

## **EXECUTIVE**

Tuesday 5 July 2022

Present:

Councillor Bialyk (Chair)

Councillors Denning, Ghusain, Parkhouse, Pearce, Williams and Wood

Apologies:

Councillors Morse and Wright

Councillor K. Mitchell (as an opposition group Leader)

Councillor D. Moore (as an opposition group Leader)

Also present:

Councillor Jobson (as an opposition group Leader)

Also present:

Chief Executive & Growth Director, Deputy Chief Executive, Director Net Zero Exeter & City Management, Director of City Development, Corporate Manager Democratic and Civic Support, Service Lead Legal Services, City Surveyor, Service Lead - Net Zero, Commercialisation, Skills, Business and City Centre, Deputy Chief Finance Officer, Service Lead Housing Needs & Homelessness, Principal Project Manager (Development) (MD) and Democratic Services Officer (HB)

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### **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 31 May 2022, were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

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### **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests were made.

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### **QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC UNDER STANDING ORDER NO. 19**

No questions from members of the public were received.

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### **PROPOSED CHANGES AND RE-PROCUREMENT OF OUTREACH-LED ROUGH SLEEPING SERVICES**

The Executive received the report on how improvements could be made to the effectiveness of the Council's current commissioned outreach services to help target and reduce rough sleeping in the city. Following the successful work with partners and the successful funding bid to the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), the Council was proposing to procure a remodelled service to better help meet the needs of people already rough sleeping in the city and those who were at risk of rough sleeping.

The Service Lead Housing Needs and Homelessness explained that the remodelled service would merge together the former Rough Sleeping Outreach Service, Housing First Floating Support and Navigator Services and briefly outlined how the remodelled service would function. To date, services had been procured and delivered individually. Rough sleepers commonly had contact with the Rough Sleeping Assertive Outreach team, Housing First Support service and the Navigator

service. Whilst collaborative working existed, there would now be more flexibility across the services with all three above services brought together and operating as a remodelled Homelessness and Rough Sleeping service.

The new provider would work with the Council to continue to reduce rough sleeping in the city and the remodelled project would be an integral feature of the new Exeter Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy expected in Autumn 2022.

During the discussion, the following points were made:-

- flexible working across the three services would lead to improved shared working, taking advantage of the existing knowledgeable and experienced staff working in these areas; and
- working with partners, the Council's successful bid for Government funding will help address Exeter's rough sleeping needs and greater Government funding should be made available for similar support across the country.

**RECOMMENDED** that Council approve:-

- (1) the undertaking of a procurement process compliant with the provisions of the Council's Procurement and Contract procedures and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 in order to identify a provider to deliver a remodelled Homelessness and Rough Sleeping service; and
- (2) entering into a contract with the successful tenderer.

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### **ALLOCATION OF THE ONE OFF NET ZERO BUDGET**

The Executive received the report which sought approval to spend the £1million earmarked reserve to support the delivery of Net Zero projects and the goals of the Net Zero Exeter 2030 Plan, covering the next four years.

The Service Lead Net Zero and Business reported that the allocation would comprise £800,000 for City Council Net Zero initiatives and £200,000 for the delivery of the Net Zero Exeter 2030 Plan. All activity through this budget would be procured through the City Council's procurement and contract procedures. The following were highlighted:-

- two temporary team members had been appointed for the next four years to support City Council Net Zero projects, with a total of four officers in the new Net Zero team;
- a Net Zero Risk Register had been developed and would be presented to the Audit and Governance Committee;
- an action plan to reduce City Council carbon emissions would be presented to the Strategic Scrutiny Committee, Executive and Council this autumn. The action plan would provide greater clarity on the breakdown of the £800,000 funding;
- the Green Accord would be re-launched and the green accreditation scheme would improve supply chain sustainability to reduce Scope 3 emissions;
- decarbonisation studies would be undertaken for high use sites such as RAMM and the City Council's leisure centres;
- Carbon Literacy training would be held for the team, Members and the Net Zero Ambassadors; and

- external funding would be sourced for the delivery of the City Council's Net Zero Carbon Reduction action plan and a bid had been made to the LEVI Electric Vehicle Charging infrastructure fund.

During the discussion, the following points were made:-

- initiative is welcome including solar panels on the Riverside roof and adding a number of batteries to existing solar sites and a new solar array on Marsh Barton, which links up to Exton Road for the electrification of electric refuse vehicles and our fleet vehicles;
- the Net Zero Ambassadors will prove a valuable addition to the Council's ambitions of reducing service carbon emissions, change behaviour, support sustainable travel and smarter working and reduce waste;
- the Green Accord accreditation scheme would improve supply chain sustainability by increasing the numbers of businesses being accredited and reduce Scope 3 emissions; and
- the failure of some of Devon County Council's Electric Vehicle Charging points across the city which need replacing is regrettable.

**RECOMMENDED** that Council approve:-

- (1) the allocation of the £1million earmarked reserve to support the delivery of Net Zero for Exeter City Council and the Net Zero Exeter 2030 plan, covering the next four years;
- (2) that £800,000 of the £1million earmarked reserve be allocated to delivering net zero for the City Council and £200,000 be allocated to the delivery of the Net Zero Exeter 2030 Plan; and
- (3) an additional £50,000 from the underspent supplementary budget in 2021/22 be allocated to support the delivery of the Net Zero Exeter 20230 Plan.

### **UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND, EXETER ALLOCATION**

The Executive received the report which provided an overview of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), and how the Council could use and manage Exeter's allocation.

The Service Lead Net Zero and Business spoke about her presentation which is attached to the minutes setting out the detail under the following headings:-

- Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) Aims;
- Communities and Place City Challenges;
- Communities and Place Ideas;
- Supporting Local Business City Challenges
- Supporting Local Business Ideas;
- People and Skills City Challenges; and
- People and Skills Ideas.

The Service Lead Net Zero and Business highlighted the following:-

- shared prosperity was a central pillar of the UK Government's levelling up agenda;

- SPF replaced previous European funding, one such funding being the Water Lane Smart Grid and Solar Project led by the City Council;
- the Department for Levelling Up and Communities was leading on SPF and the City Council was now working on its investment plan with £20,000 allocated for this purpose;
- Exeter allocation was £1,403,000 for three years, the annual breakdown, being £170,373 for this financial year, £340,747 for 2023/24 and £892,757 for 2024/25;
- 4% of SPF at £56,120 was allocated to project administration and management, to include the appointment of a Temporary Project Manager;
- to access the allocation, the investment plan would need to be submitted by 1 August 2022. It was a high level document, highlighting city challenges and would be signed off by the Leader, Chief Executive and the Section 151 Officer;
- as the value of interventions proposed was over the allocation of £1.4million each intervention would need an application which would be assessed against the aims and objectives of SPF, deliverability, value for money and the Exeter Vision;
- consultation with the business community on city challenges was a key element and three online sessions had been held focussing on the investment priorities of SPF, being communities and place, business support and people and skills. The Liveable Exeter Place Board had been chosen as the Local Partnership Group to consult with to gain local insight of city challenges and to gain consensus of the Investment Plan;
- copy would be prepared for the City Council website, so that any business or organisation can submit a project concept form for funding through SPF; and
- regular updates would be provided to the Strategic Scrutiny Committee to monitor progress.

The Service Lead Net Zero and Business further advised of the intention to establish a SPF working group for oversight and monitoring. City Council officers would serve on the working group and both Exeter Chamber and InExeter had been contacted as two organisations to represent a number of businesses across the city, to sit on the working group.

Councillor Wood, as Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, welcomed the report, emphasising the goal of building pride in place and increasing life chances. Although availability of funds was finite, it would be important to ensure value for money as well as seeking to focus on the Council's Net Zero 2030 ambitions to reduce carbon emissions and increase bio-diversity.

**RECOMMENDED** that Council approve:-

- (1) officers developing an investment plan to deliver the aims of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), to release Exeter's UKSPF allocation of £1,403,000;
- (2) delegated authority being granted to Exeter City Council's internal UKSPF Management group for the approval of the investment plan;
- (3) the appointment of a Project Manager to support the management and monitoring of the Exeter UKSPF following the receipt of the offer letter from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC); and
- (4) the earmarked £20,000 administration payment for developing Exeter's investment plan and consultation process, with any surplus used for project administration.

**RESOLVED** that Executive note that:-

- (1) in order to meet the UKSPF requirements, consultation on Exeter interventions would take place with a number of organisations with an interest in the delivery of UKSPF in Exeter, and the Liveable Exeter Place Board; and
- (2) to ensure the effective management and monitoring of the UKSPF, an internal officer working group (UKSPF Working Group) be established, which will provide regular update reports to the Strategic Scrutiny Committee.

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### **LOCAL VALIDATION LIST**

The Executive received the report on the Local Validation List, which enabled local planning authorities to set out the supporting information they required for planning applications and planning permission, which was in addition to the standard national requirements. Local List requirements needed to be reviewed and published every two years to carry statutory weight.

The Assistant Service Lead - Development Management (Major Projects) advised that the Council's previously adopted Local List documents on the Council website had been published in 2010/11 and were therefore out of date. Following a six week consultation on a new Local List, undertaken between 17 June and 29 July 2021, comments had been received and were taken into account in a final Local List, which required formal adoption by Executive.

The document was split into two main parts: a series of tables setting out the information required for different types of planning application and the circumstances of when the information was required; and guidance on the information, including links to further technical guidance and key contacts.

Councillor D. Moore, as an opposition group leader, had submitted a question on this item, but was unable to be present. The question and answer are attached to the minutes.

#### **RESOLVED** that:-

- (1) the Final Local Validation List be adopted;
- (2) to ensure that national requirements were kept up to date with any new planning legislation or amendments to existing legislation, delegated authority be granted to the Director City Development to make any amendments the Local List and technical guidance in section 4.0 of Appendix C of the report; and
- (3) the Executive note that any amendments to the list of local requirements in Section 3.0 in Appendix C of the report, would require consultation before being carried out and that the Local List would be brought back to the Executive for re-adoption.

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### **PROGRESS UPDATE FROM EXETER CITY FUTURES AND CITY OF EXETER GREENHOUSE GAS INVENTORY**

The Executive received the progress report from Exeter City Futures Community Interest Company (CIC) outlining the work being undertaken to progress the Net Zero Exeter 2030 Plan, which included the Baseline Greenhouse Gas (GHG) inventory for the city, the reductions required to achieve Net Zero in 2030 and also

identifying specific and timely metrics for monitoring progress towards carbon neutrality in each emissions sector.

The report outlined the scale of the challenges faced in achieving a Net Zero city by 2030 and provided measurable key performance indicators for use as a strategic dashboard on the performance for the city and provided suggested options for achieving the Net Zero goal. The report had also been presented to Strategic Scrutiny Committee on 16 June 2022, and its comments had been included in the report presented.

Referencing *The Creative Bureaucracy* and its *Radical Common Sense* book by authors Charles Landry and Margie Caust, the Chief Executive & Growth Director emphasised the seriousness of the challenge the world now faced and how Exeter, and the City Council in particular, were seeking to respond.

Referring to UK Government and local authority initiatives, he identified a gap between the City Council's ambitions and those of some other local authorities and also the Government itself. Exeter City Council had declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and pledged to work towards creating a carbon neutral city by 2030, which was 20 years in advance of the national 2050 net zero target required under the Climate Change Act 2008. It was therefore showing leadership of place at a critical time and he proceeded to detail both the seriousness of the problems and initiatives that could be taken.

The strategy for delivering a Net Zero Exeter was broadly understood and the circulated report set out measures that could be taken, but the challenges and complexity of implementing these were largely self-evident. Measures included:-

- optimise the amount of renewable energy from photovoltaics (PV) on residential and commercial properties;
- connect over 11,000 additional homes to district heating networks;
- minimise energy use within buildings by retrofitting commercial buildings, and retrofitting the homes in the city with a fabric first solution, such as cavity wall insulation;
- replacing all gas boilers with air heat pumps - 42,000 in total;
- replacing all fossil fuel cars - there were 50,430 licensed vehicles in Exeter - with Electric Vehicle (EV) battery cars;
- making the most of the short journeys in the city by walking or cycling and increasing the amount of cycling;
- plan all new homes so they don't need to be retrofitted; and
- make sure all new homes are within 15 minutes of facilities and designed in a fashion to avoid the need to use the car, and improve recycling rates.

The City of Exeter's institutions collaborating for local impact was an explicit aim of the Exeter 2040 Vision and, in Exeter, the City Council and County Council had vital roles to play in putting in place a policy framework to deliver the Net Zero goal for Exeter. The city's institutions regularly met and explored the challenges through the Liveable Exeter Place Board and the city was therefore in a better position than many places in galvanising organisations behind ambitious goals.

The Centre for Energy and the Environment at the University of Exeter had been commissioned to establish the GHG inventory for the city to quantify the reductions required to achieve Net Zero in 2030. The GHG inventory had set out the reductions required by sector to meet the Net Zero 2030 goal which would require policy development in the coming months. Some of these were:-

- optimising the contribution of existing roofs, domestic and commercial, to accommodate PV;
- planning policies on new build, mechanisms for enhancing biodiversity, biodiversity enhancement and multi-authority agreements on renewable energy;
- rolling out more district heating networks;
- immediate provision of EV charging infrastructure both for buses, fleet and private vehicles;
- additional retrofitting for HRA properties;
- planning policies in support of cycling and pedestrians with reprioritisation of spaces and infrastructure to support cycling; and
- stepping up of recycling and roll out of food waste.

There were insufficient resources for traditional project management delivery in support of this ambitious programme but it was considered possible to pull together resources for a core team to roll out the scale of initiatives required sector by sector to meet the 2030 timeline. Joint ventures with the private sector would be important and reference was made to initiatives in other areas such as Bristol's commitment to electric vehicles and the North Devon biosphere.

Councillor D. Moore, as an opposition group leader, had submitted questions on this item, but was unable to be present. The questions and answers are attached to the minutes.

Councillor Jobson, as an opposition group leader, spoke on this item. She sought clarification on a timeline for meeting the challenges in view of the resource set change required and how average residential households could meet the practical challenges and the costs of implementing identified solutions. For example, the costs of EV battery cars were high and currently unaffordable to many households. She also referred to the possibility that individuals and families would forsake the opportunity for city centre living and adopt a preference for the suburbs to enable them to continue to commute and use their cars for a multiplicity of other reasons. In this respect, research was urgently needed if the 10 million kilometre a year's reduction in travel to 2030 was to be achieved. She also hoped that the issues identified would be placed in front of Scrutiny before being tabled before Executive and Council.

The Leader gave assurances that the matters identified would be considered by Scrutiny prior to further updates and report to Executive and that the timeline for considering the resourcing challenges would be the Autumn. He advised that there was no assumption that the cost of transition to Net Zero would be funded by the Council Tax as the scale of funding was likely to go well beyond the scope of normal tax funding and the impact of the cost of living crisis. He further advised that there had not been research on individual household costs and behaviour and also that the Transport Authority's Strategy for Exeter was for 50% of all journeys within the city to be active travel - the Council was simply communicating the scale of that challenge.

The Leader further stated that the Council had made a commitment to meeting the challenge of Climate Change and that it was unfortunate that some authorities had shied away from the challenge and had adopted the Government's target of 2050. He gave an assurance that every effort was being made to ensure that the city's partners were fully on board.

During the discussion, the following points were made:-

- Exeter benefitted from the presence of a car share scheme and Co Cars. One Car Club vehicle took at least six private vehicles off the road;
- Exeter's recycling rates were on track to improve and the actual amount of waste collected in the city was 296kg per person per year compared with Devon's of 360kg;
- a goal was to increase public awareness of the importance of recycling;
- the Council's commitment to retrofitting was a good news story providing an example to the private sector;
- welcome the leadership role assumed by the Council; and
- the need to move away from the reliance on internal combustion engines and to replace with electric powered vehicles is vital for the future.

The Portfolio Holder for Climate Change emphasised the scale of the challenge by referring to the breakdown of estimated greenhouse gas emissions in Exeter in 2019 by sector. He stated that Net Zero was one of the Council's core corporate priorities, with Net Zero Exeter 2030 explicit in the Exeter 2040 Vision. The report highlighted the size of the task ahead and he asserted the Council's commitment to meeting these challenges.

In response to the points made by Members, the Chief Executive & Growth Director re-iterated the challenges ahead which would require a whole systems approach with Liveable Exeter as a vanguard in this process. With 53,000 houses set to be built over the next 20 years in this part of Devon it could be anticipated that, unless the modal shift of 50% of all journeys within the city take place by walking and cycling, traffic problems and congestion would increase to the point where the highway network would no longer be able to cope and the necessary response from the Highway Agency and transport authority would be to oppose further development. The Government was continuing to fail to set necessary standards for house builders in spite of its stated commitment to combat Climate Change, a commitment which still permitted the fitting of gas boilers, which ultimately would require retrofitting and, crucially, its failure to set a Net Zero Target date lower than 2050. Such a target was not the City Council's approach.

The city possessed leading scientific research into climate change and developers approaching the planning authority were fully aware of the Council's Net Zero ambitions and the refusal to adopt lenient construction requirements. The Council had consistently shown leadership in the challenges as, for example, through the HRA retrofitting programme and its move away from an Economic Development team approach to a Net Zero commitment. Partners across the city were also cognisant of the challenges and, in response to the need for change, were seeking solutions through identifying investment and innovation opportunities which, would not only address Climate Change issues, but also benefit the local economy such as the creation of green infrastructure jobs.

**RESOLVED** that the Executive:-

- (1) acknowledge the requirement of a comprehensive and whole system approach to delivering Net Zero Exeter 2030, and that no single organisation, including the City Council, could solve the challenge of reducing city greenhouse gas emissions to zero. The Executive also acknowledge that a 20 year timetable ahead of national and county targets for net zero was very ambitious, requiring place based co-ordination and cross institutional cooperation. The Executive welcome the Exeter Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory, acknowledging the pace and scale of change required to deliver on the Net Zero 2030 goal and the required step change in resources, activity and policy making both at a local and national level;



- (2) invite Exeter City Futures CIC to reflect on the challenges of resourcing the step change in activity to meet the Net Zero 2030 Goal and options for meeting the challenges be provided for consideration by the Executive and Council;
- (3) welcome the Strategic Scrutiny Committee to look into the practical issues raised for the construction sector and the supply chain to meet the demands of retrofitting the housing and commercial stock, and support scrutiny members pursuing a wider brief as a critical friend of Executive in addressing the financial, technical and policy issues;
- (4) call for immediate and concerted effort to be taken on one specific intervention required under the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory, such as the goal of connecting homes and non-residential buildings to a district heat network and explore the practical challenges to securing delivery with limited capacity against the 2030 time line to report a plan of action to the Executive by December 2022;
- (5) welcome the decision of the Strategic Scrutiny Committee to acknowledge the importance of biodiversity and carbon sequestration to address the challenge of delivering a Net Zero Exeter. The Strategic Scrutiny Committee be invited to advise the Executive on practical proposals for linking the planning and development system with the climate and ecological emergency and how to deliver net biodiversity gain on development sites and offsetting carbon in Devon; and
- (6) note that Councillor Zion Lights (Member Champion for Net Zero), had been appointed as a Director on the Board of Exeter City Futures, replacing the Chief Executive & Growth Director as the Council's Director on the Board.

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**GENERAL FUND CAPITAL MONITORING 2021/22 AND REVISED CAPITAL PROGRAMME FOR 2022/23 AND FUTURE YEARS**

The Executive received the report on the Council's overall financial performance of for the 2021/22 financial year in respect of its annual General Fund capital programme. The report also sought approval for the 2022/23 revised capital programme including commitments carried forward from 2021/22.

The Deputy Chief Finance Officer requested that £49,280 be added to the Capital Programme in order to facilitate an additional scheme for a Skate Ramp and BMX jumps at Pinhoe Station Road Playing Field. The existing skate ramp had been dismantled and stored in the Belle Isle Depot for re-use and it was planned to be reinstated at the eastern end of the playing field. It would be widened to allow it to be better used and to improve safety for users. Additionally, the existing BMX jumps would be levelled and replaced with a new pump track. It would be fully funded from Section 106 contributions which Council would be requested to approve on 19 July, so as to prevent delaying approval until October 2022.

Members supported the additional recommendation.

**RECOMMENDED** that Council approve:-

- (1) the overall financial position for the 2021/22 annual capital programme;

- (2) the amendments and requests for further funding to the Council's annual capital programme for 2022/23; and
- (3) an additional scheme for a Skate Ramp and BMX jumps at Pinhoe Station Road Playing Field with £49,280 to be added to the Capital Programme.

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### **OVERVIEW OF GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2021/22**

The Executive received the report on the overall financial position of the General Fund Revenue Budget for 2021/22 financial year. The report sought approval for the General Fund working balance, a number of supplementary budgets and the creation of new earmarked reserves.

The Deputy Chief Finance Officer drew Members' attention to the comments of the Section 151 Officer and to the request for Council to approve £4.3 million of supplementary budgets, the majority of which were funded by earmarked reserves. They were affordable and, in many cases, backed by external funding.

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

- (1) the net transfer of £6,687,965 from Earmarked Reserves as detailed in paragraph 8.11 of the report;
- (2) the supplementary budgets of £4,304,610 and budget transfers as detailed in paragraph 8.13 of the report;
- (3) the Earmarked Reserves at 31 March 2022;
- (4) the Council Tax account and collection rate;
- (5) the outstanding sundry debt, aged debt analysis and debt write-off figures;
- (6) the creditors payments performance; and
- (7) the overall financial position of the Council and the General Fund working balance at 31 March 2022 of £5,480,752.

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### **2021/22 HRA BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - OUTTURN**

The Executive received the report which advised Members of the major differences between the approved budget and the outturn for the financial year up to 31 March 2022 in respect of the Housing Revenue Account and the Council's new build schemes in respect of its revenue and capital programme.

The Deputy Chief Finance Officer drew Members' attention to the comments of the Section 151 Officer advising of the challenges with recruitment and delivery of projects, which had a significant impact on expected spend in the year and pushed out the need for expenditure into future periods.

**RECOMMENDED** that Council approve (where applicable): -

- (1) the supplementary budgets of £550,500, as detailed in paragraph 8.5 of the report;
- (2) the HRA financial position for 2021/22 financial year; and
- (3) the revision of the HRA Capital Programme to reflect the reported variations detailed in Appendix 4 of the report.

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### **TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2021/22**

The Executive received the report on the current Treasury Management performance for the 2021/22 financial year and the position of investments and borrowings at 31 March 2022.

Councillor Jobson, as an opposition group leader, spoke on this item and asked for an update on the maturity dates of the Council's current fixed term deposits

The Deputy Chief Finance Officer provided the following updates as at 5 July 2022 in respect of Fixed Term Investments:-

Standard Chartered - 14/04/2022 - 14/10/2022 - 1.39%	3,000,000
Slough Borough Council -18/05/2022 - 20/02/2022 - 1.5%	5,000,000
Thurrock Borough Council - 12/05/2022 - 14/11/2022 - 1.20%	5,000,000
Goldman Sachs - 15/06/2022 - 15/12/2022 - 2.115%	3,000,000
West of England Combined Authority - 23/06/2022 -16/03/2023 - 1.65%	<u>5,000,000</u>
	<u>21,000,000</u>

The fixed term deposits set out in the report were in place at the end of the reporting date, 31 March 2022.

**RECOMMENDED** that Council note the content of the Treasury Management report.

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### **IMPLICATIONS OF THE ELECTIONS ACT 2022**

The Executive received the report on the implementation of the Elections Act 2022, which had received Royal Assent on 28 April 2022, and the potential impact on budgets and resources. Details of the various implications, costs and resources were presented in Appendix A of the report. Some parts of the Elections Act 2022 would be implemented by December 2022.

Particular reference was made to the following:-

- the need for the Council to make necessary budgetary plans to ensure it meets its obligations ahead of December 2022, and until confirmation was received from the Government to the budgetary support that would be made available to local authorities;
- an additional budget of £50,000 was sought for the current financial year pending confirmation of any extra funding support; and
- the need to plan ahead in anticipation of likely additional throughput at the polling stations themselves for which additional members of staff would be on duty on the day, as well as polling equipment and an additional staff member for the Electoral Service team.

Councillor D. Moore, as an opposition group leader, had submitted a question on this item, but was unable to be present. The question and answer are attached to the minutes.

The Corporate Manager Democratic and Civic Support responded as follows to Members' queries:-

- postal vote applicants would be required to refresh their applications every three years as opposed to the current five year requirement;
- further reductions could be required unless the Government fully funds the ongoing costs associated with the measures. There was a “new burdens” agreement between Central and Local Government whereby the Government promise to fully fund additional burdens on the sector - however this was often done at national level; and
- although there had been two suspected incidents of electoral fraud in recent elections in Exeter, both had been dismissed after Police investigation.

During the discussion, the following points were made:-

- concerns that individuals without ID such as a driving licence or passport would be excluded from voting;
- during a test pilot in London, approximately 1,000 voters had been turned away from the polling stations and had not returned; and
- of the 58 million who had voted in the 2019 elections, there had been 33 suspected voter impersonations, that is 0.0001%.

**RECOMMENDED** that Council:-

- (1) note the report and consider specific implications as and when further legislation is brought into force, over the next 6 - 18 months; and
- (2) approve a supplementary budget of up to £50,000 for the 2022/23 financial year, and any potential future budgetary requirements, to meet the immediate demands of the Elections Act 2022.

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### **FORMER EXETER BUS STATION**

The Executive received the report which sought funding to advance the demolition of the former Exeter Bus Station building in preparation for interim uses to be brought forward before the wider regeneration of the CityPoint site.

The City Surveyor reported that, as the new bus station has been operational for some time and the temporary uses of the upper and lower aprons during the construction of St. Sidwell’s Point had also been reduced, it was the intention to now bring forward demolition of the redundant facility allowing the City Council to have a cleared site on which to introduce a range of “meanwhile” uses.

A bid would be made to the Government’s Levelling Up Fund to demolish and replace the old Bus Station until the longer-term scheme could be delivered. If the bid was successful then the demolition would be funded from Capital Grant. Alternatively, the demolition would be funded from the surplus income generated from the acquisition of the Guildhall Shopping Centre.

Particular reference was made to:-

- the alternative approach of mothballing the site would be costly and prevent exploration of a range of “meanwhile” uses whilst the CityPoint scheme moves forward;
- the proposal would remove a significant constraint to the future re-development of the wider CityPoint site; and
- “meanwhile” uses would help animate the area adjoining the new leisure centre.

**RECOMMENDED** that Council approve the provision of the sum of £900,000 for the purpose of funding the demolition of the former Exeter Bus Station.

77 **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.

78 **GUILDHALL SHOPPING CENTRE**

The Executive received the report which informed on the agreed terms for the acquisition of the Guildhall Shopping Centre and the outline business plan for the asset going forward, following the decision by Council on 18 October 2021 to allocate funding to acquire the centre.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

(The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 7.27 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 on 19 July 2022.**

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## Minute Items 69, 70 and 75

### Questions and Responses - Opposition Leader Councillor D. Moore

#### Item 6 - Progress update from Exeter City Futures and City of Exeter Greenhouse Gas inventory

This is a question of process in relation to recommendation 2.4. Please can the Executive clarify if:-

- a) the 'one specific intervention such as the goal of connecting homes and non-residential buildings to a district heat network' is to be the priority for that immediate and concerted effort, or
- b) if the connection to a district heat network is not to be the focus of the immediate and concerted effort, please can the Executive describe when that decision will be made and by which body, and which goals will be considered?

#### Response

The purpose of the recommendation is to test whether there is an appetite to look at one of the many areas of the net zero plan, and to explore whether there is a mechanism for delivery that can be progressed in spite of the obvious resource constraints of the City Council.

This would be both as a learning exercise to understand the technical and resourcing issues but also to understand the appetite for embarking on a significant body of work. District heating is one of the specific measures identified in the greenhouse gas emissions report and therefore an appropriate subject for consideration. Given the City Council has no powers over the delivery it requires a collaborative approach and therefore indicative of the whole city co-ordination required to achieve the goal of a net zero city. If Members are so minded to explore a potential delivery plan for heat networks, the proposed approach would be presented to Executive as soon as practically possible.

**On page 21 (point 8.7) the report says the Exeter City Futures now includes Oxygen House. Please can the Leader confirm on what basis Oxygen House is now involved and are they on the Board of Exeter City Futures?**

#### Response

Oxygen House is a partner of Exeter City Futures and provides one of the Directors of the company.

#### Item 13 - Local Validation List

**The response from the Chief Planning Officer in Devon County Council says Public Health colleagues welcome the inclusion of requirements for air quality assessments. Will the Executive please require an air quality assessment for all developments on sites within 20 metres of the air quality management area. (Page 212).**

#### Response

The Local List requires Air Quality Assessments for all development on sites within 20 metres of the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), unless Environmental Health has already agreed it is not needed. The purpose is to ensure that proposals for new housing, offices, etc. in close proximity to the AQMA will provide healthy living environments for the occupiers. However, this requirement may not be needed in all circumstances, which can be confirmed by Environmental Health during the pre-application discussions stage.

**Item 15 - Implications of the Elections Act 2022**

**What provisions will be made to ensure that young people just turning 18 at the time of the election and people in temporary accommodation/homeless aren't excluded from voting because of the requirement to present identification?**

Response

There are no specific details as yet, but a national communications campaign for voter identification will be the responsibility of the Electoral Commission (EC), including coordination of campaigns and supporting outreach and roll-out via partners. The EC and the Department of Levelling up Housing and Communities will work to ensure plans and timelines for communications and guidance can be aligned.

The EC will run both national campaigns aimed at all electors and targeted campaigns for specific groups. (This will be supplemented by information on the ECC website and social media platforms).