

STRATEGIC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date: Thursday 12 September 2024

Time: 5.30 pm

Venue: Rennes Room, Civic Centre, Paris Street, Exeter

Members are invited to attend the above meeting.

If you have an enquiry regarding any items on this agenda, please contact Liz Smith, Democratic Services Officer (Committees) on 01392 265425.

Entry to the Civic Centre can be gained through the rear entrance, located at the back of the Customer Service Centre, Paris Street.

Membership –

Cllrs Pole (Chair), Mitchell, M (Deputy Chair), Atkinson, Ellis-Jones, Haigh, Hughes, Jobson, Knott, Moore, Palmer, Rees, Rolstone, Snow and Williams, M

Agenda

1 Apologies

To receive apologies for absence.

2 Minutes

(Pages 5 -
10)

To approve and sign the minutes of the Strategic Scrutiny Committee held on 6 June 2024.

3 Declarations of Interest

Councillors are reminded of the need to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests that relate to business on the agenda and which have not already been included in the register of interests, before any discussion takes place on the item. Unless the interest is sensitive, you must also disclose the nature of the interest. In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, you must then leave the room and must not participate in any further discussion of the item.

Councillors requiring clarification should seek the advice of the Monitoring Officer prior to the day of the meeting.

4 **Local Government (Access to Information) Act - Exclusion of Press and Public**

It is considered that the Committee would be unlikely to exclude the press and public during the consideration of the items on this agenda, but if it should wish to do so, then the following resolution should be passed:

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

5 **Questions from Members of the Public Under Standing Order No.19**

Details of questions should be notified to the Democratic Services Manager via the committee.services@exeter.gov.uk email by 10.00am at least three working days prior to the meeting. For this meeting any questions must be submitted by 10.00am on Monday 9 September.

For details about how to speak at Committee, please click the following link - <https://exeter.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/councillors-and-meetings/public-speaking-at-meetings/overview/>

6 **Questions from Members of the Council Under Standing Order No.20**

To receive questions from Members of the Council to the relevant Portfolio Holders for this Scrutiny Committee. The Portfolio Holders reporting to this Scrutiny Committee are:-

Councillor Bialyk -	Leader
Councillor Allcock -	Portfolio Holder City Development
Councillor Vizard -	Portfolio Holder Climate and Ecological Change and Communities
Councillor Wood -	Portfolio Holder Leisure Services and Physical Activity
Councillor Wright -	Portfolio Holder, Culture and City Centre Strategy
Councillor Foale -	Portfolio Holder Arts, Culture and Tourism

Advance questions from Members relating to the Portfolio Holders above should be notified to the Democratic Services Manager.

7 **Portfolio Holder report - Councillor Vizard**

(Pages 11
- 16)

To receive a report from Councillor Vizard, the Portfolio Holder for Climate, Ecological Change and Communities.

8 **Working Towards Net Zero:ECC Corporate Carbon Footprint Report & Carbon reduction Action Plan**

(Verbal)

To receive the verbal report from Head of Service, City Centre & Net Zero.

9 **City Wide Net Zero Programme and update on delivery** (Verbal)

To receive the verbal report of Head of Service, City Centre & Net Zero.

10 **Progress Report Shared Prosperity Fund update** (Pages 17 - 26)

To receive the report updating Members on Exeter's Shared Prosperity Fund.

11 **Forward Plan of Business and Scrutiny Work Plan** (Pages 27 - 30)

Please see for noting a link to the schedule of future business proposed for the Council which can be viewed on the Council's web site. This on-line document is a source for Members to raise issues at Scrutiny on forthcoming Executive agenda items:-

<https://exeter.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/councillors-and-meetings/forward-plan-of-executive-decisions/>

Also attached is a draft work plan of future scrutiny items.

Should Members wish to raise issues in respect of future business please notify Liz Smith in advance of the meeting.

Date of Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee will be held on **Thursday 14 November 2024** at 5.30 pm in the Civic Centre.

Individual reports on this agenda can be produced in large print on request to Democratic Services (Committees) on 01392 265107.

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STRATEGIC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

6 June 2024

Present:

Councillor Councillor Liz Pole (Chair)
Councillors Mitchell, M, Atkinson, Ellis-Jones, Haigh, Hughes, Jobson, Moore, D, Rees,
Rolstone and Snow

Apologies:

Councillors Knott, Palmer and Williams, M

Also present:

Service Lead - Active & Healthy People, Director Finance, City Surveyor, Service Lead -
Communications, Tourism & Culture, Service Lead Legal Services, Democratic Services
Manager and Democratic Services Officer

In attendance:

Councillor Philip Bialyk	- Council Leader
Councillor Naima Allcock	- Portfolio Holder for City Development
Councillor Matthew Vizard	- Portfolio Holder for Climate, Ecological Change and Communities
Councillor Duncan Wood	- Portfolio Holder for Leisure Services and Healthy Living

20 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2024 were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair as correct, subject to the addition of a vote of thanks given to Sharon Sissons.

21 **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made by Members.

22 **Questions from Members of the Public Under Standing Order No.19**

There were no questions submitted by the public.

23 **Questions from members of the Council Under Standing Order No.20**

There were no questions from members.

24 **Commercial Property Review**

Chair proposed that Commercial Property Review be heard.

The Director Finance introduced the report stating that there were around 600 leases and licenses, many historic owned since wartime and all were within the city.

The City Surveyor presented the report making the following points:

- There was a substantial asset value of £98.5million with an annual rental income of £8.38 million;
- In addition, land ownership strengthened strategic control of land use and regeneration
- A review of disposals would be coming to Executive as a more proactive approach was needed;
- There were recruitment issues within the team and innovative approaches were being explored to address this; and
- the funds for the Guildhall were ring-fenced.

The Director Finance and the City Surveyor answered questions from Members as follows:

- any sales funds not used for debt repayment would need to be invested and may break-even but longer-term interest rates may fall and impact on investment;
- rents were reviewed with new leases and rent review events. There were opportunities for restructuring of leases in locations such as the High Street and Marsh Barton;
- there was a budget of £1.7million to address Environmental Performance Certificates when properties were returned;
- it was requested that the Scout Hut make contact with the team with a proposition and the lease length could then be discussed;
- the wider corporate aims to reduce carbon impact to objectives would be added;
- Capital receipts go into the General Fund and were treated as any other funding;
- interest and capital were paid, as fixed rate loans and all would have a zero balance at the end;
- there were a number of capital requirements which would need to be prioritised;
- the government were not encouraging the acquisition of commercial property, hence the Guildhall funds were ring-fenced for use on regeneration activities;
- Office occupancy was down but Senate Court was amongst the most modern offices in the city which people are willing to pay for, but re-investment was needed to continue this;
- an asset strategy review was required but should take place after the corporate restructure;
- some historic assets were used as operational spaces and the Council worked with the historic organisations;
- there were not many applications under community asset transfer;
- the city wall was not strictly commercial but a member of the team was working on a repair project;
- a report would be coming on Belle Isle. Mary Arches was on the market and CityPoint and Clifton Hill will follow;
- there were government rules around paying back and re-financing of the Guildhall, with a management agent in place dealing with billing, tenants and maintenance, which was also monitored by a Council accountant;
- there were not really any post-covid trends around voids. The long-term void in the Guildhall was paying rent in full and not sub-letting; and
- recruitment issues within the team were problematic.

Councillor Mitchell proposed and Councillor Moore seconded the following recommendation which following the vote was carried.

RECOMMENDED that the Executive Committee consider a review of the current Asset Management Policy in relation to commercial property.

RESOLVED that the report was noted.

25 **Leisure Service Update**

The Service Lead - Communications, Tourism & Culture presented the report making the following points:

- leisure was taken back in-house in 2020;
- the team had bucked the national trend and were trying to improve daytime footfall;
- there was a lot of competition, but the rise in budget gyms was now falling;
- work was being undertaken on linking with other teams to meet corporate priorities;
- there had been successes in joint working with GP Referral Schemes being nationally recognised, which saw over 200 people per week, with a waiting list of 80 and making a profit. There were strong links with NHS teams and the voluntary sector;
- the staffing model had changed following received advice and research undertaken about what people want and need;
- diversification work was ongoing for the digital offer;
- there was a need to be cost-neutral, which was a challenge with aging stock. Northbrook would come to Council, St Sidwell's Point required updating, Wonford had proposals on the table and Riverside had ongoing challenges;
- the team was still recovering from staffing changes;
- there were just under 12,000 members with 47,000 pay as you go members. Attrition had also peaked with university students leaving;
- work was being undertaken on creating social cohesion using the available space, such as the Northcott Theatre using space for junior sessions;
- Active Devon were a critical partner for benchmarking; and
- the net cost of the service for 2024-35 was £2.8million

The Service Lead - Communications, Tourism & Culture answered questions from Members as follows:

- data had been collected from projects such as Pelican and each one was reviewed to enhance and improve accessibility;
- data was also shared between teams, with Active and Healthy People looking at areas of deprivation and reach out to where there was no leisure facility;
- there is potential to increase income as St Sidwell's and Riverside had reached capacity;
- the pricing structure would be reviewed for implementation next year, and would consider peak/off-peak;
- the revenue cut had been difficult but would not compromise Health and Safety; There was no date for becoming cost-neutral due to the aging buildings;
- most swimming pools generally loss money but St Sidwell's Point bucked this trend;
- junior and family options would be considered when addressing prices, as current 12 for 10 didn't apply;
- there were no outcomes from the travel plan which had been worked on with the bus station. The report would have gone to Devon County Council but there were no final results currently;

- the Council continued to encourage sustainable travel through green tourism and had arrangements with Stagecoach and GWR;
- car parking pricing was being looked at to see if there was anything which could be done for members;
- Northbrook was in an area of deprivation and was a fantastic facility, however it required a Member decision in future;
- Riverside didn't always look clean despite using appropriate cleaning chemicals. Issues raised at the meeting would be picked up with operational team; and
- a breakdown of memberships would go to the Executive, but the highest was adult gym memberships, followed by adult swimming and then junior and swimming lessons.

RESOLVED that the report was noted.

26 **Live and Move Strategy**

The Service Lead – Active and Healthy People presented their report and made the following points:

- a further application for funding had been made to Sport England, the outcome of which would be determined in a couple of weeks;
- there had been a focus on lower super-output areas;
- the Active Lives survey provided rich information to inform where resources were pointed;
- there was a focus on those doing no activity, and the survey demonstrated a year-on-year reduction of those doing zero activity;
- there was a £4.50 return on every £1 invested, which could be greater for those increasing from zero activity;
- work was being undertaken with Inclusive Exeter to improve activity in diverse communities;
- the Live and Move programme was nationally recognised as being innovative; and
- there had been an increase in the proportion of families who were active.

The Service Lead – Active and Healthy People answered questions from Members as follows:

- through partnership with Devon County Council and the LCWIP, support had been provided for a number of schemes however, Sport England work had supported Newtown area;
- Alphington Green Circle diversion would have a consultation later this year and may potentially require partner finance;
- the Ebrington Road area was contained within the St Thomas priority area
- governance belonged with the Council as the host organisation and was contracted until the end March 2025 subject to the further ask of funding for 2025-2028
- Sport England would meet on 25 June 2024;
- data was based on the annual local lives survey and had a dashboard and focus on the 20 lower super-output areas;
- information could be provided on protected characteristics in future;
- there had been a focus on culture, long-term health conditions and low income;
- the Wonford Hub governance would be decided post-planning;
- the Alphington crossing idea had been appraised by Devon County Council and deemed not feasible;

- King George V playing field was a multi-use area for football, walkers and those enjoying the biodiversity. There was a shortfall of three ATP pitches and work with the Community Trust would be taking place;
- community builders were the eyes and ears on the ground, connecting directly with their communities;
- there was learning to be had from the programmes which have been in place such as those for girls and women;
- teenage girls showed the largest drop-off in activity;
- it was a great time for girls' rugby with two city teams and another about to begin ahead of the Womens Rugby World Cup in 2025; and
- there was a focus on the city working with Cranbrook as a satellite town to identify barriers such as single car occupancy, which for Cranbrook, was the highest in the country.

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure Services and Healthy Living was invited to the table and answered questions as follows:

- he acted on HATOC as an independent Member, rather than as a Portfolio Holder;
- he supported Devon County Council with elements which learned from and work with local communities;
- work was being looked at for improvement to transport options and seeking more active travel;
- HATOC were undertaking an equalities impact assessment and seeking legal advice and there will be learning from the analysis; and
- the Live and Move Strategy would support Devon County Council to learn and it was important to note Exeter City Council only monitored emissions.

RESOLVED that the report was noted.

27 **Forward Plan of Business and Scrutiny Work Plan**

The Chair shared that the Scrutiny Programme Board had been re-scheduled and would be meet on 17 June 2024.

The Service Lead Legal Services, in responding to a question from a Member, agreed to look at the Scrutiny forms and processes for submission, with the Scrutiny Programme Board.

The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 8.34 pm

Chair

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REPORT TO STRATEGIC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 21 September 2024

PORTFOLIO HOLDER'S REPORT TO SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

Councillor Matt Vizard – Portfolio Holder for Climate, Ecological Change and Communities

1. Issues relating to achieving the Council's published priorities

Net Zero Carbon City

Over the summer, the team have been researching and developing a range of KPI's to monitor the effectiveness of work undertaken by the team in reducing City Council carbon emissions. Best practice has been sought from LA's from across the UK, and from partners through the Devon Climate Emergency. Once finalised, the KPI's will be presented back to Strategic Scrutiny.

1. City Wide Net Zero 2030

Programme Manager for City Wide Net Zero has recently been appointed. The post holder is currently meeting City Council officers and businesses in the city to make connections. This role comes with a limited budget, so activity will need to be funded by external funding.

2. Exeter City Council Net Zero 2030

Residential food waste is being rolled out across Exeter. Further rollout is on hold until a new food bay is constructed. This ties in with the refurbishment of MRF.

A decarbonisation plan for the Royal Albert Memorial Museum is due for completion in 2024.

The City Council GHG report/inventory has been delayed by a couple of months this year, this has been due to recruitment challenges at SWEEG. The report is due imminently and will be reported at November Strategic Scrutiny.

3. Ecological Change

Ongoing high demand for sports and mixed leisure use across City Council green spaces presents conflicting land use priorities. Resource and space restrictions mean that ecology enhancement potential is currently limited across City Council owned land. Enhancements are therefore currently reliant on developments, private landowners, or across existing designated sites. The implementation of statutory planning frameworks, council policy and the Devon local nature recovery strategy can ensure the protection, enhancement, and restoration of biodiversity.

In addition, space restrictions mean that additional canopy cover targets will need to be achieved across developments and/ or private landowners in the main. This limits the ability of the Council to directly influence canopy levels and carbon reduction progress through Exeter's Treescape. Ongoing resource and budget constraints mean that development projects require external funding.

The capacity of operational teams to secure and deliver ecology-based projects, alongside core workloads, is limited. However, operational meadow grass programmes

and the Exeter Wild city project in combination with Devon Wildlife Trust are ongoing aiding with carbon sequestration, pollution mitigation and biodiversity enhancement.

Leading a Well-Run Council

The City Council's solar estate has increased to **3.4MW** which reduces energy consumption and costs for a number of service areas.

2. Update or commentary on any major ongoing programmes of work

City Wide Net Zero 2030

The University of Exeter has kindly paid for an update to the **city wide green house gas report** and inventory. This report will be used to develop a work programme for the Programme Manager for City Wide Net Zero and to enable a review of the Net Zero Exeter 2030 Plan to address areas that have high carbon emissions. The updated report is due imminently.

The **Programme Manager for City Wide Net Zero** started in their post 1 August 2024. They are currently working through an initial work programme of:

- Review the Net Zero Exeter 2030 Plan
- Research how place based net zero is delivered at similar LA area's to Exeter, such as Norwich & Gloucester
- Set up Strategic Climate Change Group, representatives from Exeter Place Partnership & the city business community
- Set up Community Climate Change Working Group, with representatives from community and voluntary groups
- Discussion with University of Exeter, in how the [Civic University Agreement](#) can support city wide net zero, as well as [Exeter Innovation](#) and [Green Futures Network](#)
- Research external funding opportunities, to deliver city wide transformation in reducing carbon emissions
- Address Exeter City Futures legacy projects:
 - Creating a vision for a low vehicle city centre
 - Community Energy Pilot
 - Facilitating the collaboration necessary for the delivery of a city centre commercial District Heating Network

The City Council **Transport Working Group** met 1 August and reviewed the Terms of Reference with some changes to document. Working in partnership with Devon County Council, the group agreed to look further into developing secure bike hubs across the city. A representative from Devon County Council will be invited to future meetings.

An update on Exeter's allocation of **Shared Prosperity Fund** is provided to Strategic Scrutiny. There are four specific projects that support city wide net zero:

- Exeter Energy Grant
- Greening Your Business - specialist support for businesses located in Exeter <https://www.heartofswgrowthhub.co.uk/prosper-sign-up/>
- Exeter Innovation Hub (high growth business support)
- Exeter College Retrofit Skills Centre

The City Centre & Net Zero team are finalising car park locations to submit to the county wide **LEVI** funding submission.

1Energy, the company rolling out the **District Heat Network** across the city centre, recently held a public consultation in-person at Exeter Community Centre, as well as

online – information boards can be viewed on their website: <https://exeter.energy/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/COAST-Exeter-Energy-Network-A2-panels-pr4-HR.pdf>

The City Council are considering our options in connecting to the DHN, retrofitting our own suitable buildings (those on the route) or stay as is. A report will be brought to Executive later this year with a recommendation. The City Centre & Net Zero team are supporting 1Energy where they can possible.

The City Centre & Net Zero team continue to meet with City Development on the development of **The Exeter Plan** and provide commentary on the chapters that impact on net zero and reducing green house gas emissions across the city, as well as adaptation.

Exeter City Council Net Zero 2030

To Net Zero team continue to deliver **Carbon Literacy** training for officers and Cllrs with 230 completing the training and 122 being certified as being carbon literate. Bronze status has been achieved, silver is the goal.

The Net Zero team is leading a large scale Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) funded project for heat decarbonisation for RAMM & Riverside Leisure Centre. An update on the RAMM & Riverside **PSDS** project is provided at Executive on 2 September.

The City Council has been awarded a £100,000 grant through the South West Net Zero Hub to explore new opportunities for **solar PV on our buildings**. The grant is paying for technical investigations on a number of City Council-owned buildings to install solar PV. This will allow the City Council to further expand solar PV generation, to reduce carbon emissions and provide a sustainable energy supply to support services from leisure centres to car parks and office accommodation.

A number of **PodPoint EV chargers** are being relocated across our Corporate Estate to support City Council services to convert from petrol/diesel vehicles to EV's. Since May 2023, when the City Council introduced charging for EV charge points, there has been 87,833.59 kg of co2 avoided, 156,845 of KWh delivered and 17,670 uses – income generated is £3,650.

The team managed a staff travel survey over the summer, to gauge how staff travel to work from home, as well as how they travel for business purposes. Working in collaboration with HR, the results of the survey is being developed into an action and implementation plan to support and encourage staff to travel more sustainably to and from work, as well as in work – The Green Travel Plan. Activity will be funded through the Green Travel budget, held by HR and as an example may include installing secure bike storage across our work places, bike maintenance and more awareness on options of travelling sustainable to work.

The City Council submitted a number of funding bids to Devon County Council, on a new Net Zero Capital Fund and were successful. Due to the election, the fund was put on hold, we are awaiting confirmation if the fund continues post-election. Successful projects covered rolling out secure bike hubs (£2.5m) at a number of public sector sites, retrofitting a number of City Council owned homes (£2m) and providing grants for businesses green their business (£600k).

Ecological Change - Recovery, Enhancement and Net Gain

As a supporting Authority, the City Council will continue working with the Responsible Body (Devon County Council) on the creation of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), which is due to be published imminently. A requirement under the 2021 Environment Act, the strategy will outline a joint authority framework of objectives, supporting the delivery of nature recovery and biodiversity net gain within Devon.

The City Council is investigating the potential use of Suitable Alternative Natural Greens Spaces (SANGS) to mitigate the impact of the Exeter Local Plan and future development, on sites of significant international biodiversity interest. A report titled 'Recognising and capturing the Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) potential of the Valley Parks' has been completed and will form part of the evidence informing the emerging Joint Mitigation Strategy. Footprint Ecology have been commissioned to undertake this work and a final draft version of the strategy is expected next year. Work continues on the implementation of mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) arrangements. This statutory requirement will see a 10% BNG requirement implemented (either onsite or offsite) across unexempted developments and following the biodiversity gain mitigation hierarchy.

The City Council's planning teams continue to develop processes in accordance with evolving guidance and regulation, and this includes working with third-party private landowners and Devon County Council to secure legal agreements for offsite 'habitat banks' in Exeter. The first nationally registered Habitat Bank on privately owned land is now complete, a 3.2 ha site in Duryard Valley Park with partnership work between Exeter City Council, Devon County Council and Biogains Ltd.

The City Council have an enhanced biodiversity duty under the Environment Act 2021 which requires LAs to communicate what they are doing to improve the environment and to show the positive change they're making through statutory biodiversity reports. BNG, the LNRS and the Exeter Plan will be the primary contributors, as well other projects such as Exeter Wild City, Northbrook Arboretum, and the potential re-naturalisation of Exeter's waterways.

The first report must be published by March 2026 and work in 2024 will begin ensuring we are recording the positive changes from these projects.

3. Issues that may impact service delivery/financial performance/future budget requirements

As previously highlighted, there is a challenge that the net zero budget is temporary, with budget remaining for activity to continue until March 2026. The Head of Service City Centre & Net Zero continues to research opportunities to develop an ongoing revenue stream for this work to continue, as well as sourcing external funding.

Due to recruitment challenges at **SWEEG**, the City Council's and City Wide Green House gas report has been delayed by 2-3 months. This is now due to be reported at Strategic Scrutiny in November.

Due to the sale of **Mary Arches Street Car Park**, the City & Net Zero team continue to research alternative locations for the solar located on the top floor of the car park.

The City Council's solar estate is **3.4MW**, which reduces energy consumption and costs for a number of service areas. There have been efficiency challenges with our solar array located on the Matford Centre and the Arc this year, due to seagull faeces. PV performance is slightly lower than in previous years, which is effecting the level of income generated. In previous years, the City Council has achieved a very good market price for our P/kwh at 13.6p/kwh – the current price is 5p/kwh. The City Centre & Net Zero team

are currently out to tender for new prices from August, so income should increase. The poor weather in 2024, compared to last year, has also effected PV performance and income generated.

The **Net Zero Ambassadors** haven't met since early 2024, now that the management restructure is completed the Ambassadors will be re-grouped to share best practice and to support one another in reducing service carbon emissions.

Local **DNO constraints** are restricting the ability to deliver energy renewable projects. Capacity is dependent on completion of Matford BSP. National Grid report that constraints are likely to continue for a further 3-4 years.

Ecological Change - Recovery, Enhancement and Net Gain

Exeter's Tree and Woodland Strategy 2023-33 will be released later in 2024. The strategy outlines a framework for protecting the biodiversity and biosecurity of Exeter's Treescape. It identifies objectives that will support canopy cover increases where space allows across City Council owned land, and through development and private land stakeholders.

The recent 'Valuing Exeter's Urban Forest Report' indicates that Exeter's holistic canopy levels reduce City Carbon by as much as 1,500 tonnes per year. With the implementation of strategy objectives this figure is anticipated to gradually increase as canopy levels do, although the benefits will not be fully realised till the maturation of new planting schemes closer to 2033.

4. Potential changes to services/provisions being considered

No significant changes within the City Centre & Net Zero team are proposed.

The team are preparing for the next round of Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) funding, which is government funding to assist public bodies to decarbonise and retrofit their buildings. The fund is due to open October 2024, with a notification of success January 2025. Successful applications will be those that save the most amount of GHG from changes made to a particular building, and that the existing heat boiler being replaced is 10years +.

5. Other matters the Portfolio Holder wishes to raise with the Scrutiny Committee

I look forward to working with City Development in how Building Control and the planning regime can act for good in reducing city wide emissions.

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REPORT TO STRATEGIC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 12 September 2024

Report of: Head of Service, City Centre & Net Zero

Title: Progress Report Shared Prosperity Fund – Update 5

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Executive

1. What is the report about?

1.1 This report updates members on Exeter's Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) allocation, which supports Building Pride in Place and Increasing Life Chances in Exeter.

2. Recommendations:

2.1 Members note progress made in delivering UKSPF in Exeter.

2.2 The Head of Service City Centre & Net Zero continues to provide an update to Strategic Scrutiny on the delivery and management of UKSPF, the next being June 2025, when SPF has come to an end.

3. Reasons for the recommendation:

3.1 Members are updated on progress made delivering UKSPF in Exeter and understand the reasons why for any delay in progress.

3.2 Members have the opportunity to scrutinise delivery and projects funded by UKSPF.

4. What are the resource implications including non financial resources

4.1 Management of UKSPF Exeter is currently overseen by the Head of Service Lead City Centre & Net Zero and managed by the Project Manager, who is on a fixed term contract until 31 May 2025.

4.2 Up to 4% of the £1,403,877 (£56,120) UKSPF Exeter allocation is available for the administration, monitoring and evaluation of UKSPF. Within the first two years of UKSPF, £20,433 has been spent, with the remaining £35,687 being allocated as a contribution to the salary of the Project Managers role.

4.3 A salary of £86,960 (salary & on-costs) remains within the Net Zero & Business budget to contribute to the remaining cost of the Project Manager role.

- 4.4 The overall budget for UKSPF Exeter has not changed from our original allocation, but the % breakdowns for capital and revenue changed slightly. This resulted in some minor changes to projects being delivered, but nothing of significance.

REVISED						
2022/2023		2023/2024		2024/2025		Total
Capital	Revenue	Capital	Revenue	Capital	Revenue	
10%	90%	18%	82%	20%	80%	
£17,037.30	£153,335.70	£63,540	£277,207	£178,551.40	£714,205.60	
Total £170,373		Total £340,747		Total £892,757		£1,403,877

- 4.5 The City Council spent the majority of our year 2 allocation, which resulted in 100% of our year 3 allocation being received. This has been due to the Project Manager being in regular contact with project leads to ensure projects are being delivered on time and on budget.

5. What are the legal aspects?

- 5.1 The original Exeter Investment Plan was signed off by DLUHC January 2023, with the original budget listed above. Year 1 spend, outputs and outcomes were signed off by DLUHC 28 June 2023, which was a 3 month delay and was consistent with other authorities. The year 2 allocation was then released. Year 2 spend, outputs and outcomes were signed off by DLUHC 24 June 2024 and paid to us on 5 July 2024.
- 5.2 In exactly the same way as the previous year, the Head of Service City Centre & Net Zero & Business was not prepared to spend at risk Exeter's year 3 UKSPF allocation until the year 2 expenditure was signed off by DLUHC. This resulted in a small delay in some projects starting this financial year. There are no plans to make any major changes to the Exeter UKSPF Investment Plan and the projects being delivered, which would require sign off from DLUHC.
- 5.3 Throughout the whole of UKSPF, the Head of Service City Centre & Net Zero worked with procurement and Legal on developing Services Level Agreements for UKSPF funded projects and contracts.

6. Exeter UKSPF Update 5

- 6.1 The tables below highlight the interventions funded in year 1, 2 and 3 of UKSPF. Any underspend has been rolled forward to the following year to spend at a later date or on another project.

Year 1 Exeter UKSPF Projects		Capital		Revenue		Rolled Forward
Intervention	Project	Projected	Actual	Projected	Actual	
Community & Place						
E5 - Built & Landscaped environment to design out crime	Replace old city centre CCTV cameras & provide Body Worn Cameras	£130,373	£129,778	£0	£0	£595

	for enforcement					
Supporting Local Businesses						
E31 – Support relevant feasibility studies	Study	£0	£0	£33,186	£0	£33,186
4% Management & Administration	Salary contribution	£0	£0	£6,814	£6,804	£10
TOTAL		£130,373	£129,778	£40,000	£6,804	£33,791

Year 2 Exeter UKSPF Projects		Capital		Revenue		Rolled Forward
Intervention	Project	Projected	Actual	Projected	Actual	
Community & Place						
E2 Community & neighbourhood infrastructure	Exeter Parklets	£50,000	£51,803	£0	£0	£0
E3 Creation of and improvements to local green spaces	Rougemont Garden	£15,540	£14,323	£4,000	£3,168	£0
E6 Local arts, cultural, heritage & creative activities	Creative Arc	£0	£0	£34,808	£34,808	£0
TOTAL		£65,540	£66,126	£38,808	£37,976	£0
Supporting Local Businesses						
E23 Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems	Innovation Hub	£0	£0	£110,000	£116,798	£0
E23 Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems	Building Greater Exeter	£0	£0	£20,000	£20,000	£0
E23 Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems	Prosper (business support)	£0	£0	£101,000	£101,000	£0
E31 Support relevant feasibility studies	Study (rolled forward from year 1)	£0	£0	£30,717	£0	£30,717
TOTAL		£0	£0	£261,717	£237,798	£30,717
4% Management & Administration	Salary contribution	£0	£0	£8,473	£4,236	£0
GRAND TOTAL		£65,540	£66,126	£308,998	£280,010	£30,717

Year 3 Exeter UKSPF projects		Capital		Revenue	
Intervention	Project	Projected	Actual	Projected	Actual
Community & Place					
E6 – Local arts, culture, heritage and creative activities	Creative Arc	£37,440	£18,720	£92,160	£46,080
E13 – Community measures to reduce the cost of living, including through measures to improve energy efficiency	Exeter Energy Grants	£30,000	£5,000	£0	£0
TOTAL		£67,440	£23,720	£92,160	£46,080
Supporting Local Businesses					
E23 – Strengthen local entrepreneurial ecosystems	Innovation Hub	£0	£0	£104,250	£50,000
E23 – Strengthen local entrepreneurial ecosystems	Building Greater Exeter	£0	£0	£20,000	£20,000
E26 – Growing the local social economy	Prosper	£0	£0	£118,182	£0
E31 Support relevant feasibility studies	Study (rolled forward from year 2)	£0	£0	£30,717	£22,031
TOTAL		£0	£0	£273,149	£92,031
People & Skills					
E33 – Employment support for economically inactive people	Urban Learning Academy	£0	£0	£172,800	£172,800
E33 – Employment support for economically inactive people. Priority given to supporting residents aged 16-24 and 50+	Exeter Youth Hub	£0	£0	£100,000	£50,000
E34 – Courses including basic skills provision for people who are unable to access training through the adult education budget	Retrofit Academy	£142,000	£0	£49,575	£0
TOTAL		£142,000	£0	£322,375	£222,800
4% Management & Administration	Salary contribution	£0	£0	£26,350	£13,175
GRAND TOTAL		£209,440	£23,720	£714,034	£374,083

6.2 The majority of year 3 projects are receiving their UKSPF grant in two tranches, April and September. The City Council are waiting on a number of invoices from project leads to pay. At present, there are no concerns for projects not delivering in the final year.

6.3 If projects are unable to deliver, there is the option of redistributing spare funds, or hand any unspent funds back to DLUHC – which will be a last resort. All along, DLUHC have made it very clear that UKSPF will not be rolled forward into April 2025.

6.4 The Project Manager is currently undertaking a full review and evaluation of projects funded via UKSPF to determine their impact on the city, its communities and how projects link back Building Pride in Place and Increasing Life Chances. This report will be available once UKSPF has commenced within Exeter. Updates on each of the UKSPF projects are highlighted below.

6.4.1 Community & Place

6.4.1.1 E2 Community & neighbourhood infrastructure, Exeter Parklets

Project is now closed and was updated in previous reports. A further update will be provided as part of a full evaluation of UKSPF projects in 2025.

6.4.1.2 E3 Creation of and improvements to local green spaces, Rougemont Garden

Work now completed, with the footpath now fully open for use by residents, visitors and the Red Coat Guides. Some maintenance issues were also addressed in Rougemont Garden as part of the project.

6.4.1.3 E5 Built & Landscaped environment to design out crime, CCTV & Body Worn Video Cameras

Project is now closed and was updated in previous reports. A further update will be provided as part of a full evaluation of UKSPF projects in 2025.

6.4.1.4 E6 Local arts, cultural, heritage & creative activities, Creative Arc

The Creative Arc Programme Manager (0.6FTE) has been in post since July 2025 and is based within the Innovation Hub – another UKSPF funded project.

The main tool for promoting the work of Creative Arc is

<https://www.creativearc.co.uk/> Commissions for cultural practitioners are within 3 categories, with 7 commissions to date:

- **Health & Wellbeing**
 - Exeter Northcott Theatre – The Commotion Choir
 - Natalie McGrath – Pink Plates & Shipwrecks
 - Positive Light Projects – The Pelican Press
- **Environmental Sustainability**
 - Almanac Theatre – The Cultivate Sessions
 - Hannah Mumby & Hannah Hayes – Flood Risk & Topsham
- **People & Place Shaping**
 - Art Work Exeter – River Radio
 - Bookbag – Fore Street Stories

The current commission closes 9 September, which has an specific application criteria with £35,000 worth of funding available. This particular commission aims are to:

- Deliver tangible outcomes for community and place
- Contribute to ‘building pride of place and increasing life chances’
- Support local business (this includes freelancers and independent practitioners)
- Increase opportunities for people to engage with and participate in arts, culture and creativity
- Support opportunities for the development of skills

6.4.1.5 E13 – Community measures to reduce the cost of living, including through measures to improve energy efficiency, Exeter Energy Grants

Grants to support residents wishing to upgrade their homes to improve energy efficiency, reduce energy bills, carbon emissions and levels of fuel poverty. Maximum grant of £1,000 for eligible households, with some additional eligibility criteria. As of late August, 27 applications have been received from residents to improve the energy efficiency of their homes, with 23 being eligible for a grant of up to £1,000. As an example, the grant is contributing to loft insulation and the replacement drafty windows and doors.

6.4.2 Supporting Local Businesses

6.4.2.1 E23 Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems – Innovation Hub

Business events continue to be popular within the Innovation Hub, attracting businesses not just located within Exeter but from further afield. Events include Exeter Chamber, Tech Exeter, Tech 4 Good, Barclays Legal Lab, Entrepreneur Workshop and a number of Pitchfest's. The Innovation Hub are supporting students, entrepreneurs, start-ups and business owners in Exeter to set up or grow their business.

Post March 2025, The University of Exeter are seeking alternative funding for the continuation of the Innovation Hub.

6.4.2.2 E23 Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems – Building Greater Exeter

The management of Building Greater Exeter has been transferred over to Exeter College. A full range of business events and support are planned for Autumn 2024/Spring 2025.

6.4.2.3 E23 Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems – Prosper

Prosper has been running since April 2023 in Exeter, as well as Mid Devon and East Devon since April 2023 providing free support for businesses. Support is broken down into four categories 'General Business Support' / 'Green Business Support' / 'Start-Up Support' / 'Job Creation & Job Safeguarding Support'. An example of an event held is below.

Referral levels to Prosper have been very strong to date, with 376 referrals through the Growth Hub online form across the three districts involved. Exeter specific referrals received to date stand at 113 businesses and entrepreneurs

against a programme total target of 188 (154 businesses and 34 entrepreneurs). There has been a very strong level of interest in both the Generalist and Start-up support in Exeter. Exeter's achievement is strong, but there is some slight concern around the level of interest in the Green support, which is such a large part of Exeter's offering. The interest in the Green support sector has increased though, and the cut-through that the programme messaging is having has improved as well. Going forward the marketing push in Exeter will be specifically targeted for "Green" support and the two remaining events to be delivered in Exeter will be designed to achieve outputs and outcomes and promote the support offering as much as possible.

6.4.2.4 E31 Support relevant feasibility studies, study

Procurement process completed, with LDA appointed to review and develop a new Vision and Action Plan for the City Centre to ensure the City Centre is responsive to creating a growing and vibrant economy, addressing changes within the retail and hospitality market. 4 Workshops completed, with a further member workshop programmed in for autumn 2024. New Vision & Action Plan is due to be completed early 2025.

6.4.3 People & Skills

6.4.3.1 E34 – Courses including basic skills provision for people who are unable to access training through the adult education budget, Exeter College Retrofit Academy

Exeter College have established a cutting edge training centre to support the development of green skills within the construction sector. This project will support the growth in green skills and jobs.

6.4.3.2 E33 – Employment support for economically inactive people, Urban Learning Academy, Urban Learning Academy

Led by CoLab, the Urban Learning Academy is a collaboration of a number of city organisations/institutions working with city residents to deliver free community-based courses, making them accessible to all and removing barriers to learning. Supporting vulnerable adults to increase life skills, help residents to move towards independence, volunteering and potentially employment.

6.4.3.3 E33 – Employment support for economically inactive people, Exeter Youth Hub

Led by Devon County Council the Exeter Youth Hub will be an agile, responsive, place based approach to support communities, that do not currently engage. Support and advice will be provided to residents to access employment, education and training. The Youth Hub is managed by advisers who work alongside individuals in an informal environment to support their journey into employment and further education.

7. How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan?

7.1 UKSPF links directly to the Exeter Vision and a number of Corporate Priorities.

Corporate Plan	Prosperous Local Economy	Interventions support businesses to innovate and to provide them individual business support to grow and pivot
	Housing & Building Great Neighbourhoods	An intervention supports the aims and aspirations of Liveable Exeter and to provide a safe place to live, work, visit and shop
	Net Zero Carbon City	Interventions support business and residents to reduce their carbon emissions
	Thriving Culture & Heritage	Interventions support the cultural sector within Exeter

Exeter Vision	Innovative & Analytical City	Interventions support high growth potential businesses, as well as the commercialisation of research from city institutions. Skills and learning interventions will be developed to support residents to improve their learning opportunities.
	Accessible world class educations	Interventions support residents to access city educational institutions in delivering world class education to residents and businesses, giving opportunities to all.
	Liveable & connected	Interventions support a thriving city centre
	A leading sustainable city	A number of interventions will support the delivery of the Exeter Net Zero 2030 Plan
	Culture	Interventions support cultural activity through Liveable Exeter

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

- 8.1 Due to delays in being notified that Exeter's UKSPF allocation was released, there is the ongoing risk that some projects may not be able to achieve their initial outcomes and outputs. This may result in Exeter not being able to spend our full allocation in its final year. The Project Manager continues to support project leads to ensure projects are on time and on budget.
- 8.2 As highlighted in 6.4.2.3, due to the lack of take up in some aspects of business support through Prosper, going forward there will be a push on green support to ensure outputs and outcomes are achieved.

9. Equality Act 2010 (The Act)

- 9.1 No potential impact has been identified on people with protected characteristics as determined by the Act because the report is for noting only. An EQIA is developed for each project funded by UKSPF.

10. Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

10.1 Some of the proposed interventions support Exeter's Net Zero 2030 Plan in reducing city carbon emissions. It also supports businesses and residents to reduce their own carbon emissions.

10.2 Elements of the People & Skills theme will focus on green skills. Larger projects will be reviewed to keep carbon emissions to a minimum or to net zero.

11. Are there any other options?

11.1 Within the guidance for UKSPF, Exeter City Council is a 'Lead Authority', so there is a requirement to manage Exeter's UKSPF allocation and develop an Investment Plan.

Director: Strategic Director Place

Author: Head of Service City Centre & Net Zero

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

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

14 March 2024, progress Report Shared Prosperity Fund – Update 4

21 September 2023, Progress Report Shared Prosperity Fund – Update 3

2 March 2023, Progress Report Shared Prosperity Fund – Update 2

22 September 2022, Progress Report Shared Prosperity Fund – Update 1

5 July 2022, UK Shared Prosperity Fund, Exeter allocation

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WORK PLAN FOR SCRUTINY ITEMS 2024/25

Working Draft for August 2024

Strategic Scrutiny Committee	Item	Director/	Portfolio Holder	Origin of Business	Status
12 September 2024	Portfolio Holder's Report (Cllr Vizard)		Portfolio Holder Climate, Ecological Change and Communities (Cllr Vizard)		
12 September 2024	Progress Report Shared Prosperity Fund - Update	Strategic Director for Community Services (tbc) Service Lead Net Zero & Business (VH)	Portfolio Holder Climate, Ecological Change and Communities (Cllr Vizard)	Report from Strategic Scrutiny Committee 29 September 2022 half yearly report	
12 September 2024	City Wide Net Zero - Programme of work and update on delivery	Strategic Director for Community Services (tbc) Service Lead Net Zero & Business (VH)	Portfolio Holder Climate, Ecological Change and Communities (Cllr Vizard)		
14 November 2024	Portfolio Holder's Report (Cllrs Bialyl Allcock)		Leader (Cllr Bialyk) and Portfolio Holder City Development		
14 November 2024	Working Towards Net Zero - Exeter City Council's Corporate Carbon Footprint Report and Carbon Reduction Action Plan	Strategic Director for Community Services (tbc) Service Lead Net Zero & Business (VH)	Portfolio Holder Climate, Ecological Change and Communities (Cllr Vizard)	Report from Strategic Scrutiny Committee 29 September 2022 half yearly report	

Strategic Scrutiny Committee	Item	Director/	Portfolio Holder	Origin of Business	Status
14 November 2024	Exeter Plan Final Version	Strategic Director for Place (IC), Assistant Service Lead City Development (Local Plan)	Portfolio Holder for City Development (Cllr Allcock)	Scrutiny Proposal - Cllr Moore Review findings of the Car Parks Strategy report Workstream to tackle social and affordable housing crisis – (Scrutiny proposal Cllr Atkinson) Both items above now incorporated into Local Plan	
14 November 2024	Air Quality Performance	Strategic Director for Community Services (tbc)	Portfolio Holder Climate, Ecological Change and Communities (Cllr Vizard)	Scrutiny Proposal - Cllr Moore NB Yearly report to Executive	
23 January 2025	Portfolio Holder’s Report (Cllrs Wood & Asvachin)		Portfolio Holder Leisure Services & Healthy Living (Cllr Wood), Portfolio Holder Housing, Homelessness Prevention and Customer Services (Cllr Asvachin)		

Strategic Scrutiny Committee	Item	Director/	Portfolio Holder	Origin of Business	Status
23 January 2025	Live and Move Programme Update	Strategic Director for Community Services (tbc)	Portfolio Holder Leisure Services & Healthy Living (Cllr Wood)	Report from Strategic Scrutiny Committee 16 March 2023 half yearly	
23 January 2025	Scrutiny Programme Annual Report	Strategic Director Corporate Resources (DH)		Yearly report	
13 March 2025	Portfolio Holder's Report (Cllr Wright & Foale)		Deputy Leader & Portfolio Holder Corporate Services & City Centre (Cllr Wright), Portfolio Holder Arts, Culture & Tourism (Cllr Foale)		
13 March 2025	Working Towards Net Zero - Exeter City Council's Corporate Carbon Footprint Report and Carbon Reduction Action Plan Progress Report	Strategic Director for Community Services (tbc), Service Lead Net Zero & Business (VH)	Portfolio Holder Climate & Ecological Crisis (Cllr Vizard)	Report from Strategic Scrutiny Committee 29 September 2022 half yearly report	
13 March 2025	Progress Report Shared Prosperity Fund - Update	Strategic Director for Community Services (tbc) Service Lead Net Zero & Business (VH)	Portfolio Holder Climate & Ecological Crisis (Cllr Vizard)	Report from Strategic Scrutiny Committee 29 September 2022 half yearly report	
5 June 2025	Portfolio Holder's Report (Cllr tbc)				

Strategic Scrutiny Committee	Item	Director/	Portfolio Holder	Origin of Business	Status
5 June 2025	Presentation on the Role of Scrutiny	Strategic Director Corporate Resources (DH)		Timetabled report	
5 June 2025	Live and Move Programme Update	Strategic Director for Community Services (tbc)	Portfolio Holder Leisure Services & Healthy Living (Cllr Wood)	Report from Strategic Scrutiny Committee 16 March 2023 half yearly	

Combined Strategic Scrutiny and Customer Focus					
18 June 2024	Budget Setting Process	Director Finance (DH)	Leader		
Autumn (date TBC)	Exeter Plan	Director Place (IC)	Leader / Cllr Allcock		
5 February 2024	Budget Setting Process	Director Finance (DH)	Leader		