements in the contract and their own carbon reduction policies. Although the list was not exclusive it included:-

- recycling ground materials to reduce journeys and wastage,
- reusing timber wastage on site,
- only using sustainably sourced timber,
- employing local supply chain where viable, and
- ensuring the use of carbon reducing activities such as video meetings, (before they had to) waste management and ore.

The site hoarding was also a good practical example of this, and the hoarding material was recyclable plastic and as it is hired so it will be reused on another project when removed.

Carbon as a currency is still in development for the industry (and making progress) and in the future we expect to see goods and services having a carbon value, known at that time. That calculation is therefore not fully available for individual tasks during construction but is wrapped into high level calculations for materials and goods. Given the attention that St Sidwell's Point has been attracting from developers and construction providers, we are clearly leading the way with our ambitions to create a state of the art, low energy (and low carbon) public facility.

Councillor Jemima Moore hoped that as the Council was setting a precedent with this building that at some point in the future we would be able to publish the carbon footprint detail as that would set a really good standard for other developments.

Questions from Non-Committee Members

1. **Councillor Trish Oliver** - How are the re-opening of leisure centres embracing safety issues during Covid times, and what would trigger any need to close down if rates of infection rise rapidly locally?

He was proud to be overseeing the development of the Council run, Leisure Services and he welcomed the new colleagues transferring into the Council. The new service will have an ethos, which was centre user lead, with people, the primary focus of the service. How it will embrace safety issues though, begins with the same careful thought that has gone into every aspect of the way the service will be run from a safety and a customer perspective.

All government and industry guidelines were being followed: each centre has had a detailed risk assessment and mitigation actions are specific to each centre - following

the key themes of ventilation, social distancing, personal hygiene, cleanliness and training and awareness. Expert technical and industry advice has been utilised to ensure that the facilities are opened in the safest possible way. We may need to close a facility or an activity within it if any of the technical mitigation activities fail, for example the new carbon monoxide monitors indicate a deterioration in air flow, or customers do not comply with the required behaviours. We may also have to consider a closure should we identify staff with symptoms requiring a test as well as any formal notification from the NHS Test, Track and Trace service that indicates a potential outbreak, two or more confirmed cases, originating in one of the centres. Should a Local Outbreak Management Plan come into force in Exeter we would anticipate closing centres as part of local restrictions.

- 2. Councillor Alys Martin** (*was not in attendance*) - In relation to the Wonford development, has COVID-19 affected the funding of the Sports England Local Delivery Pilot?

No, Sport England have continued to fund all 12 pilot areas throughout the pandemic and have been extremely supportive of how the Local Delivery Pilot team was deployed to support the community response to lockdown. Sport England have invited us to bid for an extension of core funding (this pays for the LDP team and the evaluation programme) to 2025. Whilst we are awaiting the formal response to our application the feedback so far is very positive and we are anticipating a successful outcome of the bid.

- 3. Councillor Michael Mitchell**- Can the Portfolio Holder elaborate regarding how the initial request from Parkwood for £1m in regard to the termination of its contract for the leisure service was reduced by the council to £355k?

The detail of the negotiating process and outcome remains commercially sensitive and confidential. However, the swift decision-making of the Council in relation to the insourcing of the services and the clear direction provided at a political level to ensure that this happened together with the experience, knowledge and skills of the Director and her team were probably the defining factors in enabling this positive conclusion.

Supplementary question and response.

If there was a view outside of the legal parameters of the contract on the attitude taken by Parkwood Leisure when they had asked for a sum greater than the actual achievement of the contract.

The Portfolio Holder advised that he had not been party to the negotiations made.

The Chair thanked the Portfolio Holders for commenting on their large areas of work and reminded Members of the brief offered by the Scrutiny Programme Board to focus on Covid-19 related matters and more latterly the recovery period. The Scrutiny Programme Board would continue to discuss how these meetings will go ahead in the future.

The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 7.00 pm

Chair

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CUSTOMER FOCUS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE **(HELD AS A VIRTUAL MEETING)**

8 October 2020

Present:

Councillor Matthew Vizard (Chair)

Councillors Mitchell, M, Foggin, Mrs Henson, Mitchell, K, Sparkes, Wardle and Warwick

Apologies:

Councillors Martin and Oliver

Also present:

Director City Development, Housing & Supporting People, Democratic Services Officer (HB) and Democratic Services Officer (SLS)

In attendance:

Councillor Ruth Williams

Councillor Laura Wright

Councillor Diana Moore

- Portfolio Holder for Supporting People
- Portfolio Holder for Council Housing Development and Services

22 Apologies

These were received from Councillors Martin and Oliver.

23 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee held on 16 July 2020 were taken as read, approved as correct, for signing by the Chair at the earliest possible convenience.

24 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made by Members.

25 Questions from the Public under Standing Order 19

No questions from members of the public were received.

26 Presentation on Covid-19 Recovery by Portfolio Holders and Questions from Members and Answers

The Chair invited the two Portfolio Holders to present their respective briefing notes.

Questions from Members submitted in advance of the meeting with the answers given at the meeting together with the supplementary questions and answers made at the meeting are set out below for each Portfolio.

Portfolio Holder for Supporting People - Councillor Williams - in presenting her briefing note highlighted the following:-

- expressed her thanks to Councillor Morse, the previous Portfolio Holder, for her dedication and hard work in this role;
- a recent virtual anti-social behaviour conference hosted by the City Council attended by local and regional leaders and partners including the Bishop of Exeter, the Chief Constable of the Devon and Cornwall Constabulary, Councillor Hart, Leader of Devon County Council, Ben Bradshaw MP as well as representatives from city's in Portugal and the United States. The City Council would be progressing many of the initiatives discussed; and
- her attendance at the Exeter Community Safety Partnership, chaired by the local police commander.

Questions from Members of the Committee.

- 1 **Councillor Wardle** - *Can the Portfolio Holder update us on the new test and trace Support payments?*

From 28 September 2020, Government has changed the legislation so that certain people will have to self-isolate due to the current Covid-19 crisis. A package of legislative measures has been introduced both to ensure that those who are required to self-isolate, do so and, that those on a low income, receive a payment to assist their finances and to encourage compliance with the legislation. The Council is administering both the Standard Scheme and the Discretionary Scheme for Exeter. Both schemes are currently due to run until 31 January 2021.

The Standard Scheme has been determined by criteria set down by Government and is primarily aimed at all applicants who are working or self-employed; are unable to work from home and will therefore have a reduction in income and are in receipt of certain qualifying benefits (Universal Credit, Working Tax Credit, Income-related Employment & Support Allowance; Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance; Income Support; Housing Benefit or Pension Credit). Government has confirmed that it will reimburse the Council for all payments correctly made under the Standard Scheme.

The Discretionary Scheme is intended for any individual who meets all of the required criteria for the Standard Scheme except that they are not currently in receipt of a qualifying benefit. The reason for this could be, for example, that a claim for a benefit has not yet been made or is being appealed, or that the individual, whilst normally resident in the UK, is unable to gain access to public funds. The Council will be receiving £29,277.09 for the four months that the Discretionary Scheme is intended to last and the Government has confirmed that no additional monies will be given to the Council. This funding equates to only 58 awards. Given that the funding for the Discretionary Scheme is limited, Government has stated that it will be up to each Council to determine additional criteria that have to be met if a payment is to be made. The additional criteria has been developed with other authorities within the County and is designed to focus on those applicants who are not in receipt of a qualifying benefit, are on a low income, have relatively low capital, have had

their income reduced and are therefore facing financial hardship due to self-isolation.

Policies for both the Standard Scheme and the Discretionary Scheme have been submitted for approval and was now live and available on www.exeter.gov.uk/testandtrace.

The support will take the form of a single payment of £500. An individual may make an application more than once but only if the individual is told to self-isolate multiple times and they meet the eligibility criteria for each individual application, and the periods of self-isolation do not overlap. Individuals in the same household can each make an application to receive a Test and Trace Support Payment, if they each meet the criteria in full.

Applicants must have been instructed by the NHS Test and Trace to stay at home and self-isolate either because they have tested positive for Covid-19, or have recently been in close contact with someone who has tested positive. All applicants will be required to provide the 8-digit unique ID number which has been provided to them by NHS Test and Trace.

Individuals meeting the eligibility criteria who have been instructed to self-isolate on or after 28 September are entitled to a payment, and Government requested that local authorities have an application process in place by 12 October. Officers, along with Strata, have designed one on-line application form to cater for both schemes, which is currently being tested with a planned go live of 12 October. On-line and telephone applications will be accepted. Eligible applications can be backdated to 28 September. In order to capture those backdated claims, www.exeter.gov.uk/testandtrace has been live since 28 September offering information and the capability to register an interest in claiming. Exeter has received 15 registrations of interest so far and those residents will be emailed a link to the application form once it is live. Applications will be dealt with by benefit staff as there is a need to check benefit eligibility through the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP)'s Searchlight system which has restricted access. The benefit staff allocated to this task are working closely with their Customer Support colleagues dealing with the Exeter Wellbeing Support Hub so that support can be provided if other vulnerability issues are identified.

The Portfolio Holder thanked all staff who had worked to implement the scheme in a short time period.

Supplementary questions and answers.

Will those self-employed individuals previously excluded from the support system be left outside the circle of entitlement again?

Will the Council be reimbursed for the scheme and by how much?

The summary of the scheme, circulated to all Members, details the information in response to the questions, including the figures sought.

- 2a **Councillor Foggin** – *As you are providing accommodation for rough sleeping what plans are there to remove tents and other items from, in and around the High Street?*

2b **Councillor M. Mitchell** - *Rough Sleepers. In recent weeks there appears to have been an increase in the number of individuals and groups rough sleeping in and around the city centre. What actions are the council taking to ensure that these individuals are supported and helped as winter approaches?*

(Combined response to 2a & 2b)

The Council co-ordinates responses to city centre (including the High Street) encampments via contact and assessment by the outreach team working closely with the Council's rough sleeper co-ordinator and housing advice team. Rapid assessment for emergency accommodation, or reconnection to home area, is undertaken with a view to provide a service offer as soon as possible. A number of services are simultaneously informed including Civil Enforcement, city centre police and Environmental Health (if anti-social behaviour is being committed). If a service offer is not available (e.g. if there is no legal duty and no discretionary option) or is declined, and if not already initiated then enforcement action is taken serving notice and removal of tents where necessary. Not all encampment dwellers are homeless and in such cases notifications are made to their housing providers to support interventions to ensure a swift return indoors.

The Council continues to provide accommodation for many rough sleepers through discretionary accommodation placements into temporary accommodation stock as well as bed and breakfast spaces purchased from hotels willing to accommodate rough sleepers (many hotels will not). The Great Western Hotel (GWH) has the majority of occupants with recent rough sleeping experience and all arising vacancies at the hotel are prioritised to rough sleepers nominated by the outreach team. In anticipation of the award of capital funds through the government's Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP) the plan is to resettle all current occupants of the hotel into move-on housing as and when it vacancies and new spaces come online. The first spaces are expected at the repurposed 11-bed hostel at 62 Howell Road. A further 10 bed units are to be delivered by local partner Bournemouth Church Housing Association (BCHA) under the first successful part of the NSAP capital bid. This will increase vacancies for rough sleepers to move into the hotel as interim accommodation whilst awaiting purchase and opening of up to 25 further NSAP-funded beds to be available as soon as possible before 3 March 2021.

In the meantime, the Council is specifically supporting BCHA in maximising moving on of residents in Gabriel House and its move-on Morwenna Court in order to free up further spaces for people to move on from the GWH. Work is also underway exploring opportunities to lease Houses of Multiple Occupation) (HMO) properties through third party investors and property agents in order to increase temporary accommodation capacity.

The Council is also leading a review and overhaul of the supported housing pathway in order to recalibrate and concentrate the availability of housing related support in some of the services and ensure clearer processes and targets around move-on and throughput in the system. This is being done through a number of measures:

- reviewing of rents in key accommodation
- reviewing the priorities of the floating support service (commissioned by County) to upstream their work
- revised move-on panel and pathway including social housing referrals

- increasing financial incentives and support to private landlords.

There remains a key issue regarding the loss of emergency overnight bed spaces as a result of covid impact. With the continuing restrictions permitting no shared bed spaces capacity for rough sleepers' bed space numbers are still severely reduced. The Junction night shelter is currently accommodating a maximum of six people (20 beds down on its 26 capacity). A works assessment to build in private rooms on the ground floor has to date proved cost-prohibitive. Gabriel House is seven beds down due to single occupancy of the bunks and no night chair facility and two further spaces are suspended at Esther Community. The young persons' Night Stop scheme has also been in abeyance since March as have other hosted beds through Countywide provider Young Devon. This issue has been raised with Public Health and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and the Council is awaiting guidance documents understood to be a set of principles for re-instating some bed spaces with increased risk management measures where possible. It is also understood that there may be an opportunity for local housing authorities to apply to MHCLG for emergency winter funds to support added capacity for bed spaces in areas of high unmet need. It is understood that the remaining £13million of the £105million NSAP revenue fund has been reserved for such purposes.

Supplementary question and answer.

Will steps be taken to prevent rough sleeping outside the Guildhall?

The Portfolio Holder advised that rough sleeping had been one of the issues discussed at the Exeter Community Safety Partnership on 7 October 2020 and was very much on the radar. Accordingly, this and other locations in the city were constantly monitored.

The Portfolio Holder also advised that Members would be provided with contact numbers to report rough sleeping. Details below:-

Contact information for reporting a suspected rough sleeper:

- Mon-Fri 9am to 5pm - Assertive Outreach Team 01392 284287 exeter-outreach@julianhouse.org.uk
- Weekends - Streetlink - <https://www.streetlink.org.uk/>

Contact information for reporting suspected criminal behaviour / ASB on the street.

- Devon and Cornwall Police Call 101 or 999 (in an emergency) 101@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk

- 3 **Councillor M. Mitchell** - *Recovery Plans. Could the Portfolio Holder provide more detail regarding the use of the allocated government grant of £440K from the Next Steps Accommodation Programme and elaborate on the availability of other 'temporary placements'?*

The £440,779 award is broken down as follows:

- £315,420 – Accommodation costs (GWH)
- £49,980 – Security (at GWH)
- £13,325 – Cleaning (including needle sweeps) and Repairs (at GWH)

- £38,000 – Support (two x workers at six months)
- £15,362 – Food and clothing support
- £8,712 – Laundry support

Other temporary placements are outlined in response to Q2a/2b. The Council's 130 units of procured temporary accommodation (95 units plus a further 35 move-on units) are consistently full with voids being re-let within 24-48 hours. In addition to the 33 rooms at the GWH the Council currently has a further 15 persons in spot purchase hotel accommodation as at 06.10.20.

Supplementary questions and answers.

It is understood that this is a retrospective payment for services already provided and, if so, is there funding available to take this programme through to the end of the financial year?

The funding provided was not retrospective as such. When the Government requested Councils to bring rough sleepers into accommodation there was a certain amount of funding allocated but additional funding was provided, on the agreement of the Portfolio Holder, from in-year savings from within the service. The funding now provided will enable the continuation of the service until the end of the financial year.

Can the funding made available be used to lease small or medium sized hotels for accommodating rough sleepers for a five year period?

Because of the piecemeal nature of funding it is difficult to plan long term. The funding provided by Government was specifically for bringing the homeless indoors to cover accommodation itself and including the other elements listed.

- 4 **Councillor M. Mitchell** – *Winter Emergency provision. In the current crisis many tenants in all sectors are experiencing financial hardship not of their own making. What actions can the Council take to ensure that if the number of eviction orders rise due to non-payment of private rentals, tenants and their families are able to remain in their homes to provide the social and other stability they need at this time?*

The Council's homelessness prevention service is working alongside welfare and benefits staff to ensure read-across of tenants approaching the service for housing advice especially where rent arrears (or the risk of) are involved. A homelessness prevention advice update is being drafted in order to circulate on social media and via the website to provide early advice and contact information for households at potential risk. Financial support utilising discretionary funds (e.g. hardship) to provide rent contributions are already in place for some households. Housing advice staff also negotiate with payments plans with some private landlords especially as more workable alternatives to the extended and more convoluted evictions process. Other measures regarding rent arrears and payment plans are in place with Council tenants as per Q3 below.

Questions from other Council Members.

- 1 **Question from Councillor J. Moore read by the Chair** - *What level of delays before receiving their first payment are new applicants for Universal Credit typically experiencing in Exeter*

Our DWP Partnership Manager has confirmed that they do not have any first payment delays. All Universal Credit claims are processed and paid on time in the first month, unless they do not verify their information, or contact the Job Centre Plus (JCP) to verify their claim. Around 97% are paid on time.

- 2 **Councillor D. Moore** - *Benefits and Welfare: Since April how many new benefit and welfare claimants are there in Exeter, how many are predicted to the end of the year, and does the Council have the capacity to process the current and expected workload to ensure no delays to claimants?*

The table below gives caseload figures for Housing Benefit (HB) and Council Tax Support (CTS).

Month	Council Tax Support	Housing Benefit
March 2020	7371	6119
April 2020	7910	6049
July 2020	7976	5917
October 2020	7813	5742
Change (Mar to Oct)	+442	-377
% change (Mar to Oct)	+6.0%	-6.2%

CTS cases continue to trend slowly down. HB caseload has been reducing at a fairly consistent rate since the introduction of Universal Credit (UC) and hasn't been hugely impacted by COVID-19. Some of the reduction in HB will be due to existing claimants starting new jobs and claiming UC instead of Working Tax Credit (WTC), not just customers losing their jobs and claiming UC instead of Jobseekers Allowance.

If the current trend continues, CTS caseload is expected to reduce by a further 200 by April 2021. However, realistically, there is likely to be a second wave of financial impact and job losses leading to an increase in claims. If this is half the size of the first wave it would mean an additional 300 claims, but it is impossible to predict at this point.

Officers anticipate being able to manage a second wave of claims as they did in the spring without undue impact on processing times, and if necessary, staff can be diverted from less urgent work, and delays in making decisions on CTS claims can be offset by flexibility on the recovery side.

- 3 **Councillor D. Moore** - *Payments and Collection: Will the Council be implementing or give consideration to its own voluntary extended ban on evictions of council tenants who have fallen behind on rents due to the impact of COVID pandemic?*

Whilst there are no plans to extend the eviction ban once it expires Members can be assured that there are a number of checks and balances in place to ensure tenants are given every opportunity to resolve any debt issues with

the Council as its landlord. As is often the case the officers have to determine who cannot pay and those that will not pay. Evictions are only ever an action of last resort for any breaches of tenancies including non-payment of rent. As a landlord we must always balance the needs to support our tenants as much as is practical against the need to generate the income to provide the services to all tenants.

Supplementary question and answer.

What action has been taken to assist those who are unable to pay council housing rent as a result of the pandemic?

Council staff continue to support those in financial difficulty on the same basis as before the pandemic. The financial position of those in difficulty is discussed in detail including assessment of their income and expenditure and, as the Council is often not the only organisation owed money, steps are taken to prioritise debt re-payment including referrals to other agencies. It is important to keep track of debt even if this involves small repayments being made. A continuing income stream to the Council is necessary to support other housing services.

- 4 **Councillor D. Moore - Rough Sleeping.** *What specialist support is the Council providing for those rough sleepers who have been evicted or abandoned emergency accommodation?*

The Council's policy towards rough sleepers recently evicted or abandoning emergency accommodation is one of continued contact and ongoing assessment of housing and health need. Outreach provide welfare checks and support for the individual to learn from the issues that led to the accommodation loss. Health needs are monitored by the Clock Tower surgery staff in the main alongside outreach staff and where relevant an individual may also have a housing navigator worker advocating for them to access alternative services felt to be needed in order to support the issue underlying the eviction (e.g. mental health, substance treatment, social care etc.). The housing navigator plays an important role in following the client to establish a relationship.

The Council supports specialist support engagement on the street via RSI-funded interventions through a specialist drug and alcohol outreach worker plus nurse and GP outreach sessions. The Council also led the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) - bid for a mental health navigator to work with rough sleepers and Housing Needs is also engaged with a revision plan for the Devon Partnership Trust (DPT)'s mental health community offer to complex and vulnerable individuals including rough sleepers. Rough sleepers (including those recently evicted) are also being supported to access covid testing where needed through combined planning and interventions between the usual services plus public health support.

Supplementary questions and answers.

What specialist support is available to those rough sleepers with complex issues?

Specialist support is through the mental health navigator as part of the RSI bid. City Council officers initiated the bid in conjunction with other partners

including the setting up of Colab. There have been successes and it is hoped that further progress can be made in this challenging area.

How many of the 22 individuals who have abandoned the accommodation provided are within the 28 identified as rough sleepers?

The Council seeks to find alternative accommodation for those who leave the Great Western Hotel for whatever reason. Some of these are likely to be rough sleeping but it is difficult to identify the precise figure. The Portfolio Holder referred to two success of re-housing individuals by referral of one to a Devon District Authority in Devon and the other to an authority in another county.

Portfolio Holder for Council Housing Development and Services – Councillor Wright – thanked the Director and all housing staff for their outstanding commitment to tenants and, in presenting her briefing note, highlighted the following:-

- the difficulty in undertaking emergency and essential repairs during the lockdown, although there had been a reduction in requests for non-essential repairs during this period; and
- the positive feedback received from tenants supported by Council Officers during the lockdown

Questions from Committee Members.

- 1 **Councillor M. Mitchell – Fire.** *Can the Portfolio Holder in the light of the concerns within the private sectors of the implication of External Wall Fire Review Form (EWS1) certification for the safety of tenants and home owners state whether local authority housing in Exeter has or will be inspected to the same standard as that required by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors?*

Background

The government recognised that following Grenfell and subsequent MHCLG guidance to landlords it became more challenging for some households to obtain mortgages for high-rise residential properties. It therefore supported of industry efforts to apply consistency in how such properties are valued. The Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) developed a procedure designed to secure a proportionate valuation judgement to buildings over 18 metres or lower if there were specific concerns; e.g. cladding systems contain combustible materials without fire stopping, wooden balconies, etc.

In short, a) is the building over 18 metres or b) if it is less, would the exterior construction allow fire to spread? The EWS1 form is used by a surveyor making an assessment to record their findings. It must be remembered that the EWS1 form is not a fire risk assessment but provides information for the valuer/lender when deciding whether to provide a mortgage. It is not a legal requirement although of course we take great note of all ministry guidance, have risk assessed all our blocks of flats and are planning detailed compartmentation assessments for all our blocks of flats over the next 4-5 years. The form itself says: *“This form is intended for recording in a consistent manner what assessment has been carried out for the external wall construction of residential apartment buildings where the highest floor is 18m or more above ground level or where specific concerns exist. It should not be used for other purposes”.*

There was an article in the Guardian newspaper about this last month. They identified a capacity issue – “there are only 300 or so experts certified to carry out these inspections and they have been prioritising taller buildings, and those where there is known to be cladding” (none of our blocks have cladding). Further, they found that it could take until 2026 to complete EWS1s just on the 18m+ high-rise blocks and those with cladding. The article also quoted the MHCLG as saying “We do not support a blanket approach to EWS1 forms on buildings, and where owners are able to demonstrate their buildings are safe using other equivalent evidence, we would encourage lenders to accept that. We are investigating further actions we can take to support the industry, including looking at ways to address capacity issues.”

The background information above is provided to help explain our status.

Our status

- We have one block above 18 metres which is Rennes House. It does not have cladding and there are no external features which would facilitate fire spread.
- All our other blocks are less than 18 metres and none have cladding or features which would facilitate fire spread
- We do have some blocks with vertical tiles held on by wood battens, these are very common however fire spread would be slow, easily reached by the fire service and quick to extinguish
- Our ‘clear and safe’ policy ensures communal areas are as free from combustible materials as possible – we also ask for combustibles to be removed from balconies (e.g. barbeques)
- Our fire risk assessments now look at surface features
- We make our fire risk assessments available to our leaseholders and third parties on request
- We will be carrying out compartmentation checks of all blocks and have already begun to involve procurement, identify frameworks, etc. One specification is that they make a recommendation if they believe an EWS1 would be beneficial (a double-check for us)

In summary, there are no specific concerns currently that warrant the instigation of an EWS1 form by us, the freeholder. We are nevertheless expecting a continuation of demands for EWS1s. If the lender accepts our stance that none are needed then we normally hear no more. Alternatively, if the lender will not accept our position then the leaseholder is free to engage a suitably qualified consultant to carry out an EWS1 survey and we will take note of its findings but it is not the same as a formal fire risk assessment undertaken by ourselves and for our purposes. Its purpose is to assist the valuation.

A South West Housing Association has adopted a similar approach and attempted to engage with RICS but their request have been ignored.

Comment by the questioner.

This issue is being faced by all local authorities who, although able to authorise inspections, the same is not possible for tenants, including those seeking to proceed with Right To Buy.

Questions from other Council Members.

- 1 **Councillor D. Moore** - *After the national ban on evictions ends at the end of this month, will the Council be implementing or give consideration to its own voluntary extended ban on evictions of Council tenants who have fallen behind on rents due to the impact of COVID pandemic?*

Answer provided in response to the question from the Non-Committee Member in Question 3 above.

The Portfolio Holder stated that every scenario was examined to help those in difficulty including benefit support and other forms of financial assistance, The Director advised that monthly arrears were monitored to check trends over time.

Supplementary question and answer.

What is the period of time during which individuals will not be pursued for failure to pay rent?

The ban on evictions ends at the end of October.

- 2 **Councillor D. Moore** – *How will meaningful tenant participation be enabled as part of the recovery process and how can the Council support the formation and operation of tenants' associations?*

We are very keen to improve our resident involvement service and to meaningfully involve residents in our work.

After much discussion with residents we have reviewed and re-written our Resident Involvement Strategy which is currently out for consultation. We would encourage anyone who has an interest in this area to comment on the new Strategy which they can via a link on our website or Facebook page.

Full details of our plans are recorded in the Strategy itself.

Once the consultation period has ended on 21st October and the Strategy has been approved by the Executive, we will be able to start on our action plan which will include:

1. A new resident involvement structure that allows residents to choose how they want to get involved and to what extent;
2. Regular resident events such as fetes, open days, gardening projects etc.;
3. Some new thriving local residents' groups;
4. Residents undertaking their own projects to improve services and their local environment;
5. Regular tenant training to increase capacity;
6. Improved two way communication, especially via internet, smartphone and social media; and
7. Involvement from all parts of the community (particularly those who have been unrepresented in the past) to create a truly diverse group of involved residents.

Specifically on the subject of forming residents' associations we will:

1. Find out what appetite there is for such groups among residents;

2. Set up initial meetings with any involved residents to discuss the aims and objectives of any association;
3. Help establish the constitution, together with a code of conduct;
4. Help decide on the number and regularity of meetings;
5. Help to elect key officers;
6. Help with booking rooms; providing refreshments; paying reasonable expenses; providing stationery and suchlike; giving help and advice on running such meetings;
7. Provide reasonable grants for any work they wish to undertake; and
8. Provide any reasonable capacity building training.

The key, of course, to all this is to work with local residents and help them to achieve what they want to achieve. Once local associations are established, there will also be two places on the Council Housing Advisory Board for the Chair and Deputy of the overall associations to represent tenants and leaseholders.

Supplementary questions and answers.

What can the Council do to help increase connections with tenants and support tenant activity many of whom played an important role in helping neighbours during the lockdown as many residents felt isolated? Can tenant participation be encouraged through other areas of Council activity such as Home Call as part of the stock condition work and other work streams so that as many residents as possible have the opportunity to engage?

The purpose of the consultation on resident participation is to hear how resident and neighbourhood associations wish to become involved with the Council and the use of Home Call would be an appropriate means of promoting this process. The Council tenants' magazine "Insight" encourages tenants to participate as well as advising them of services within and outside the Council. Housing officers on routine visits also encourage tenants to participate in the consultation on the resident involvement strategy. Similarly, Customer Service staff, on receiving phone calls from Council tenants encourage them to complete the survey.

The Portfolio Holder advised that the Council possessed 4,976 council houses.

Supplementary question in addition to those on the agenda and answer.

What is the current number of voids and are they on schedule to be ready to be re-occupied?

There are 23 major voids with five weeks being the average period a property is left void at the present time as a result of the Covid-19 crises as it had not been possible to clear properties, deliver rubbish to the tip etc. during lockdown and there was also a legal restriction on moving households. Advantage was taken to use some of the voids to house the homeless as part of the "Everyone In" Government initiative. It is hoped that the backlog will be addressed within two to three months.

The Chair, Portfolio Holders and Committee Members asked that their thanks be passed on to staff for their commitment, hard work and significant efforts during the current crisis.

The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 7.04 pm

Chair

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AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE **HELD AS A VIRTUAL MEETING**

Wednesday 16 September 2020

Present:-

Councillor Wardle (Chair)
Councillors Atkinson, Foggin, Hannaford, Henson, D, Mrs Henson, Mitchell, M and Oliver

Also Present

Director Finance, Deputy Chief Finance Officer, Audit Manager (HP), Democratic Services Officer (MD) and Democratic Services Officer (SLS)

25 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillors Pattison and Warwick.

26 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held 22 July 2020 were taken as read and approved as correct for signing by the Chair at the earliest possible convenience.

27 **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests were made.

28 **EXTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT**

Jackson Murray, the Engagement Lead from Grant Thornton, the Council's External Auditors, updated Members on the Audit deliverables and key matters of their progress including the financial statements audit, the value for money conclusion and certification of the housing benefits subsidy claim. He advised that the draft financial statement was received on 31 July 2020, before the revised national publication deadline of 31 August 2020, which had enabled their audit team to commence selecting samples for testing. It was anticipated the audited financial statement would be issued by the 30 November 2020 target date.

Covid-19 continued to impact on their work which was predominantly undertaken remotely and whilst there were benefits, some aspects of the work were taking longer to complete. The progress report included reference to a number of publications including a National Audit guide for Audit Committees on financial reporting and management during Covid-19 as well as the new National Audit Office Code of Practice for the 2020/21 period and he would update Committee Members accordingly at the earliest opportunity. A Member suggested two of the reports referred to in Grant Thornton's report, from Localis, an independent not for profit think tank, entitled 'Building for Renewal: Kick-starting the C19 Housing Recovery', and a 'Place Based Growth' report produced in collaboration with the County Councils' Network merited further consideration and he suggested an urgent cross party exploration by this Council of a number of the issues identified. Members considered that there were many interesting themes in the reports and suggested holding a Members' Briefing, as well as raising at a future Scrutiny Committee or the Executive.

The External Auditor's Engagement Lead also referred to the recent publication of the Redmond Review which considered the local government audit market and provided a summary of its key themes and main recommendations to strengthen governance which included:-

- the creation of an Office of Local Audit and Regulation to be responsible for the regulation of the local audit market and include a number of functions performed by the Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd,(PSAA) who currently oversee the appointment of external auditors.
- formalising the liaison meeting process between external auditors and senior officers within the local authority.
- External Audit reporting annually to the local authority and not necessarily just through the Audit Committee process.
- consideration of moving the accounts reporting timetable back to the 30 September.
- recognition that audit fees were too modest for the complexity of the work entailed, particularly around the preparation of the financial statement.
- the accounting body, CIPFA, should review the accounting
- the creation of a summary document aside from the financial statements to the accounts, which would be audited to offer greater accessibility for members of the public.

The Director Finance advised that he had attended a webinar event on the Redmond Review and the discussion had included the prospect of the inclusion of an independent member who would be a suitably qualified accountant to sit on the Audit Committee of each local authority. Whilst, audit work would continue to be carried out by firms such as Grant Thornton, there would increasingly, be an ongoing dialogue over the cost versus quality issue and ability within the time scale. He reminded Members that significant savings had to be made by the Council, against the backdrop of any increased cost in the audit delivery process.

A Member suggested any such future review of membership should also consider performance against the scope of the Audit Committee. The External Auditor's Engagement Lead welcomed the opportunity to discuss the Redmond recommendations at the next meeting of this Committee. The Director Finance would provide a summary for Members.

The Audit and Governance Committee noted the External Audit Progress Report and welcomed two particular reports 'Building for Renewal: Kick-starting the C19 Housing Recovery, and a 'Place Based Growth' which Members suggested merited further consideration in some form by the City Council.

INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT

The Audit Manager (HP) presented the report on internal audit work carried out during the period 1 April to 30 June 2020. Members' attention was drawn to the progress against the Audit Plan, where a number of factors directly related to Covid-19 had made an impact on the delivery against the Plan. There had been considerable levels of unplanned work, as well as Internal Audit staff assisting with reactive work in other parts of the Council. This included assisting with the administration of Covid business grants, carrying out inventory checks and stock take of the city's leisure centres in preparation of their transfer back to the Council. Regular audit work had presented a greater challenge as many service areas had to focus on critical work with the consequence that Internal Audit would not be able to

deliver the plan of work agreed and therefore amendments to the plan were being proposed.

Members' attention was drawn to Appendix A, which set out the progress against the work carried out to date and the amendments which were highlighted in the report. Appendix B included an update on significant governance issues presented in the Annual Governance Statement and the Audit Manager reported there had been no changes. Appendix C set out the conclusion of an Internal Audit report in relation to the Pinhoe Community Hub. The report had been made available to Members as per the order of the Information Commissioner and the Council's External Auditors.

The Director Finance responded to a Member who expressed her disappointment that correspondence, which would have formed part of the enquiry had not been included in the report. The Member suggested that a more robust investigation should have been carried out and was concerned over the handling and perfunctory investigation. Her concern related to the appropriateness of the financial arrangements made in the setting up of the project, rather than the creation of a much welcomed project to build a community hub in Pinhoe. The Director Finance assured Members that the circulated report was, as produced by Internal Audit in its entirety, with the names of those individuals who had raised the matter, being redacted so the report could be presented in the public domain. The Member, in raising her concerns, sought assurances that the original letter should be made available. The Director Finance stated that the funding request had not been in place at the outset, and a separate request for £100,000 to build a community hub was approved at full Council. A study of the robustness of the grants process had now been made, which had led to the grants review and a new system put in place. However, he would speak to the Monitoring Officer and report back to Members.

In response to advance questions from a Member in relation to the update on the Pinhoe Community Hub, as set out in Appendix C of the report, the following responses were provided from the Director Finance:-

- In terms of the author of the report and redactions, Internal Audit reports were produced to be shared internally with management to support improvements to the Internal Audit environment. One of the Council's Audit Managers was the author of the report and the redactions related to individuals who were no longer employed or were no longer members of the Council to enable the report to be made publicly available.
- The Audit and Governance Committee was the most appropriate committee to consider this report, because it was a matter of governance of Internal Audit and their view on the control environment, which was sought. Such reports were not, as a matter of course taken to the Audit Committee in full, with summaries being provided. The Information Commissioner and the External Auditors requested that the full report be made available to Members, but the Director Finance reminded Members had the right to see any audit report.
- There was not sufficient allocation in the budget for this request for funding to be processed through the normal grants process at that time. The request for funding of £100,000 was brought forward as a separate report to Full Council. Members of the Council would have had the opportunity to comment and vote on the matter with the opportunity to approve or reject any such recommendation.
- Although the short report had been made available, Members were welcome to request any further information they required. The grant awarded was to provide

funding to build a community asset in an area, using funding derived from the New Homes Bonus. Members sought to build a community asset in an area that had seen significant levels of housing with the stated intention of the scheme to support the community. The Director Finance stated that it had been acknowledged that the grants process had required strengthening and this had since taken place.

- Officers referred to in the report were not contacted prior to leaving the authority and no discussion had taken place with any serving or former Members who were involved.
- In respect of the current status of the grant, and before the closing of last year's accounts in 2019/20, and the recommendation from External Audit, further payments of £22,064 were made. However, following their recommendations, any further activity in this regard would be discussed with External Audit before making any further payments, there have been no leasehold arrangements entered into with the applicants of the Pinhoe Community Hub.

A Member welcomed the intent and spirit of the Pinhoe Community hub project, which was as a result of the principles of the New Homes Bonus award process and would contribute to an area of the city which had absorbed a significant amount of new housing. Another Member was pleased that the current grant system offered probity and safeguards and that a valuable community facility had been provided for Pinhoe. She also acknowledged that the outcome was the offer of community facility for the community, so, whilst there may appear to have been a failing in part of the process, the outcome would offer great benefits.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) the Internal Audit Progress Report for the first quarter of the year 2020/21 be noted; and
- (2) the amendments to the 20/21 Internal Audit Plan be approved.

30

REVIEW OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE RISK REGISTER

The Audit Manager (HP) referred to the Audit and Governance Committee's responsibility for monitoring and reviewing the Corporate Risk Register and in presenting an update advised that there were no changes to the Corporate Risk Register since the last meeting.

Following a request from a Member, the Audit Manager (HP) agreed to update the Risk Register on the lines suggested to improve the presentation of the detail. The Director Finance responded to a Member's concern about licenced craft on the Exeter Canal and River Exe. Although there was no reference in the Risk Register, he would contact the City's Harbour Master and colleagues in Environmental Health to enquire about the social distancing controls and checks imposed on passenger licensed craft using the Exeter Canal and River Exe and update the Member.

The Audit and Governance Committee noted the contents of the Risk Register.

(The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 6.45 pm)

Chair

STRATA - JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, 8 SEPTEMBER 2020

Present:

Councillors Clarence, Hookway, King, Nuttall, Oliver, Sparkes, Twiss and Atkinson

Members Attendance:

Councillors Millar and Wrigley

Apologies:

Councillors Orme

Officers in Attendance:

Simon Davey, Strata Board Director

David Hodgson, Strata Service Director

Laurence Whitlock, Strata IT Director

Robin Barlow, Head of Security & Compliance

Martin Millmow, Head of Document Centres

David Sercombe, Head of Business Systems & Business Intelligence

Adrian Smith, Head of Infrastructure & Support

Peter Johns, Head of IT Solution Delivery

12. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Based on the existing annual rotation for the position of Chair, Councillor Twiss proposed that Councillor Atkinson representing Exeter City Council be elected Chair for the 2020/21 Municipal Year. This was seconded by Councillor Sparks, and

RESOLVED That Councillor Atkinson be elected Chair

13. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 January, 2020 were approved as a correct record. The minutes would be signed at a future date when practicable.

14. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

15. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC UNDER PROCEDURAL RULES

None.

16. QUESTION FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCILS UNDER PROCEDURE RULES

The following questions have been submitted by Councillor Millar of East Devon District Council. Answers were provided and circulated prior to the meeting.

Question 1

To ask the Committee, to confirm the total cost of purchasing Member iPads at East Devon District Council including maintenance and repairs, and to share all relevant papers containing the business case with Councillors.

Answer

In March 2018, Strata submitted a discussion document to the three authorities to present options for the support of councillor IT (attached).

Previously councillors provided their own IT, and there was an expectation that Strata would be able to support this privately owned IT.

One option that was presented was for the authority to provide councillors with a portable device enabling councillors to access emails, calendars, documents and the Modern Gov environment in a more consistent and supported manner. This enabled TDC and EDDC councillors to operate in a similar way to ECC councillors who had been using authority provisioned tablet devices for five years.

After internal debate within EDDC and TDC, Strata were advised to proceed with the purchase of portable devices for councillors and a project was initiated to procure, build, test and deploy Apple iPad devices to councillors.

EDDC made a decision to purchase the Apple iPad 12.9 inch Pro WiFi 64Gb for each councillor (see attached invoice)

TDC decided to purchase a smaller iPad device for each councillor, at a cheaper price.

The total cost for EDDC based on a five year usage of the Apple iPad devices is :

Total five year cost = £ 48,104

This cost is made up of :

- Application licensing included in Strata Core Licensing and base budgets.
- Councillor support provided as part of the Strata Service Desk service
- Councillor training provided as part of the Strata IT Training service.
- Initial iPad cost £ 47,089
- Current repair costs of £1,015

The costs for the devices were included and approved in the 2019/2020 budget process, ultimately by council in February 2019.

After deployment of the devices some councillors raised concern that they needed to be able to access emails, calendars from private devices (in addition to the iPad devices provide by the authority). To provide this functionality and to deliver access in a secure manner, Strata needed to purchase additional Microsoft O365 licences and Mimecast email security filtering.

The cost of this additional functionality over five years for the councillors who requested (36) this level of access is:

Total five year cost = £ 40,960

- EMS E3 Add-on (EDDC Cllrs) = £42.00 per user per year
- Mimecast Additional Email Security Filter (1st year free) £8,350 per Annum

These figures were presented to EDDC and they authorised Strata to proceed.

Strata believe that the provision of iPads to the councillors across all three authorities has:

- Enabled the authorities to provide a consistent delivery of Cllr content via a single supported device
- Helped to reduce print and paper usage, which has had a positive impact on the environment and costs.
- Provided improved levels of security for council data
- Improved levels of IT support for councillors
- Provided access to IT training (should it be required) via the Strata trainer.
- Provided a platform for the deployment of the Modern Gov application making it easier for Dem Services to support councillors
- Provided councillors with a lightweight device which can be used for all council related work and can be access remotely or whilst on council premises.
- Supported the secure deployment of the Zoom platform and enabled officers and councillors to operate effectively during the Covid19 crisis.
- Enabled councillors to access emails and content securely not just from the provided device but also from privately owned devices.
- In using Strata for the deployment and support of the devices there has been no additional charge made to the three authorities.
- Enabled Strata to offer a higher degree of support to Councillors than previously has been available.
- Using a single device has removed the previous high level of support burden on Strata, meaning that we have been able to keep support costs under control and delivered savings in excess of the original expectations.

Question 2

To ask the Committee, what progress they are making in assessing the potential for hybrid meetings.

Answer

Strata has submitted a paper on a handful of technical solutions to run hybrid meetings to the Democratic Services teams of all three Councils.

The paper also highlighted some challenges that we will come with running hybrid meetings, including the anticipated number of participants for meetings. The recommended solution would change if there were 10 people in attendance to if there were 20, for example.

Strata have recommend waiting to see how Teignbridge District Council's Hybrid meeting approach performs, which we are anticipating will begin initial testing later in September. TDC purchased a solution prior to Covid19 using the Public-I solution, though the implementation was delayed because of it. The three Democratic Services teams have worked well together through the pandemic, sharing knowledge and thinking, and we are encouraging that EDDC and ECC are involved with the testing of TDC's new solution as a way of helping to assess the viability within their own councils.

EDDC Democratic Services have accepted Strata's recommendation of reviewing the TDC hybrid project.

Question 3

To ask the Committee, have any town and parish Councils in the District approached STRATA or support since the Coronavirus Act 2020.

Answer

Strata have not received any requests from either town or parish councils within EDDC since the Coronavirus Act 2020.

In August 2020, we did receive a request from Dawlish Town Council regarding GIS data and in Sept 2020, we received a request from the Devon Association of Local Councils as to whether we could assist with the provision of training services.

In previous years, Strata have received enquiries from Seaton Town Council (2017) and Dawlish Town Council (2019).

Question 4

To ask the Committee, does it remain the policy to wind up the STRATA Joint Scrutiny Committee and has this been assessed in terms of transparency and Member/democratic oversight?

Answer

The operation of Strata has been subject to scrutiny since the formation of the organisation in 2014 / 2015.

Currently there are multiple levels of governance of Strata, these include the Strata Management Team, the Strata Board, the individual IRB's of each authority, the Joint Scrutiny Committee and the Joint Executive Committee. There are also external audit controls in place to monitor the organisation both in terms of financial and process / performance, these are provided by Francis Clarke (financial auditors) and the Devon Audit Partnership.

Strata produce a highly detailed monthly report for the three authorities along with an annual Business Plan, these documents are circulated widely and are discussed at a Strata Board and individual IRB level.

After five years of the successful operation of Strata which has seen considerable achievement against the original objectives of Reduced Risk, Reduced Cost and the provision of an IT service which has capacity and capability.

Financial performance is strong with Strata delivering in excess of £1m of savings in the financial year 2019/20, this added to the savings from previous years shows the original saving targets can not only be met and exceeded.

Devon Audit Partnership has shown Strata to be of a 'Good' standard and offers substantial assurance of the IT service.

Adding all existing governance commitments together, it shows that there is already considerable scrutiny of Strata and it's operation at multiple levels by all three authorities both individually and jointly.

We feel that given the success of the Strata business the time has come to simplify the governance structure, whilst ensuring that each authority still has the ability to scrutinise Strata through individual scrutiny committees, rather than having one Strata scrutiny committee.

Our plans prior to Covid were to review the existing governance structure and to reduce the governance burden on Strata, allowing Strata to focus on the delivery of exceptional IT service.

In October 2019, Strata produced a discussion document entitled 'Governance Framework', and this was subsequently presented to the JSC and JEC and discussed with a recommendation that we undertook a review of the Shareholder Agreement and worked to put into place the required changes.

However, unfortunately this has not been progressed further at this stage due to the demands put on Strata and the management team during the Covid 19 crisis and this has had to be a priority.

Moving forward once the current level of demand drops, it is the intention of the Strata Board to re-commence the work to make the change to the governance framework of Strata.

Supplementary Questions

Councillor Millar asked supplementary questions in relation to his questions 1 and 4 above as follows:

1. The cost of the provision of Ipads and remote o365 to EDD Councillors exceeded £80,000. How open was the decision between Members and Strata?

In response the Strata Director confirmed that this was a proposal that Strata put to the authorities in 2018 to improve the support for Councillors' IT. The options were discussed by both this Committee and Strata Joint Executive. The EDDC Strata Director confirmed the above adding that the minutes of the Joint Executive were ratified by EDDC's Cabinet, both initially and again when it approved the financial implications for the option in the budget. EDDC Overview and Scrutiny Committee would have also approved the budget which included the financial implications.

2. Can there be a reconsideration of this issue because now is not the time to reduce the scrutiny role given the changing environment in which we are now working and the scrutiny work of the committee has been good.

In response the Strata Director referred to this matter being discussed at the Committee at its last meeting during the Strata governance update. It was referred for consideration to the Strata Joint Executive in June. Teignbridge District Council provide legal support to Strata, and have been engaged to look at Strata's stakeholder agreement and constitution in relation to changing the governance structure. The Covid situation has meant Strata's focus has been on the delivery of the IT service rather than on the governance framework which has been delayed. The Strata Director for EDDC confirmed that the matter would need to back to all three Councils for agreement to the constitutional changes.

The Chair referred to Minute 8 of the meeting of the Committee 13 January 2020, when the matter was discussed, and asked that it be included on the next agenda.

17. STRATA IT DIRECTOR & MANAGER'S REPORT 1 MAY TO 31 JULY 2020

The Strata IT Director referred to the report circulated with the agenda. The Covid pandemic and consequential unprecedented working environment had resulted in Strata focusing on providing and delivering the IT service and support to officers and councillors in an exemplary way, and which has enabled Strata to demonstrate its true value. Strata had to increase its skills base to provide the support needed, and had achieved much over the last few months in adapting to the needs of the authorities. This included the creation of community hubs, support with virtual councillor meetings, and moving from office to remote working for officers in a period of about two weeks. This was testament to the standard of infrastructure provided to the authorities and procurement processes to achieve the provision of hardware to enable remote working in a secure way.

In addition, the Committee noted the following: the savings delivered last year were in excess of forecasts set out in the Business Plan at over £1million; the delivery of hybrid meetings was being investigated; the availability and standard of Strata systems has been maintained during the pandemic for most of the time, being

stable, reliable, flexible and adaptable to the environment; the majority of staff were still successfully working mainly remotely, with staff migrating back into the office; employee broadband issues were out of Strata's control; demand for IT services had significantly increased; these had been dealt through the implementation of a new service desk system; and customers were happy with the service delivery based on customer satisfaction survey; support had been given to the Councils' Members during remote meetings working with democratic services; hybrid meetings were being tested at TDC before investing in other solutions at EDDC and ECC; agile working for TDC was facilitated with the roll out of laptops and docking stations and the purchase of new software to support remote working; digital mailroom was being developed and had increased to deal with remote working which enabled post to be circulated the day of delivery; ECC had brought its leisure centres back in house and Strata were assisting the authority in implementing technology to allow the leisure premises to open again over the next couple of months; the importance of investment in staff resources and IT backup, and security of data, with about 40% of incoming emails being rejected; Strata are currently in the processes of undertaking the annual IT Health Check to enable PSN certification; cyber security training would be rolled out for all authorities; the IT Solutions Delivery was keeping projects on track and helped with delivery; Strata staff had adapted to the Covid situation well, supported Strata visions, were accepting of the need for continuous improvements and development, and have an exceptional low sickness rate; the Board would be considering governance at its next meeting and how the Councils would like Strata to be governed; the 2020-21 Business Plan had been agreed by ECC and EDDC and would be considered by TDC at the end of the month; and the 2021-22 Business Plan was being prepared and would be considered by the three Councils in due course.

In response to questions the Committee were advised on password security; that internet connection of Councillors and remote meetings running on private internet feeds were outside the control of Strata. Strata had no influence or access to the networks to resolve these issues but have given advice and guidance as to how home broadband provision could be improved; an issue with Global Desktop had been identified and was in the process of being resolved but which required software to be loaded onto all council devices of which there were some 2000; and the importance of investing in security systems.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

18. STRATA BUDGET MONITORING QUATER 1 2020/21

The Strata Director for Finance referred to the agenda report relating to the financial position of Strata. Strata was given £6.6million to run the services for 2020/21. The Covid pandemic had resulted in all Councils looking for savings. Additional Strata savings have been identified at £330K due to for example, delaying staff appointments, and procurement adjustments, resulting in a forecast

£1m refund to the 3 Councils this year. In addition, the Statement of Accounts 2019/20 which had been signed off by the Auditors. The Director explained the differences between a company and a Council in terms of financial management and practices, which enables Strata to return a refund to the Councils at year end.

RESOLVED

The report be noted.

19. STRATA ICT AUDIT SUMMARY 2019/20 DEVON AUDIT PARTNERSHIP

The Strata Director referred to the Devon Audit Partnership, an organisation which works with Strata. An audit plan is produced at the beginning of the year in relation to Strata services which measures performance and effectiveness, particularly project management and delivery and cyber security. The Audit concluded that the three Councils has substantial assurance that Strata can fulfil its role as the IT service provider with an adequate internal control framework.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

20. LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985 - EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

That, under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item particular on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

21. BUSINESS CASE FOR THE NEW FINANCE SYSTEM

The Committee referred to the agenda report. The strata Manager reported on the business case following its presentation to the Joint Executive Committee in June 2020.

RECOMMENDED

The Strata Joint Executive Committee is recommended to approve the recommendations set out in the report.

CLLR Y ATKINSON
Chairman

STRATA - JOINT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, 22 SEPTEMBER 2020

Present:

Councillors Arnott (Chair), Bialyk and Dewhirst

Non-Voting Members:

Karime Hassan, Phil Shears, Mark Williams

Member Attendance:

Councillors Clarence

Officers in Attendance:

Robin Barlow, Head of Security & Compliance

Simon Davey, Strata Board Director

David Hodgson, Strata Finance Director

Peter Johns

Martin Millmow, Head of Document Centres

Paul Nicholls, Food Health & Safety Manager

David Sercombe, Head of Business Systems & Business Intelligence

Adrian Smith, Head of Infrastructure & Support

Laurence Whitlock, Strata IT Director

Amanda Coombes, Democratic Services Officer

23. APOLOGIES

None received.

24. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2020 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

25. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

26. QUESTION FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCILS

In response to supplementary questions from Cllr Clarence (Teignbridge District Council) in respect of the maintenance and support of personal IT equipment and the availability of access to councillor emails and calendars on personal devices, the Strata IT Director advised that Teignbridge District Council (TDC) had not

currently taken up the option of the enhanced service, whereas East Devon District Council had. The enhanced service was a chargeable option, and this had previously been presented to the TDC Overview and Scrutiny Committee, but funding was not approved.

In respect of the maintenance, Cllr Dewhirst stated that there were no plans for Strata to maintain personal equipment, as the authority had provided an iPad for councillor use.

27. STRATA IT DIRECTOR & MANAGER'S REPORT

The Strata IT Director presented the report on activity from 1 May to 31 July 2020, identifying key activities, successes and areas for improvement.

He brought members attention to the 'Value for Money' question which he advised had required Strata to look at what they do now compared to the starting point in 2014, and to also look at associated costs now compared to 2014 costs + RPI. The outcome of this exercise would be circulated to councillors.

During discussion, members raised questions regarding the use of the software application Microsoft Teams. Strata were currently working with the three authorities and a series of workshops had been setup to explore how the authorities may benefit from MS Teams and this would then enable a set of clear requirements to be defined, and a business case potentially drawn up. It was emphasized that any early phase deployment of MS Teams would not replace the Skype for Business telephony platform or the Zoom conferencing platform.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

28. STRATA FINANCE REPORT

The Strata Finance Director presented the report advising on the financial position of Strata at the end of quarter 1 of the financial year 2020/2021, including both revenue and capital spend. He advised that the Company had been given a total of £6.60 million to run the IT Services in 2020/21 along with funding for various capital projects.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

29. STRATA ICT REPORT - DEVON AUDIT PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL AUDIT REPORT

The Strata IT Director stated previous reports had highlighted the strengths of both the Strata's strategic concept and direction and, in the day to day delivery of the full range of IT services to the Partners. Work undertaken this year further

confirmed that the direction of travel remained upwards and that the appetite to continually improve remained as strong as ever.

Devon Audit Partnership (DAP) considered the Business Plan to be of a high standard and this, along with the high standard operational reporting and metrics, provided the measures from which continual service improvement can be delivered. Strata continued to perform strongly during 2019/20 and again exceeded the financial benefit targets set by the Partners. DAP advised that the authorities had Substantial Assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control framework in Strata Service Solutions Ltd.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

30. LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985 - EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

31. BUSINESS CASE FOR THE NEW FINANCE SYSTEM

The Head of Business Systems, Strata presented the report which was undertaken into the case for a new finance system.

RESOLVED that the following be approved:-

- (1) the Strata Business Case for the Financial Management Convergence Project, on the basis that the tender documents would be structured to allow the procurement of a Financial Management System for one, two or three authorities. Teignbridge District Council would be the first authority to implement the system. East Devon District and Exeter City Council's retain the option of adopting the same system at a later date; and
- (2) to proceed with a formal Tender exercise for a common Financial Management System for all three authorities.

The meeting started at 4.00 pm and finished at 5.24 pm.

Chair

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EXECUTIVE
(HELD AS A VIRTUAL MEETING)

Tuesday 1 September 2020

Present:

Councillor Bialyk (Chair)
Councillors Sutton, Foale, Ghusain, Harvey, Morse, Pearson, Williams, Wright and Wood

Apologies:

Councillor K. Mitchell in his capacity as an Opposition Leader.

In attendance

Councillors Leadbetter in his capacity as an Opposition Leader

Also present:

Chief Executive & Growth Director, Director (JY), Corporate Manager Democratic and Civic Support, Service Lead - Environmental Health & Community Safety, Democratic Services Officer (MD) and Democratic Services Officer (HB)

84

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2020, were taken as read and approved as correct, for signing by the Chair at the earliest possible convenience.

85

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests were made.

86

QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC UNDER STANDING ORDER NO. 19

A member of the public, Mr Cleasby submitted the following question, related to Minute No. 89:-

- In relation to para 10.1 of the report at item 8, will the Council please explain exactly what is envisaged the “senior leader” members of the Liveable Exeter Place Board will get out of the meetings so that they find it worthwhile to continue attending?

The Council Leader responded:-

The Liveable Exeter Place Board members have previously endorsed the Exeter 2040 Vision and are generously contributing their time to support the realisation of our Vision.

The Place Board provides a forum in which to discuss challenges in the realisation of the Vision and what the Place Board members can do, individually and collectively, to overcome these challenges and to realise the 2040 Vision. The Place Board also gives the leaders the opportunity to raise other issues which they believe require the support of others to overcome, to the benefit of the City.

Any matters raised by the Board which require any Council decisions will always be brought through the Council's existing decision making and governance processes in order to ensure transparency.

Mr Cleasby asked a supplementary question:-

Do you agree that the participants may well seek to get inside information or competitive advantage on emerging development plans and that the Place Board's decisions and conclusions will have to be accepted by Exeter City Council or they will see no point in continuing?

The Council Leader responded:-

The purpose of the Board is not to enable anyone to seek advantage and it is unfortunate if it is not fully appreciated what the Board is designed to do.

87 **FOOD LAW AND HEALTH AND SAFETY SERVICE ENFORCEMENT PLAN 2020**
- 2021

The Executive received the report, which sought approval to adopt the statutory Food Law and Health and Safety Service Enforcement Plan 2020/21, which sets out the Council's regulatory function in respect of food safety and health and safety and the priorities for the forthcoming year.

Particular reference was made to the need for the Council to demonstrate how it would fulfil its regulatory obligations in respect of its food safety service and to make adequate arrangements for enforcement of health and safety.

RECOMMENDED that Council approve: -

- (1) the Food Law and Health and Safety Enforcement Service Plan 2020/21; and
- (2) the authorisation for the Service Lead - Environmental Health and Community Safety to change the plan in the light of national guidance and/or to meet operational needs.

88 **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE POLICY FOR THE BETTER CARE FUND**

The Executive received the report on the Better Care Fund, which was a joint programme between the Council and the NHS to share health and care services. The Council had a statutory responsibility to allocate Better Care Fund resources, which are allocated to Districts through the Upper Tier Social Care Authority (Devon County Council), including financial assistance to eligible residents. The policy requires regular review to ensure that the available assistance is appropriate and to target resources to ensure that vulnerable individuals had access to support when it is needed.

Members welcomed the following within the updated policy:-

- the streamlining of the process for stair-lift grants and the removal of the means testing following a successful pilot which had led to the doubling of the number of stair-lifts installed in the last 12 months;
- the widening of the type of assistance available to tackle delayed hospital discharges; and

- the range of Warm Home Grants provided to those in greatest need which support the Council's desire to promote the use of renewable energy and energy efficiency.

RESOLVED that the Executive supports the adoption of the revised Financial Assistance Policy for the Better Care Fund; and

RECOMMENDED that Council adopt the revised Financial Assistance Policy for the Better Care Fund.

89

LIVEABLE EXETER PLACE BOARD

The Executive received the report which provided an update on the governance structure for the Liveable Exeter Garden City programme, including the terms of reference and membership of the Board, following the establishment of a Board to oversee the Liveable Exeter Garden City programme in July 2019.

Members were informed of:-

- the ambition to ensure high quality place making and built environment, key to which was the provision of 12,000 new homes by 2040, supported by necessary infrastructure;
- the Place Board amended the Exeter Vision 2040 statement to include the Net Zero Exeter 2030 target;
- the development of a Cultural Compact and Exeter designated City of Literature status by UNESCO;
- the role of the Sport England Local Delivery Pilot in developing active and healthy lifestyles;
- the creation of a strategic board, comprising the City's leading stakeholders, enabled Exeter to respond effectively to the Covid pandemic through the development of a Recovery Plan for the City; and
- one place being held on the Board for the University of Exeter's new Vice-Chancellor Lisa Roberts.

The following responses were given to Members' queries: -

- the Chair of the Chamber of Commerce, as a Place Board member, would represent the interests of local businesses; and
- the terms of reference and membership of the Place Board would be kept under review.

RESOLVED that: -

- (1) the terms of reference and membership of the Liveable Exeter Place Board be noted; and
- (2) matters arising from the Liveable Exeter Place Board and issues for consideration at the Liveable Exeter Place Board, be reported back to the City Council by the Leader of the City Council on a regular basis.

90

FREEDOM OF THE CITY

The Executive received the report which set out a proposal to offer the Freedom of the City to Mr Richard Jacobs in recognition of his outstanding service to the City of Exeter as a local businessman and entrepreneur.

It was noted that reference to the Ted Wragg Trust now supporting two schools in Exeter, should be amended to refer to two schools in Plymouth.

RECOMMENDED to Council that:-

- (1) the title of Honorary Freeman of the City Status be conferred on Richard Jacobs; and
- (2) the Right Worshipful the Lord Mayor be requested to convene an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council to be held on the rising of the Ordinary Meeting on 20 October 2020, for the purpose of passing the appropriate resolution under Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972.

91 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985 - EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Act.

92 **EXETER CITY GROUP - RECOMMENDATIONS ON GOVERNANCE**

The Executive received the report which sought to make governance changes to the Exeter City Group to ensure that the Group of companies could play a significant role in the Council's strategic agenda to support the recovery of the city, building at pace and scale, in demonstrating environmental excellence under the Net Zero Exeter agenda; and contributing significant income to the Council's general fund to help address the funding gap evident in the medium to long term funding of the Council.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) the current Shareholder Representative appoint additional Directors, namely the Council's Director (Chief Finance Officer) and Director (the City Solicitor) to both the Exeter City Group Board and Exeter City Living;
- (2) following the implementation of (1) above, the Shareholder Representative be changed by removing the current Director appointment (David Bartram) and appointing the Chief Executive & Growth Director in the role of Shareholder Representative to undertake the activities and decisions as identified in the Shareholder Representative Delegated Powers document, in consultation with the Leader of the City Council and the Portfolio Holder for Council Housing Development and Services;
- (3) the new Shareholder Representative be authorised to agree any necessary amendments to the Management Agreement in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Council Housing Development and Services; and
- (4) Exeter City Living be requested to consider appointing two additional senior management posts to the Exeter City Group, comprising a Development Director in Exeter City Living and a Director of Operations overseeing

procurement of business services and development of the organisation across the Exeter City Group.

(The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 6.26 pm)

Chair

The decisions indicated will normally come into force 5 working days after publication of the Statement of Decisions unless called in by a Scrutiny Committee. Where the matter in question is urgent, the decision will come into force immediately. Decisions regarding the policy framework or corporate objectives or otherwise outside the remit of the Executive will be considered by Council.

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EXECUTIVE
(HELD AS A VIRTUAL MEETING)

Tuesday 6 October 2020

Present:

Councillor Bialyk (Chair)
Councillors Sutton, Foale, Ghusain, Harvey, Morse, Pearson, Williams, Wright and Wood

In attendance:

Councillor Leadbetter in his capacity as an Opposition Leader.

Apologies:

Councillor K. Mitchell in his capacity as an Opposition Leader.

Also present:

Chief Executive & Growth Director, Director City Development, Housing & Supporting People, Director Net Zero Exeter & City Management, Director Communications, Culture & Leisure Facilities, Director Finance, Corporate Manager Democratic and Civic Support, City Surveyor, Principal Project Manager (Strategic Infrastructure Planning), Principal Project Manager (Development) (HS), Democratic Services Officer (MD) and Democratic Services Officer (HB)

Councillor in attendance under Standing Order No. 44

Councillor Hannaford speaking on item 8 (Min. No. 98)

93 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 September 2020 were taken as read and approved for signing as correct at the earliest possible convenience.

94 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests were made.

95 **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

No questions from members of the public were received.

96 **CHANGES TO EXECUTIVE PORTFOLIOS AND PRIORITIES 2020/21**

Councillor Bialyk proposed and Councillor Foale seconded that Councillor Morse be nominated as Chair of Planning Committee, for recommendation to Council on 20 October 2020.

RECOMMENDED to Council that Councillor Morse be nominated as Chair of the Planning Committee.

RESOLVED that the list of Portfolio Holders Responsibilities and Priorities 2020/21 be noted.

97

EXETER CITY COUNCIL ANNUAL INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING STATEMENT

The Executive received the report which sought approval for the publication of the Infrastructure List, as part of an Annual Infrastructure Funding Statement (AIFS). The AIFS regulations dictated that the AIFS must be published by 31 December 2020 and include other, purely factual, information about CIL and Section 106 Agreements.

The Portfolio Holder for Communities and Culture moved an amendment to the recommendations, to include the following words in Appendix 1 of the report presented at the meeting:-

- Supporting and embedding culture as part of Liveable Exeter infrastructure projects;
- Supporting Major cultural investment projects as identified by the Cultural Compact; and
- Delivering on the aims and objectives of Exeter's Cultural Strategy.

Members noted that the statement helped inform the public that spend on infrastructure improvements was vital to enhance and support ongoing developments across the city.

Following the discussion, Councillor Ghusain moved, seconded by Councillor Sutton, the amended recommendation with the inclusion of the additional wording for Appendix 1 in the report, which was voted upon and unanimously supported.

RECOMMENDED that Council: -

- (1) approve the publication of the Infrastructure List presented in Appendix 1 of the report, along with the other requisite information in the Annual Infrastructure Funding Statement;
- (2) note the Scheme of Delegation review, as set out in Min. No. 102 below, for the proposed delegated arrangements for reviewing and publishing the Annual Infrastructure Funding Statement; and
- (3) support the inclusion of the following words in Appendix 1 of the report:-
 - Supporting and embedding culture as part of Liveable Exeter infrastructure projects;
 - Supporting Major cultural investment projects as identified by the Cultural Compact; and
 - Delivering on the aims and objectives of Exeter's Cultural Strategy.

98

2020/21 GENERAL FUND CAPITAL MONITORING STATEMENT – QUARTER 1

The Executive received the report on the current position in respect of the Council's revised annual capital programme. The report sought to advise Members of the anticipated level of deferred expenditure into future years and required approval to amend the annual capital programme in order to reflect the reported variations.

Councillor Hannaford, having given notice under Standing Order No 44, spoke on this item. He made the following points:-

- welcomed the proposal to repair the roof of the Pines (spelling corrected from Princes in the report) Gardens Gatehouse, the original revenue budget approval of £16,500 being replaced with a capital budget of £85,000;
- as well as the historical importance of the Gatehouse to St. Thomas, its repair was a health and safety requirement; and
- this enhancement would encourage greater use of the Gardens which would hopefully help reduce litter, graffiti etc.

RECOMMENDED that Council approve:-

- (1) the revision of the annual capital programme to reflect the reported variations as detailed in paragraph 8.1 and Appendix 1 of the report; and
- (2) the additional budget requests, as detailed in paragraph 8.7 of the report.

99

OVERVIEW OF GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2020/21 – QUARTER 1

The Executive received the report on the overall financial position of the General Fund Revenue Budgets for the 2020/21 financial year after three months.

The Director Finance advised Members that, following approval of the Emergency Budget at the July Council meeting, the first quarter showed an £850,000 improvement against the budget as a result of car parking income being ahead of projection and the release of £200,000 as the third tranche of Government emergency funding support in response to the Covid-19 crisis. He advised however, that the former had levelled off and that the Government deferral of a reduced settlement for Local Government for this financial year may or may not be carried forward for another year. A decision on this and the announcement on Business Rates and an anticipated cessation of New Homes Bonus scheme was awaited.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes and approves (where applicable):-

- (1) the General Fund forecast financial position for the 2020/21 financial year;
- (2) the self-financing supplementary budgets as detailed in paragraph 8.7 of the report;
- (3) the outstanding Sundry Debt position as at June 2020; and
- (4) the creditors' payments performance.

100

2020/21 HRA BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - QUARTER 1

The Executive received the report on the overall financial position of the HRA Revenue and Capital Budgets for the 2020/21 financial year after three months. Members noted the identified vulnerable budgets and the budgetary over/under-spends detailed in the report. The budgets marked as at risk were explained as factors beyond the control of the Council, which may result in deviations from budget and were subject to close monitoring by officers.

Particular reference was made to the Council taking out a loan of £15.4 million from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLb) to support its social housing programme. The Council was therefore taking advantage of the new, discounted PWLB rate enabling it to borrow at 1% below the normal borrowing rate.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing Development and Services announced that the Council had successfully bid for a Government grant of £600,000 to roll out a retrofit programme for Council houses which would commence within the next two weeks and thanked the housing team for their work on the bid.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes and approves (where applicable):-

- (1) the HRA forecast financial position for 2020/21 financial year; and
- (2) the revision of the HRA Capital Programme to reflect the reported variations detailed in Appendix 4 of the report.

101

GOVERNANCE REVIEW UPDATE

The Executive received the report which provided Members with an update on the new governance arrangements which were agreed by Council on 15 October 2019. It was highlighted that, due to the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on the Council's decision making process, it was too early to fully appreciate the changes that were made and, accordingly, a further review would be brought back to the Executive in 12 months.

Councillor Leadbetter, speaking as an Opposition Leader, welcomed the report.

RESOLVED that the Council's revised governance arrangements be noted with a further report to be brought to the Executive in 12 months.

102

AMENDMENTS TO THE SCHEME OF DELEGATION AND TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE

The Executive received the report which set out the proposed amendments to the Scheme of Delegation to Officers to match operational arrangements. The report also sought a minor change to the Terms of Reference for the Licensing Sub-Committee, to provide Licensing Authorities the power under section 132A of the Licensing Act 2003 to revoke or suspend personal licences.

RECOMMENDED that Council approve:-

- (1) the changes to the Scheme of Delegation to Officers as set out in the Appendix to the report; and
- (2) the following addition to the Terms of Reference for the Licensing Sub-Committee:-
 - To determine whether to revoke or suspend a personal licence where convictions come to light after grant or renewal.

103

CORPORATE ASSET MAINTENANCE

The Executive received the report on the identified asset maintenance priorities following an asset inspection programme. A summary of the various projects was given together with an overview of the scale of the investment required. An indicative programme of works was also provided.

Members noted that:-

- the identified assets did not include properties within the leisure contract that had now been brought in-house. These properties were in the process of being surveyed;
- the definition of a level B assessment for a property being satisfactory and performing as intended and being fit for purpose but with minor deterioration; and
- property assessments were based on reports of condition surveys and structural engineers.

RECOMMENDED that Council:-

- (1) approve the identified budgets for each project to ensure good asset management;
- (2) approve the additional budget required for 2020/21 and note the annual funding requirements for future years, forming the basis of the capital programme for the next four years as detailed in the report, for approval in February 2021; and
- (3) note the significant overall cost of £37.5 million and approve an asset review programme to identify potential surplus assets, which may be made available for sale in order to finance the programme of works.

104

EXETER CHIEFS

The Leader congratulated the Exeter Chiefs on reaching the Final of the Heineken Champions Cup.

105

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985 - EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Act.

106

SUPPORT FOR DISTRICT HEATING NETWORK TO SERVE THE ALPHINGTON STRATEGIC ALLOCATION AND SOUTH WEST EXETER

The Executive received the report on the delivery of the District Heat Network at South West Exeter, including making a site for an energy centre available on Exeter City Council land at Matford and acquiring unregistered land titles at Mutton Lane.

The Portfolio Holder for Net Zero Exeter 2030 welcomed the report which would help the City Council meet its carbon reduction target and to become carbon neutral by 2030.

RECOMMENDED that Council approve:-

- (1) the City Council continuing to support the delivery of a Heat Network to serve Developments in Alphington, Exeter and in Teignbridge district at South West

Exeter and the connection of that network to the Energy Recovery Facility including the application of third party funding;

- (2) making land available at Matford on a commercial basis for the purposes of an energy centre to provide supplemental and backup heat generation for the District Heat Network at South West Exeter, providing that the Council is satisfied that the network operator has used reasonable endeavours to secure a suitable alternative site and has been unable to do so, and also provided that existing third party rights on the land can be successfully re-negotiated; and
- (3) assisting the delivery of the network by acquiring unregistered titles in the vicinity of Mutton Lane, on the basis that its costs will be recovered from the network operator.

(The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 6.29 pm)

Chair

The decisions indicated will normally come into force 5 working days after publication of the Statement of Decisions unless called in by a Scrutiny Committee. Where the matter in question is urgent, the decision will come into force immediately. Decisions regarding the policy framework or corporate objectives or otherwise outside the remit of the Executive will be considered by Council.

REPORT TO COUNCIL

Date of Meeting: 20th October 2020

Report of: Chief Executive & Growth Director

Title: Our Strategy – Corporate Plan Autumn 2020 Update

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Council

1. What is the report about?

1.1 The report presents an update to the council's 2018-21 Corporate Plan.

2. Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that:

- Council approves Our Strategy – Corporate Plan Autumn 2020 Update
- Any necessary drafting amendments before publication be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

3. Reasons for the recommendation

3.1 To endorse publication of the plan, to enable members, employees and stakeholders to be informed about the council's updated, key priorities.

4. What are the resource implications including non-financial resources?

4.1 There are no resource implications. Funding for any projects or initiatives identified in the plan will be considered as they are approved on an individual basis.

5. Section 151 Officer Comments

None

6. What are the legal aspects?

None

7. Monitoring Officer's comments

None

8. Report details

8.1 The aim of the corporate plan is:

- to promote understanding and ownership of the council's achievements, direction and priorities;
- to set out some of the key actions the council will be taking;
- to enable reporting on progress with priorities

8.2 The corporate plan was originally published in October 2018. It set out how, as leaders of the city and the council, we would:

- Help deliver the emerging Exeter Vision 2040, by providing services and developments that build on Exeter's growth and success and meet local communities' aspirations
- Focus on strategic programmes that address the current, major challenges facing the city
- Run a successful and effective council

8.3 In summary, the autumn 2020 update effectively retains the priorities in the original plan, but places greater emphasis on the delivering Net Zero Exeter 2030 and the recovery work in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. There are also updates on promoting active and healthy lifestyles and building great neighbourhoods.

9. What risks are there and how can they be reduced?

9.1 The risks of projects or initiatives identified in the plan will be assessed as they are approved on an individual basis and included in the Council's Risk Register as appropriate.

10. Equality Act 2010 (The Act)

10.1 In recommending this proposal no potential impact has been identified on people with protected characteristics as determined by the Act because impacts will be assessed as required by the projects and initiatives identified in the plan.

11. Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications

11.1 The updated plan confirms that delivering Net Zero Exeter 2030 is a key priority for the council.

Chief Executive & Growth Director: Karime Hassan

Author: Bruce Luxton

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

None

Contact for enquires:
Democratic Services (Committees)
Room 4.36
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Our Strategy





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Cllr Phil Bialyk
Leader,
Exeter City Council

Introduction

Our updated corporate plan reflects the changes that have occurred since we produced Our Strategy 2018-2021.

Since then the council has declared a Climate Emergency in Exeter and has set the ambitious target of creating a Net Zero Carbon city by 2030. This will be at the heart of everything we do going forward.

We have also experienced the Covid-19 crisis, which continues to have an impact on all of our lives in a way that would have been almost impossible to imagine before the outbreak.

I am extremely proud of the way our city is responding to the crisis. Residents, communities and organisations across Exeter have come together during lockdown to look after and support each other during the most difficult times.

This work is ongoing, as it becomes obvious that the virus is something that we are going to have to learn to live with in the future.

The council has not been immune to the impact of Covid-19, and we have been hit hard financially as many others have. We have had to work extremely hard to balance the books in the current financial year, and we will need to continue setting very challenging budgets in the years ahead. Delivering value for money services is therefore critical.

It would be easy to scale back our ambitions as a result of the Covid-19 crisis. But I will not let that happen. I am absolutely determined that the success our city has enjoyed over recent years will continue.

We will protect and maintain the services that we as residents all depend on. At the same time we will pioneer transformational programmes designed to address active lifestyles, clean growth, active travel, innovation, housing supply and a carbon neutral city.

It is essential that Exeter is at the forefront of the UK's recovery from the Covid-19 crisis. Everyone at the council is working hard to ensure this happens, but we can't do it alone. The collaborative approach we have taken with our partners on the Place Board means all major institutions and organisations in Exeter now speak with one united voice.

It's not simply about returning to where we were. We have pledged to Build Back Better - that means facilitating a sustainable recovery which builds on our commitment to delivering a carbon neutral city.

Since we declared a Climate Emergency in Exeter last year a lot of work has taken place with our partners at Exeter City Futures to create a roadmap to a carbon neutral future. Now is the time to start putting this into action. That's why I have set up a new portfolio dedicated to lowering carbon emissions and fighting climate change, with a new team set up to support Net Zero. The council has a long and proud record in reducing energy through a range of ambitious measures introduced over the last decade. Now we are planning for the next phase of this work.

We have a lot of plans - the buildings that we are creating here in Exeter are to Passivhaus standards, reducing carbon by up to 90 per cent and reducing the bills for households. We are bringing forward 500 council houses in the coming years all built to that standard.

We will be at the forefront of retrofitting existing properties across the city to be highly energy efficient and low carbon, reducing fuel bills and bringing clean growth to Exeter, with good skilled jobs and new apprenticeships in the technology of the future.

This update highlights our corporate priorities, which guide everything we do.

They are:

- **Delivering Net Zero Exeter 2030**
- **Promoting active and healthy lifestyles**
- **Building great neighbourhoods**
- **Providing value for money services**
- **Leading a well-run council**

These priorities, together with the recent structural changes I have made to the council, will ensure Exeter is in the best possible position to continue its economic recovery from the Covid-19 crisis, while ensuring that the fight against climate change remains at the top of the agenda.

The work we do today will shape how Exeter looks in the future. We have set out a clear vision for what we want to achieve in the next couple of decades: an innovative and analytical city, a healthy and inclusive city, the most active city in the UK, a city with accessible world-class education, a liveable and connected city, a leading sustainable city and a city of culture.

I hope this is a vision in which we can all share, and I know it is one that we can achieve if we all continue to work together in partnership.

October 2020



Build Back Better

Supporting Exeter's recovery from Covid-19: Overview

Key public sector agencies, businesses and community stakeholders in the city have worked together to produce a comprehensive plan to steer the recovery from Covid-19. Build Back Better focuses on a place-based 'Exeter' response as we oversee the transition from crisis management to turnaround and recovery planning. It aligns with and compliments the work being done at county and regional level.

It is a testament to Exeter's spirit of collaboration that so many organisations have come together to work on this plan.

Exeter's recovery plan details seven recovery groups:



Chaired by members of the Liveable Exeter Place Board, the recovery groups have offered the opportunity for many leading organisations to support the recovery plan for the city. In doing so the members have drawn out detailed, city-level knowledge and understanding of opportunities and challenges unique to Exeter. Tying this into the wealth of detailed knowledge and understanding about their specific areas of focus has resulted in a bespoke plan to drive growth back into Exeter and the surrounding region - but to also deliver growth which is sustainable and inclusive.

“Exeter has always been a successful city, we’ve worked hard to keep it that way and now we have to work even harder to ensure we remain successful into the future and Build Back Better.”

Cllr Phil Bialyk, Leader



In December 2019, organisations from within the City of Exeter and those with a keen interest in the continued growth and success of the city as an economic engine of the Greater Exeter regions, came together to form the Liveable Exeter Place Board.

Here they agreed a commitment to Exeter's Vision 2040, to be recognised as a leading sustainable city and global leader in addressing the social, economic and environmental challenges of climate change and urbanisation.

The council will play a lead and critical role in realising this vision.

The Exeter Vision

Innovative & analytical city:

Exeter will be a model of strong local democracy. Communities will organise themselves and use their assets and resources to reduce inequalities and create a sense of belonging. The city's anchor institutions will drive local impact. Active, engaged citizens and communities will be empowered to create, share and use data to respond to shared problems and needs. Exeter will be a young people-friendly city and young people will have a meaningful voice in the decisions that affect them and their communities.

An innovative and analytical culture will support communities, businesses, civil society and public bodies to work together to solve the city's challenges and achieve its ambitions. The city institutions work collaboratively with a coherence in pursuit of the city's vision.

Healthy & inclusive:

Exeter will be healthy and happy and local services will support people to live their lives well, in the ways that matter to them. Every resident will have a home that is secure, affordable and healthy in a balanced and connected neighbourhood that supports wellbeing and reduces social isolation. Access to clean, secure and affordable energy will help to eliminate fuel poverty. Health, care and wellbeing services will be designed and delivered in partnership with the communities who use them.

The most active city in the UK:

Exeter will be the most active and accessible city in England – transport will not be a barrier to economic or social activities, and sustainable means of travel will be cheaper, quicker and more convenient than private car ownership. Land currently dominated by driving and parking will be freed up for social, economic and environmental uses and air will be clean and healthy. A high-quality and accessible built environment and green spaces, with great arts and cultural facilities, will encourage healthy, active lifestyles. A comprehensive network of safe routes will ensure that most everyday journeys are made by walking and cycling.

By the time they are an adult,
a child born in Exeter today will
live in a city that is inclusive,
healthy and sustainable
- a city where the opportunities
and benefits of prosperity are
shared and all citizens are able
to participate fully in the city's
economic, social, cultural
and civic life.

Accessible world-class education:

Exeter will be agile and innovative, and economic growth will be clean, inclusive and resilient. Local supply chains will be stronger, supporting the city's businesses and social enterprises and keeping more money within the local economy. All residents will have access to world-class education and training, and meaningful, high-quality employment with fair wages. The life-changing benefits of access to and participation in arts, culture and physical activity will be realised. Employers will be able to recruit, nurture and retain a skilled local workforce as well as attracting the best global talent.

Liveable & connected:

Exeter will be a liveable city, with a thriving city centre, within a network of thriving rural and coastal towns and villages. The impacts of growth will be managed and mitigated and communities will lead development, helping to create a city where everyone has access to the places and services which enable them to meet their needs and lead fulfilling lives. Urban planning will protect and enhance Exeter's exceptional natural and historic environment, safeguard its iconic landscape setting, and encourage high-quality contemporary design that complements and enhances the city's heritage.

A leading sustainable city:

Exeter will be a carbon neutral city by 2030 and recognised as a leading sustainable city and a global leader in addressing the social, economic and environmental challenges of climate change and urbanisation. The Exeter of the future will have grasped the opportunities ahead of us today.

Culture:

Exeter will be known nationally and internationally as a city of culture. It will innovate and lead in the area of the environment, wellbeing, cultural literacy, creative making and heritage innovation to build a living city where everyone thrives. Under its UNESCO City of Literature status Exeter will become a destination for writers and a city of readers. The city will use the power of literature and words to pursue a set of wellbeing goals to improve life for all.





“To achieve our net-zero carbon ambitions we must seek new ways of doing things and seek out new approaches to delivering services and accessing investment.

We must work much more closely together, across the public, business and community sectors, sharing responsibility for finding joint solutions for the challenges we are all facing and seeking wherever possible to collaborate and join up our services locally.”

Net Zero Exeter 2030 Plan, Exeter City Futures

The council has declared a climate emergency

Like Exeter, many other cities and towns are aiming to be carbon neutral; but few have set out clear and deliverable plans to show how that will be reached. The council asked Exeter City Futures to work in partnership with the city to create a clear delivery roadmap. Net Zero Exeter 2030 sets out the scale of the challenge, and the likely actions and investment required to ensure that Exeter is, and is in a position to remain, carbon neutral by 2030.

This marks the start of an exciting 10-year journey for our city. Success will only be achieved through a genuinely collective effort to ensure Exeter remains one of the greatest places to live in the UK.

The plan sets out a series of practical actions that local authorities, organisations and individuals can take, with associated carbon savings and cost, all of which Exeter will need to put in place in order to be carbon neutral by 2030.

Some of the key findings from the plan include a 53,000 tonnes of carbon saving if 100% of Exeter's electricity was generated from clean sources, as well as 140,000 tonnes of carbon saving if Exeter were to exploit the maximum potential for renewable generation (including solar, wind, geothermal).

In July 2020 the council adopted Net Zero Exeter 2030 as council policy to inform all policy documents, plans and corporate decision making in response to the Climate Emergency and in pursuance of the goal to make Exeter a carbon neutral city by 2030.

We will be exploring opportunities to secure investment and to create mechanisms for funding the programmes set out in the plan. Once the financial position of the City Council has been clarified with Government financial support as a consequence of the Covid-19 crisis, we will be explaining how we will deliver the actions set out in the section "what Exeter City Council can do".





We know that active and healthy lifestyles bring wider benefits to individuals and communities by reducing health inequality, tackling congestion, improving community connectivity and reducing social isolation.

Background

In England one in four people do less than 30 minutes of physical activity a week, while one in six deaths is linked to inactivity. In Exeter, some people are already more physically active than the national average. Exeter is overall a healthy place to live but some areas in the city have poor health outcomes. Whilst prosperity overall in the city has grown in recent years, the health inequalities gap between the most and least well-off areas has increased. We know that active and healthy lifestyles bring wider benefits to individuals and communities by reducing health inequality, tackling congestion, improving community connectivity and reducing social isolation.

The challenge

There is a widening inequality gap for Exeter communities in terms of health, employment and access to services. Exeter has populations that face social and financial exclusion, particularly in the six wards lying in the top 20% most deprived in the country. Our analytical approach has highlighted 20 priority areas across the city with the highest rates of inactivity leading to poorest health outcomes for those residents.

The most recent Active Lives survey data shows that 15.8% of people in Exeter are inactive, taking part in less than 30 minutes a week of physical activity. In total, including children and young people, we estimate that over 30,000 residents are doing less than the recommended 150 minutes of physical activity per week. Our local research shows that, nearly four in ten (37.9%) of people in our priority areas are inactive, nearly three times the average of the rest of the population of Exeter.

Some groups are at significant disadvantage and communities are unequal. There are certain groups, such as those on low incomes or unemployed, women and people living with disabilities who struggle to be physically active in their everyday lives. As a result the life expectancy for residents in Topsham

is over 86 years. This is more than 12 years greater than for those living in Sidwell Street where life expectancy is just 74.5 years. This is close to the maximum life expectancy inequality (16.7 years) between most and least deprived areas in England. Research shows that those who do the least activity stand to benefit the most from moving more, even if it's just small changes like gentle jogging, swimming, or playing games and exercising in the park.

Exeter has significant challenges with transport and mobility across the city, at times being gridlocked. Over 40% of car journeys within the city boundaries are between 0-5kms. People are now beginning to behave differently, more are working from home and more sustainable forms of transport are becoming prevalent. This is why our future plans have a relentless focus on doing more within our priority neighbourhoods. We want more people moving more in everyday life and we are working with our partners to find more ways to get people out of cars and walking and cycling more in their neighbourhoods and for their regular commutes.

Our plans

Covid-19 has had a profound effect on the way we behave. Social distancing and restrictions on movement have had a profound effect on how people play, exercise, travel and work. We have overhauled our pre-pandemic plans taking into account local and national insights, particularly from our strategic partner Sport England. The important benefits of being physically active have been highlighted throughout the pandemic and the need to find ways to support those who struggle the most to be active in everyday life has become more acute. We are continually evolving our plans as we seek to understand the changing needs of residents and communities and how to make lasting, positive behaviour change in this new and challenging environment.



Sport England Local Delivery Pilot

As one of 12 national pilot sites we continue to work with Sport England and local delivery partners on an ambitious plan to increase physical activity levels in priority neighbourhoods where there is the highest risk of physical inactivity. With funding from Sport England secured until 2025 we will be engaging with communities through our new social movement and digital platform called "Live&Move". This will gather and share stories of people in our communities who are realising the benefits of being active in everyday life.

We will also be:

- **Relaunching the Exeter Green Circle as an accessible fun walking route across the city.**
- **Supporting people to take part in informal physical activity in their neighbourhood.**
- **Working with primary and secondary schools to help more children and young people walk, scoot and cycle to school.**
- **Building a network of community streets and low traffic neighbourhoods to enable more people to walk and cycle in their local neighbourhood.**
- **Supporting the Liveable Exeter housing plan to create the active environments of the future.**

Wellbeing Exeter

All areas of the city are supported through the assets-based work of Wellbeing Exeter, which was established as a small pilot over five years ago. It has grown into a remarkable and unique, place-based network of support for individuals through Community Connectors linked to every GP practice in the city. Grass roots community activity is supported by the Community Builders based in every ward.

The Wellbeing Exeter network reaches into every part of the city and has been a vital ingredient in the community response to Covid-19. Our challenges now are to continue to expand this work and to address key issues identified through ongoing learning and listening that is an essential component of our asset based community development (ABCD) approach.



Wellbeing Exeter is an example of real collaboration between the public and voluntary and community sector with funding partners now including Devon County Council, Exeter's NHS Primary Care Networks, NEW Devon Clinical Commissioning Group and Sport England.

Built Leisure Facilities

Across the UK councils and leisure providers are struggling to maintain and develop leisure facilities in the wake of Covid-19. We set out our long-term plans in our Move More strategies published in 2019. To bring these to fruition we took the radical decision to bring the management of all our leisure facilities under the direct control of the council. This took effect in September 2020. Our priority in the immediate term is to re-open facilities and centres as and when it is safe to do so within the Covid-19 environment with customer and staff health and safety always being a priority.

We will now be able to continue to take forward our ambitious development plans for our centres and 2021 will be a big year for us. The new flagship St Sidwell's Point swimming pool and leisure centre has progressed rapidly despite the complexities of the Covid-19 pandemic. This amazing centre will open in 2021 and will provide residents with an unrivalled activity experience as the first leisure centre in the UK to be built with healthy biology and low-energy Passivhaus standards.

The refurbishment of the fire-damaged Riverside Swimming Pool and Leisure Centre has continued through the pandemic. This has been a complex and frustrating project but we are confident it will re-open, with a brand new look, alongside St Sidwell's Point in 2021.

We will be bringing forward investment plans for the development of a Community Sports Village at the Exeter Arena and ISCA centres sites. This will include a new, integrated sports hub, a new swimming pool and state of the art cycling facilities in partnership with British Cycling. We will also be concluding the first phase of a community engagement process in Wonford where hundreds of local residents and stakeholders have been working together (as part of our Sport England Local Delivery Pilot) to create the designs for the new Health and Wellbeing Hub. We will be bringing forward plans to take this project through to full design and build phase continuing with the community-led design approach.



The city is already home to a rich network of diverse and friendly neighbourhoods. The aim is to protect and nurture these communities but also to ensure that existing and new residents will have a home that is secure, affordable and healthy in a balanced and connected neighbourhood.

Background

Exeter has always ranked very highly as a great place to live in comparison with other cities in the UK. It is the quality of the environment, the friendliness of local people and the quality of life that make it so. Its popularity and its attractiveness as a place, drive growth and investment. This fuels demand for more housing, placing greater pressures on an overloaded infrastructure including hospitals, schools and other public services

Much of the new housing and the new jobs have migrated to the edge of the city and there remains great reliance on the private car to get about. It is clear that congestion on the city's roads is having a direct impact on quality of life, while at the same time undermining Exeter's economic success story.

The emerging Exeter Vision 2040 captures the sense of the city's importance on a global stage, as the home of world-renowned businesses, institutions and organisations such as the Met Office and the University. With people living in connected, cohesive, healthy safe and active communities. This means attracting and retaining the most talented individuals by offering a fantastic quality of life in the very best kind of environment whilst ensuring local communities can continue to connect and flourish.

It is also about embracing the new and relishing change and making sure no one gets left behind with everyone in the city benefiting from growth and opportunity. It is about finding a place for the new entrepreneurs and the new businesses that will spring up in the city and finding ways to help existing businesses to evolve and thrive.

The city is already home to a rich network of diverse and friendly neighbourhoods. The aim is to protect and nurture these communities but also to ensure that existing and new residents will have a home that is secure, affordable and healthy in a balanced and connected neighbourhood. The Liveable Exeter programme will be a key vehicle in supporting the delivery of up to 12,000 new homes with new communities built around hubs of activity, workspaces, schools and local amenity.

“A key issue for city development is the planning of new developments to deliver a built environment conducive to active and healthy lifestyles and active travel. It needs to tame the car in the areas closet to the city centre so we can create streets prioritised for walkers and cyclists and in the process create attractive public spaces.”

Karime Hassan, Chief Executive and Growth Director

The challenge

There is a shortage of social and affordable one and two bedroomed homes in the city with over 3,000 people on the waiting list for social and affordable housing.

Unless we change our approach we could have a shortfall of approximately 7,000 affordable homes by 2040.

The infrastructure that serves the city is already stretched and we know that the city faces challenges around congestion and the transition to being a carbon neutral city. This means that significant investment is needed to support not only our existing communities, but also deliver infrastructure to support future communities. The scale of this investment will be significant and is beyond the capacity of the council to deliver alone. Support will therefore be required from other partners to ensure that the necessary infrastructure is created to support the delivery of new sustainable and inclusive communities.

Great neighbourhoods are supported by vibrant and dynamic local centres, a strong city centre and the availability of secure and diverse employment opportunities. Exeter, like many towns and cities, faces challenges in ensuring the continued viability of its local centres, the city centre and employment opportunities and this will necessitate joined up action to ensure the city remains as an economic engine for the region and a leading shopping destination.

Our plans

- Progress work on our own statutory Local Plan and work with Teignbridge, East Devon, Mid Devon district councils and Devon County Council on a potential, non-statutory strategic and infrastructure plan.
- Continue to work with our neighbouring authorities to consider and plan for the impacts of development across the Greater Exeter region and seek to cooperate in addressing and mitigating the impacts of such development.

- Continue to use our wholly-owned housing development company, Exeter City Living, to promote the development of new homes for the city. Since 2019, the Company has completed twelve new homes across two sites at Anthony Rd and Thornpark Rise, commenced ten new homes at Bovemoors Lane (to be completed in December 2020) and will commence the development of 157 new homes at Hamlin Gardens, Clifton Hill and Vaughan Road this year. Exeter City Living's pipeline of development exceeds over 800 new homes over the next five years.
- Complete business plans for three new subsidiaries of the Exeter City Group, for retrofitting homes and buildings, residential property management (market rent) and property consultancy.
- Champion and promote the development of exemplary and sustainable new homes and developments within the city, supporting the delivery of the 2030 carbon neutral commitment and building upon the city's reputation as a global leader in the promotion and delivery of exemplary development - showcased by the St. Sidwell's point development.
- Continue to progress the Liveable Exeter programme, with a view to delivering up to 12,000 new homes for the city in sustainable, inclusive and highly accessible new communities.
- Work to ensure that schemes and projects are promoted and implemented to support the city centre, and other local centres, to ensure that they remain attractive, viable and vibrant.
- Work to ensure that the city has sufficient supply of the type and quality of commercial accommodation to meet the needs and demands of Exeter's businesses, both now and in to the future.
- Work with the Liveable Exeter Place Board and other strategic partners, including Homes England and Sports England, to identify opportunities for strategic interventions to support the delivery of the 2040 Vision - including, for example, the development of a Strategic Place Partnership or City Fund model in conjunction with Homes England to support the delivery of new communities.

Council housing

With the removal of the HRA Cap, the council is able to borrow against its assets to enable the provision of more affordable housing. To this end, the HRA team has undertaken a review of all viable sites that might provide quick wins for the council.

- **The council housing development programme now has nine priority sites which are actively being investigated and progressed. The current target is to deliver 500 properties over the next ten years, but we are currently well ahead of this.**
- **Some of these sites have existing non-traditional housing which will need to be demolished to enable more energy efficient, lower maintenance homes to be built, increasing density to achieve higher numbers of homes to help meet demand.**
- **Other sites have garages in need of refurbishment on them, which will work better as housing.**
- **To help with the council's aims of Promoting an Active and Healthy Lifestyle, and Building Great Neighbourhoods, some sites in sustainable locations are being designed as car free schemes. This will encourage and enable residents to walk, cycle and use public transport more.**
- **In line with car free schemes, investigations are taking place into creating 20 Minute Neighbourhoods - where it is possible to walk or cycle to everything you need within 20 minutes.**
- **To help achieve the ambition of being Carbon Neutral by 2030, all our homes will be Climate Resilient, and built to Passivhaus and Building Biology standards, helping to address fuel poverty and ensuring longevity in the face of increasing climate change challenges.**
- **Retrofitting is essential in some cases to extend the life and improve the energy efficiency of existing stock. A pilot at Chestnut Avenue will deliver a retrofit Energiesprong solution to six properties by December 2020.**

Schemes underway or completed, in many cases working with Exeter City Living (ECL) either as a Joint Venture partner or Development Agent include:

- **Three high specification houses at Anthony Road, purchased from ECL in October 2020.**
- **53 one and two bedroom Extra Care flats at Millbrook Lane, due for completion in spring 2021.**
- **Nine three bedroom houses at Thornpark Rise, purchased from ECL in October 2020.**
- **18 poor energy efficient, non-traditionally built properties at Newman Road are being demolished and rebuilt. The first six will be completed before Christmas 2020.**
- **Ten three bedroom houses at Bovemoors Lane, due to be completed in December 2020.**
- **21 one and two bedroom flats at Hamlin Gardens due to start on-site before Christmas 2020.**
- **60 flats for the HRA and 32 for ECL at Vaughan Road as a Joint Venture. Currently going through tendering process with the intention to start on-site in spring 2021. Demolition will take place beforehand to speed things up.**
- **The way forward for Rennes House is currently being considered and will be reported to the Executive in due course.**

To maximise best value, receipts from Right to Buy sales are offset against schemes and where possible grant from Homes England will be obtained. All schemes are carefully assessed for viability.

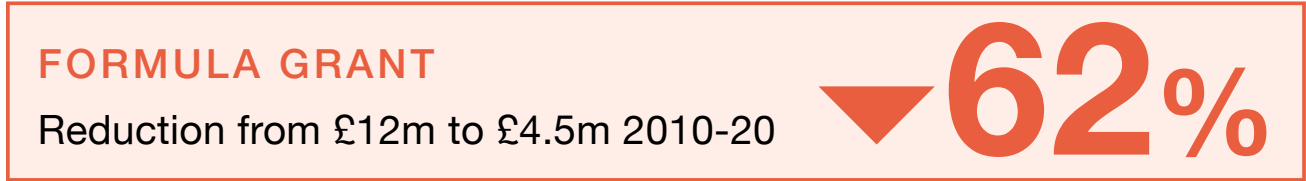
Achieving Net Zero or carbon neutrality for the council's housing stock is aligned to the corporate objective and the council has been successful in securing Government funding of £600,000 to target the retrofit of 120 properties to improve their energy performance rating. The retrofit programme associated with the grant will be October 2020 to April 2021 and will align with the wider strategy of the council to achieve full carbon neutrality of the council's housing stock by 2030.

Background

We provide more than 100 services to those living in, working, visiting and studying in the city from our annual net budget of £14.1m.

Over the last decade the council has worked in collaboration with other public service bodies to address whole system change to address outcomes such as supporting individuals with housing and financial problems, care and healthy lifestyles.

At times this means the council incurs expenditure in pursuance of solutions that benefit other organisations financially, such as the police, the local hospital trust and Devon County Council. This is the right thing to do and we will continue to work in this way through the Liveable Exeter Place Board, Wellbeing Exeter and other initiatives. Improving public services to achieve the Exeter 2040 vision of an inclusive, healthy and sustainable city will deliver savings to the public sector purse in the long run.



Cost reductions & additional income to date:	
2010-11	£1.748m
2011-12	£2.421m
2012-13	£1.048m
2013-14	£2.190m
2014-15	£1.465m
2015-16	£0.460m
2016-17	£0.975m
2017-18	£1.265m
2018-19	£0.945m
2019-20	£1.963m
2020-21	£2.201m
TOTAL	£16.681m

The challenge

In the face of ongoing austerity and the ongoing response to Covid-19 there is less money and more demand on our services than ever before. If we continue delivering services in the same way as we do today there will be a significant funding gap over the next five years. This is despite a track record of reducing our costs and increasing income by £16.7m since 2010.

This ongoing requirement to ‘balance the books’ each year means we have to continue to reduce our costs, generate additional income and prioritise spending. We also need to balance our successful strategy of growing the city with a focus on the council itself and how we deliver our services.

Reductions required	
2021-22	£1.8m
2022-23	£2.7m
2023-24	£1.5m
TOTAL	£6.0m

Our plans

To meet ongoing reductions in central government funding we will:
Focus on value for money by:

Spending less:	Minimising the cost of services
Spending wisely:	Prioritising what we spend money on
Spending well:	Providing services efficiently, making the best use of available resources

- Expand our commercial activity and generate more income.
- Improve the management of our built assets, improving value for money, income potential and maximising longevity.
- Procure goods and services as efficiently and effectively as possible.
- Make it as easy as possible for more people to help themselves by providing high-quality information and advice through digital and self-help services.
- Provide accessible, high-quality, efficient and effective one-stop shop services for people who need our help and advice.
- Support our staff with agile, mobile and remote working, ensuring we make the best use of their skills and experience.

Our approach

As for all organisations, delivery of our strategy relies on us being a well-run council. For us this means having open and accountable governance arrangements, adopting management best practice and complying with a range of regulations and statutory requirements.

As a well-run council, we will:

- Inform and engage openly with our stakeholders.
- Ensure that health and safety at work is a priority for the council and that all staff are aware of its significance for their roles and responsibilities.
- Develop the capability of our staff to ensure they are highly motivated, well trained and meet our values.
- Promote equality and diversity and tackle social exclusion in all of our work.
- Manage risks and performance.
- Ensure we are resilient to deal with emergencies and disruptive incidents.
- Use data to inform our decisions and priorities.
- Manage and secure our information, which will be transparent and accessible.
- Reduce our carbon and waste production and reduce our energy consumption to help make Exeter a greener place.

