

COUNCIL

Tuesday 19 April 2022

Present:-

Councillor Trish Oliver (Chair)

Councillors Allcock, Bialyk, Branston, Denning, Foale, Ghusain, Hannaford, Harvey, Mrs Henson, Holland, Jobson, Leadbetter, Lights, Mitchell, K, Mitchell, M, Morse, Newby, Packham, Pearce, Sheldon, Sparkes, Sparling, Sutton, Wardle, Warwick, Williams, Wood and Wright

Also Present

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APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Begley, D. Moore, J. Moore, Sills and Vizard.

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IAN QUANCE

The Lord Mayor spoke with great sadness on the recent passing of Ian Quance, the Deputy Lord Mayor, who had served as a City Councillor representing the Pennsylvania Ward from 2019 to 2022 and passed on her condolences, and those of Council Members, to his family and friends.

A minutes silence was held in his memory and to reflect on his life.

The Leader of the Council led a series of tributes to Ian. All spoke with great affection and respect for his work, first as an officer leading the Council's Bereavement service and subsequently as a Councillor. They referred to his sense of humour and to his values and commitment, particularly to his family, and also to those causes he held dearly, including his passion for the Bereavement service, his concern for nature and the environment and the importance of working for a fairer society.

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MINUTES

The minutes of the Extraordinary and Ordinary meetings of the Council held on 22 February 2022 and of the Extraordinary meeting held on 10 March 2022 were moved by the Leader, seconded by the Deputy Leader, Councillor Wright, taken as read, approved and signed as correct.

With reference to Minute No. 7 of the Extraordinary meeting of Council on 10 March 2022, the Leader reported that he and Councillor Packham would shortly be meeting his cousins who were due to arrive in the UK and be staying with them after fleeing from the war in Ukraine.

The Lord Mayor referred to the work of the Exeter Conversation Café which was helping address the Ukraine crisis, including accepting donations.

OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS

The Lord Mayor passed on her condolences, and those of Council Members, to Councillor Vizard, whose father had recently passed away.

The Lord Mayor reported the receipt of the following petitions:-

- Stop Exeter Residents paying price for Private Development - which applied to a Planning Application and would be presented at the relevant Planning Committee, in accordance with the petition scheme; and
- Objection to Parking Charges - which applied to the consultation on car parking increases and had formed part of the car parking consultation process.

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

- the dual Aldermanic Ceremony for Past Lord Mayor's Rachel Lyons and Lesley Robson on 24 February 2022;
- a rooftop tour of Exeter Cathedral on 25 February 2022;
- the laying of the wreath on 26 February 2022 at St. Andrews Chapel, Exeter Cathedral to mark the 80th Anniversary of the sinking of HMS Exeter, prior to which, memories from family members had been recounted at the Guildhall;
- helping mark World Book Day on 3 March 2022 with Councillor Ghusain by visiting Hill Barton Vale Little Free Library;
- the Exeter Chiefs v Bath rugby match on 2 April 2022 as part of the Exeter Chiefs 150th Anniversary celebrations;
- the Red Coat Guides reception on 5 April 2022 where long service commendation certificates had been presented to retired Red Coates and Red Blazers presented to new recruits;
- recognising a number of inspiring people at the Lord Mayor's Commendations ceremony at the Guildhall on 14 April 2022; and
- a further successful Lord Mayor's coffee morning on 26 February 2022 with the Exeter University Contemporary Choir participating.

The Lord Mayor advised that her charity coffee morning on Saturday 23 April 2022 would be the last of her Mayoral Year and that local musicians would be performing.

The Lord Mayor announced that Councillor Luke Sills would be standing down at the forthcoming Local Government elections on 5 May and also referred to Chris Buswell, Alys Martin and Ollie Pearson who had recently stood down. She thanked them all on behalf of her fellow Members for their achievements and many years of public service to the people of Exeter. She wished them well for the future.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Lord Mayor reported the receipt of a question from a member of the public.

Question from Cynthia Thompson to Councillor Bialyk, Leader.

Mrs Thompson was unable to be present and her question was read out by the Corporate Manager Democratic and Civic Support.

Question

Has the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) given any guidance regarding Officers of the City Council holding Directorships on Exeter City Council private companies and, in particular, guidance for Officers in key roles which the City Council is required to employ by statute?

Response

CIPFA are producing guidance on Local Authority Companies which was expected to be published in May 2022.

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PLANNING COMMITTEE - 21 FEBRUARY 2022

The minutes of the Planning Committee of 21 February 2022 were presented by the Chair, Councillor Morse, and taken as read.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 21 February 2022 be received.

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PLANNING COMMITTEE - 28 MARCH 2022

The minutes of the Planning Committee of 28 March 2022 were presented by the Chair, Councillor Morse, and taken as read.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 28 March 2022 be received.

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STRATEGIC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 17 MARCH 2022

The minutes of the Strategic Scrutiny Committee of 17 March 2022 were presented by the Chair, Councillor Denning and taken as read.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Strategic Scrutiny Committee held on 17 March 2022 be received.

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CUSTOMER FOCUS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 31 MARCH 2022

In the absence of the Chair, Councillor Vizard, the minutes of the Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee of 31 March 2022 were presented by the Deputy Chair, Councillor M. Mitchell, and taken as read.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee held on 31 March 2022 be received.

22

COMBINED STRATEGIC SCRUTINY AND CUSTOMER FOCUS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 30 MARCH 2022

The minutes of the Combined Strategic Scrutiny Committee and Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee of 30 March 2022 were presented by the Chair, Councillor Denning, and taken as read.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Combined Strategic Scrutiny and Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee held on 30 March 2022 be received.

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AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE - 9 MARCH 2022

The minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee of 9 March 2022 were presented by the Chair, Councillor Wardle, and taken as read.

In respect of **Minute No. 6 (Code of Corporate Governance 2022/23)**, the Chair moved and Councillor Denning seconded the recommendation and following a vote, the recommendation was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 9 March 2022 be received and, where appropriate, adopted.

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HARBOUR BOARD - 14 MARCH 2022

The minutes of the Harbour Board of 14 March 2022 were presented by the Chair, Councillor Harvey, and taken as read.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Harbour Board held on 14 March 2022 be received.

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EXECUTIVE - 4 APRIL 2022

The minutes of the Executive of 4 April 2022 were presented by the Leader, Councillor Bialyk, and taken as read.

In respect of **Minute No. 47 (Additional Staffing at the Control Centre)**, the Portfolio Holder for City Development spoke on behalf of Councillor Vizard who had been unable to attend the meeting to pass on his gratitude to the Council for identifying an additional £87,000 to spend on the service. Councillor Vizard had spent time with Tony Cox, who had addressed the Council on 22 February 2022 on the murder in Exeter of his daughter Lorraine Cox and his work in raising awareness for the campaign for safer streets and to end violence towards women.

The Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Council Housing Development and Services referred to the heartfelt and difficult representations made by Tony Cox to the Council and to the campaign he had led in memory of his daughter.

Following the Council meeting, and with the support of the Leader, a further review had been undertaken with the Director Finance and Service Leads on this issue. As a result, budgets had been revisited and an additional £87,000 had been identified for an additional three Full Time Equivalent members of staff for the Control Room. In addition, £550,000 had been invested in CCTV through a combination of Safer Streets funding from the Home Office, the Police and Crime Commissioner and Exeter City Council and which included an additional 32 CCTV cameras to offer additional coverage and crucial infrastructure upgrades. Consultations would be held with the Police and Crime Commissioner with a view to funding further improvements to the system for 2022/23, including increased staffing to enable concerned members of the public to contact the Control Room directly.

The Leader and Deputy Leader thanked the Council for its cross party support to the initiatives for improving safety in the city.

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

In respect of **Minute No. 48 (Overview of General Fund Revenue Budget 2021/22 - Quarter 3)**, the Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendations and following a vote, the recommendations were carried unanimously.

In respect of **Minute No. 49 (2021/22 General Fund Capital Monitoring Statement - Quarter 3)** the Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendations and following a vote, the recommendations were carried.

In respect of **Minute No. 50 (HRA Budget Monitoring Report - Quarter 3)**, the Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendations and following a vote, the recommendations were carried.

In respect of **Minute No. 51 (Freedom of the City)** the Leader moved and Councillor Mrs Henson seconded the recommendations and following a vote, the recommendations were carried unanimously.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Executive held on 4 April 2022 be received and, where appropriate, adopted.

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

In accordance with Standing Order No. 8, the following questions were put by Councillor K. Mitchell to the Portfolio Holder for City Development

Following the reassurances given by the Portfolio Holder at the Extraordinary Council meeting on the 22 February 2022, can Councillor Morse please confirm:-

A) How many of the 160 backlogged Planning Enforcement cases have now been closed?

B) How many new Planning Enforcement cases have been opened since the Extraordinary Council meeting?

C) How many Planning Enforcement cases in total currently remain open? and

D) How confident is the Portfolio Holder that all of the original 160 backlogged cases will be resolved by the time the temporary Planning Enforcement post expires?

The Portfolio Holder for City Development advised that, at the time of writing:-

A) 123 of the cases that were in the backlog had been closed, a total of nearly 77%.

B) an additional 25 cases have been registered since the date of the meeting.

C) there are currently 83 live enforcement cases (some cases were ongoing and not included in the backlogged cases).

D) with nearly 77% of the cases already dealt with, we are confident that the vast majority of the backlog will have been dealt with. However, some of these cases are proceeding to formal action and therefore are likely to be ongoing beyond the six month period. It is never going to be possible to get to a point of having no live enforcement cases on the system but the team has made great progress over the last four months. Given the success of dealing with the backlog and the importance of dealing with potential breaches of planning control effectively, the City Development team are reviewing how we resource the enforcement function going forward.

The Portfolio Holder for City Development thanked the Planning staff for their work on enforcement cases in addition to their on-going case work.

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

The recent survey of 1,500 local women in Exeter, by the Safety of Women At Night (SwaN) has found that over 85%, felt unsafe or very unsafe, walking alone at night in the city centre.

Can the Leader of the City Council please comment on these truly concerning findings?

Local women said that they would feel safer in Exeter city centre if there was an increased police presence, more affordable transport, enhanced CCTV coverage, and better lighting.

Can the Leader of the City Council please update Members on the work the Deputy Leader has been doing on these matters, with others, including in her role as Exeter's local Councillor Police Advocate and a member of the Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Commissioner Panel? Specifically, what progress has been made to secure more women police officers patrolling the city centre?

Does the Leader share my concerns that the service cuts announced by Stagecoach to local bus services at night, make women more vulnerable, as they are waiting even longer for buses?

Is there an update for Council regarding the work being done by the local Community Safety Partnership and the University of Exeter, to develop an Exeter Safety of Women At Night Charter?

Can the important issue of women's safety in Exeter, including general public safety, drink spiking, toxic masculinity, misogyny and domestic violence and sexual abuse, be properly included in the Council's scrutiny work programme, and robustly reflected in the Council's corporate plan?

The Leader thanked Councillor Hannaford for drawing attention to the work of the Exeter Community Safety Partnership over the last few months, which had been led by the University of Exeter.

The Leader stated that it was important to recognise the fantastic response that the survey had with over 1,500 participants. At the heart of this survey was the importance of the city hearing the voices of its communities. Sometimes this was not an easy thing to do, but it was important that the City Council, with the large number of partners that make up the Community Safety Partnership, hear these voices and then act collectively to bring about change.

The Leader was pleased that, as part of the work undertaken by the Community Safety Partnership, a Safety of Women at Night Charter had been established with seven principles that each organisation had to commit to. Exeter City Council had signed up to the Charter, with members of the senior management seeking to embed the seven principles in the work conducted across the organisation. The Leader encouraged others, such as businesses, voluntary and other government organisations within the city to sign up to the Charter to show their commitment in making the city even safer.

The Leader shared Councillor Hannaford's concern about service cuts and the impact on vulnerable people and women and girls and he was pleased that the

County Council's Exeter Highways and Traffic Orders Committee had the opportunity to cross examine the Stagecoach Managing Director and the assurance that he had given to Councillor Denning with regard to reimbursing taxi fares in the event of last buses being cancelled. It was important to note that Exeter, like other cities, had its isolated problems. However, Exeter remained one of the safest and most vibrant places to live and it was the aim to improve this yet further over the coming year.

The Leader asked the Lord Mayor to invite the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Council Housing Development and Services to respond to other parts of Councillor Hannaford's question.

The Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Council Housing Development and Services reported that, in terms of the deployment of female police officers, she was unable to provide figures and that this was a matter for the Chief Constable and the Police and Crime Commissioner. In response to Safer Streets funding, this had allowed the City to take the following action:-

- £550,000 being invested in CCTV through a combination of funding from the Home Office, the Police and Crime Commissioner and Exeter City Council and which included an additional 32 CCTV cameras as well as crucial infrastructure upgrades;
- an additional three Full Time Equivalent staff for the Control Room which had been approved at the last Executive;
- additional lighting throughout the city, including festoon lighting in 93 trees in the city, thanks to additional funding from InExeter;
- the re-establishment of Best Bar None which was seeing responsible licensees improving the standards within their premises and undertaking training and awareness to spot the signs of predatory behaviour and prevent drink spiking; and
- working with Devon County Council and Stagecoach to establish a night bus service pilot on a Friday and Saturday night.

Referring to the survey undertaken by a media company on behalf of the University of Exeter, the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Council Housing Development and Services refuted the figure of 85% in relation to the limited response possible to the question on whether women felt safe in Exeter at night, which she considered to be inaccurate as Exeter was, generally, a very safe city.

The Deputy Leader advised Councillor Hannaford that his question would be referred to the Scrutiny Programme Board for consideration by a Scrutiny Committee, where much of the detail that the question raised, could be discussed in detail by that Committee.

Councillor Hannaford, asked a supplementary question as to whether the Council intended to explore the creation of a designated Member Champion or Advocate to promote safety in the city?

The Leader responded that this would also be considered by the Scrutiny Programme Board.

In accordance with Standing Order No. 8, the following question was put by Councillor Sparling to the Portfolio Holder for Net Zero Exeter 2030

In 2017, the Council passed a five-year Energy Strategy and Action Plan with three priority goals; a sustainable corporate estate, an energy neutral Council and a low carbon city.

With this strategy having reached its conclusion, please can the Portfolio Holder explain if these goals have been met and if not, what review process and measures have been put in place to ensure these goals are still met and by when?

The Portfolio Holder Net Zero Exeter 2030 stated that the Energy Strategy and Action Plan would merge with a new Net Zero Action Plan. Remaining energy, sustainability and carbon reduction goals were to be quantified based on viability, changes in technology, the Council's own operations/estate and Government policy.

There were two interlinked strands, the first being the Council's own carbon footprint and the second being that of the wider City. The delivery of Net Zero for the Council's own corporate estate was the priority of the newly formed Net Zero Team, two members of the team having recently been appointed. The team would use a carbon footprint report produced for the Council by the Centre for Energy and the Environment to establish an action plan that will follow accurate targets, projections and opportunities. The Plan would ensure reviewed priority goals were incorporated, and measures to be introduced included an annual assessment of the Council's Green House Gas (GHG) emissions to identify changes that had taken place each year to enable the evaluation and updating of the actions required to deliver Net Zero.

From a City wide perspective, it would be fair to say that, prior to the declaration of a climate emergency in July 2019, the City Council had already been on a journey to support a low carbon city. The Council had been pursuing a raft of measures designed to give momentum to the goal of supporting a more sustainable city which had been twin tracked to address the City Council's own emissions and supporting the wider city of Exeter. For example, the City Council had pioneered solar Photovoltaic (PV) installations on its commercial roofs, these PV sites now provided about 40% of the non-domestic generation in the city. The Council had also supported and delivered district heat networks for new residential communities in Monkerton. The Council had led on the retrofit of the Council's own housing stock and built new Council housing stock to passivhaus standards, also pioneered in the Edwards Court Extra Care Housing accommodation and St. Sidwell's Point. The Council had also worked on transformational programmes such as the Sport England Local Delivery Pilot to support active travel to prioritise pedestrians and cyclists. Through championing active design principles, it had set out a new strategy for future house building to support the objectives of active travel and supported the initiatives of Devon County Council in this regard.

Greenhouse gas emissions in Exeter had generally been on a downward trajectory since 2008. Estimated GHG emissions of 717 thousand tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (kt CO₂e) in 2008 had declined by a third to 476 thousand tonnes (kt CO₂e) in 2019.

With the declaration of a climate emergency in 2019, the goal had shifted from a low carbon city to achieving a Net Zero city, and the City Council was playing its part to support this goal with the Net Zero Exeter 2030 Plan.

Delivering Net Zero in 2030 required a much greater reduction in emissions. Buildings was the sector with the highest emissions (35%), followed by power (24%) and transport (22%). Lack of progress in the buildings and transport sectors was

particularly concerning. The city needed to make significant progress in buildings and transport to deliver Net Zero.

The Chief Executive & Growth Director would be reporting progress in detail on reducing GHG emissions in the city to a Scrutiny Committee in June, prior to consideration by Executive.

Councillor Sparling, asked a supplementary question as to whether, given the merging of the Energy Strategy and Action Plan with the Net Zero Plan, was the Portfolio Holder confident that the goal of a Net Zero Exeter 2030 would be met?

The Portfolio Holder responded that there remained work to do, but with the merger of the two Plans, it had been necessary to re-set goals and that she remained confident that the ultimate goal of a Net Zero Exeter 2030 would be met.

(The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and closed at 6.58 pm)

Chair