

COUNCIL

Tuesday 22 July 2025

Present:-

The Right Worshipful the Lord Mayor Councillor Anne Jobson (Chair)
Councillor Gemma Rolstone (Deputy Lord Mayor)
Councillors Asvachin, Atkinson, Banyard, Begley, Bennett, Bialyk, Cookson, Darling, Foale, Fullam, Harding, Holland, Hughes, Hussain, Ketchin, Knott, Miller-Boam, Mitchell, K, Mitchell, M, Moore, Palmer, Patrick, Payne, Pole, Rees, Snow, Vizard, Wardle, Wetenhall, Williams, R, Wood and Wright

Also Present

Chief Executive, Head of Legal and Democratic Services & Monitoring Officer, Strategic Director for Corporate Resources, Democratic Services Officer and Democratic Services Officer

56

MINUTES

The minutes of the Ordinary meeting of the Council held on the 10 June 2025 were moved by the Lord Mayor, taken as read, approved and signed as correct.

57

OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS

The Lord Mayor advised that she had attended the following:

- Exeter College Apprentice & Employer Awards;
- Topsham St James Cricket Club 150th Anniversary;
- “A New Creation” at Exeter Cathedral;
- Northcott’s production of Romeo & Juliet;
- Riding for Disabled’s Exeter Group;
- Armed Forces Day;
- the installation of the new Bishop of Crediton;
- raising of the Windrush Flag at Devon County Council;
- Redmayne and Bentley’s 150th anniversary;
- Devon and Exeter Institution’s Midsummer Festival;
- Macmillan’s 150th Anniversary;
- Vice Chancellor’s Garden Party;
- Science Park’s 10th anniversary; and
- the opening of the Climate Change Forum at the University.

The Lord Mayor also highlighted the success of the Lammas Fair celebration, and that both she and the Deputy Lord Mayor were looking forward to the upcoming Women’s Rugby World Cup.

58

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Lord Mayor reported that one question had been received from a member of the public.

The individual who had submitted a question was not in attendance, and the Lord Mayor advised that the question and response would be published on the website within five working days.

EXETER HARBOUR BOARD - 12 JUNE 2025

The minutes of the Exeter Harbour Board held on 12 June 2025 were presented by the Chair, Councillor Ruth Williams, and taken as read.

In respect of **Minute No.18 Chair's Announcements**, Councillor Moore asked for clarity regarding the floating restaurant and why it continued to be on the agenda. Councillor R Williams clarified that it had remained on the agenda as it remained an ongoing issue for the Harbour Master and other relevant parties.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Exeter Harbour Board of 12 June 2025 be received.

STRATEGIC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 5 JUNE 2025

The minutes of the Strategic Scrutiny Committee held on 5 June 2025 were presented by the Chair, Councillor Pole and taken as read.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Strategic Scrutiny Committee held on 5 June 2025 be received.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE - SPECIAL 19 JUNE 2025 & SPECIAL 24 JUNE 2025 AND 8 JULY 2025

The minutes of the Special Executive Committee held on 19 June 2025 were presented by the Leader, Councillor Bialyk and taken as read.

In respect of **Minute No. 45 Pendragon Road** Councillor Moore asked for clarification regarding access points to the site, and the expected greenspace that would be connected to this development. Councillor Banyard asked the Leader to provide information on the guarantees the Council could offer to ensure the enforcement on the ransom strip around the site. Clarification was also sought from Councillor Harding regarding how the land between Savoy Hill Valley Park and Mincinglake Valley park could be joined as soon as possible.

In response the Leader stated that the report had covered the disposal of land and had not been a planning application, that the number of access points was still being discussed by planners with the developers. Discussions surrounding the land at the edges of the site were subject to ongoing work between legal and planning teams. Regarding the land between Savoy Hill Valley Park and Mincinglake Valley Park it would be good to see this provide better and useable amenity space for residents and visitors.

RESOLVED that the minutes of Special Executive Committee held on 19 June 2025 be received.

The minutes of the Special Executive Committee held on 24 June 2025 were presented by the Leader, Councillor Bialyk and taken as read.

In respect of **Minute No. 48 Closure of Northbrook Swimming Pool**, Councillor Palmer raised concerns about information suggesting that Northbrook Swimming Pool would be demolished by the Council and whether if asked by the Northbrook Trust for the swimming pool to be returned to them in its original condition, the closure would be reconsidered. Councillor Miller-Boam asked the Leader to provide clarification on what work had already been done regarding community ownership of the pool, as recommended by the Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee.

In response the Leader stated that there had been no proposal for the Council to demolish Northbrook Pool as the asset was not ours, and that there was an upcoming meeting with the Legal team regarding the lease, but there would be no reconsideration beyond that.

Councillor Bennett submitted the following question under Standing Order No. 8:

“At the Executive on the 24th June, over 4 weeks ago, the Leader said with regard to Northbrook Swimming Pool. If agreed tonight, the closure process could take up to 12-weeks. This will give officers time set up focus groups, talk with teachers and engage leisure members to work out ways to help people transition to St Sidwell’s and Riverside pools. We are fortunate in having committed and knowledgeable staff at our leisure centres, who can facilitate this process.”

Please can a full update on these focus groups, transition arrangements and provision made for schools be explained to Council?.”

The Leader provided the following response in response to Councillor Bennett’s question:

“Following the Executive meeting on 24 June, I am pleased to provide a full update on the progress made regarding the closure process of Northbrook Swimming Pool (NSP) and the transition arrangements to St Sidwell’s Point (SSP) and Riverside Leisure Centre (RSLC).

Schools and Clubs Engagement

The Leisure team have now met with all schools and clubs currently using NSP. A thorough review of pool hall space at SSP and RSLC has confirmed that we are able to accommodate all existing bookings. This has been communicated to all relevant parties, and we are currently awaiting final confirmations. Once received, all sessions will be formally added to the schedules at the new sites. I am pleased to report that in some instances; we have been able to reduce costs for schools.

Focus Groups and Community Engagement

Focus groups designed to engage individuals with protected characteristics, including those who are neurodivergent, have been scheduled at both St Sidwell’s Point and the Isca Centre during the week commencing 4th August. These sessions will offer leisure members and other stakeholders the opportunity to share their views and help shape the transition process that is inclusive, accessible, and responsive to the diverse needs of our community.

We remain committed to a smooth and well-supported transition for all our users of Northbrook Swimming Pool and will continue to provide updates as the process continues.”

In a supplementary question Councillor Bennett asked whether or not the difference in price of school transport would be paid for by the council. The Leader responded stating that this was a school transport issue and should to be raised with Devon County Council, and that a number of costs for schools had already decreased.

RESOLVED that the minutes of Special Executive Committee held on 24 June 2025 be received.

The minutes of the Executive Committee held on 8 July 2025 were presented by the Leader, Councillor Bialyk and taken as read.

In respect of Minute No. 55 Local Development Scheme: Summer 2025

Councillor Bennett referred to a question asked by Councillor Moore during the meeting and asked how much progress had been made in drafting an SPD for co-

living. In response Councillor Patrick, the Portfolio Holder for City Development, clarified that it was recognised that this was important housing tenure and should be part of our plans for SPD going forward, but was awaiting a draft plan from Bristol. Once received work would commence on a draft plan for Exeter.

In respect of **Minute No. 56 Newtown Community Project – Triangle Car Park Amends** Councillor Vizard spoke in support of the scheme, stating that it was crucial to the area and a good example of public consultation. Councillor Vizard also commended the support of the Cycling Campaign. Councillor M Mitchell stated that the recommendation had been supported unanimously at HATOC.

The Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendation which following a unanimous was CARRIED.

In respect of **Minute No. 57 Costed Organisational Carbon Footprint Projections to 2030** Councillor Harding asked for clarification regarding information suggesting that the solar farm was back-up powered by a diesel generator. Councillor Banyard noted the areas showing marginal reduction by 2030, and asked that given procurement is a powerful lever, how would secondary emissions from this be reduced. Councillor Moore noted that the Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) highlighted an issue regarding some religions and asked the Leader if this would be addressed. Councillor Moore also noted that 'Business As Usual' (BAU) showed a reduction of 29% by 2030 and asked when Exeter would be expected to achieve net zero. Councillor Atkinson spoke in support of this report and asked the Leader if she was correct in believing that this report was groundbreaking and that no other council had produced a report at this level.

The Leader responded that he would take the comments about the EQIA and feedback to officers. He confirmed that Councillor Atkinson was correct in her belief that the report was groundbreaking, and the Leader asked Councillor Vizard, Portfolio Holder for Climate, Ecological Change and Communities to respond in more depth.

Councillor Vizard responded to questions making the following points:

- solar farms were not backed by diesel generators;
- there was more that could be done using with communications to share the work that the council had been doing;
- BAU was a misnomer as it suggested that the Council was doing nothing out of the ordinary but that was not the case;
- the Net Zero by 2030 ambition remained, and the report was fully costed and provided a stark message about what would be necessary to achieve that target; and
- the report was groundbreaking and that there had been no similar, costed reports across local authorities.

RESOLVED that the minutes of Executive Committee held on 8 July 2025 be received.

The Leader, Councillor Bialyk presented the Corporate Plan Report and during debate Members made the following comments:

- there was concern that residents feedback about nature was not reflected in the outcomes of the corporate plan, and that there was a duty towards nature and decarbonisation;

- the introduction to the plan mentioned heritage but there was no corresponding outcome;
- the Council needed to enable a greater voice for the community as they wanted to have a say on issues that affected them;
- further discussion in the future with opposition groups would be welcomed when drafting new plans;
- drafting amendments would be made to change the wording to 'Net Zero'; and
- operational detail had been provided regarding managing green spaces which could help clarify some biodiversity concerns.

The Leader responded to Members comments in the following terms:

- the corporate plan had been based on the manifesto of the Labour group;
- drafting recommendations would be delegated to the chief executive as would issues surrounding heritage, which would be discussed at the leaders next meeting with the chief executive; and
- cutting of grass was under contract with highways, and the information could be found online.

The Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendations of the report, which following a vote were CARRIED.

63

ORGANISATIONAL TRANSFORMATION AND EFFICIENCY PROJECTS - REQUEST FOR A NON-RECURRING BUDGET

The Leader, Councillor Bialyk introduced the report and during debate Members made the following comments:

- the council might not exist in the same way following Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) therefore the aim of this project could be in vain;
- the investment in IT raised concerns that infrastructure was becoming a larger portion of what the council was focusing on;
- learning and development was a large amount of work for one role;
- the council's responsibility was to the people of Exeter to ensure that the council was ready for LGR;
- it was important to be up to date digitally and to relieve stress on members of staff where possible as well as ensuring readiness for LGR;
- the council could fall behind unless investments in staff were made;
- this could provide impetus to assist LGR, and we should not stop because there was change on the horizon;
- the council should make sure whatever changes were made were compatible with neighbouring authorities they could be working with; and
- there were significant number of staff who maybe concerned with what the future looks like after LGR and it would be important to acknowledge and reassure where possible.

Members asked the following questions:

- was this suitable given the context of LGR and that everything may be different in the future;
- where would corporate health and safety be sourced;
- would it help to know what central government would provide for restructure;
- could the council be informed of discussions with neighbouring authorities given the amount of investment in infrastructure;
- would the council look to upskill and prepare officers rather than training new staff.

The Leader and Section 151 Officer responded to Members questions in the following terms:

- the council would make sure there was good communication with other local authorities;
- the request was for funds to develop staff;
- business rates reset would take place this year; and
- these funds would address budget challenges over the next two years.

The Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendations of the report, which following a vote were CARRIED.

64

JOINT HABITATS SITE MITIGATION STRATEGY

The Leader, Councillor Bialyk, introduced this report and during debate members made the following comments:

- an email from the Head of Service - Operations had been circulated to every councillor;
- two partners, Teignbridge Council and East Devon District Council had already approved this strategy;
- Exeter was fortunate to have easy access to two vital European sites, Dawlish Warren and the Pebblebed Heaths, and it was important to protect those;
- would like to see a similar plan for Exeter;
- there was no biodiversity strategy for the city, and this level of detail was needed across all green spaces; and
- Members were sceptical due to the Government's reputation of regarding the environment.

The Leader responded in the following terms: -

- this strategy had cross party support at both Teignbridge and East Devon District Council; and
- support for this strategy was welcomed.

The Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendations as stated in the report, which following a vote unanimous were CARRIED.

65

NOTICE OF MOTION BY COUNCILLOR HUGHES UNDER STANDING ORDER NO. 6

Councillor Hughes moved, and Councillor K Mitchell seconded a Notice of Motion in the following terms: -

NOTICE OF MOTION BY COUNCILLOR HUGHES UNDER STANDING ORDER NO.6

Council notes that:

The Supreme Court, in the case of For Women Scotland v the Scottish Ministers, ruled that the terms “man”, “woman” and “sex” in the Equality Act 2010 refer to ‘biological sex’, and that the Scottish Government’s effort to increase women’s representation on public boards therefore did not entail representation by trans women with a Gender Recognition Certificate, as it had intended.

A Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC) allows trans people to change their birth certificate and their sex marker with HMRC. It is an illegal practice under

the Gender Recognition Act 2004 for an employer to ask for an employee's GRC.

Repeatedly misgendering someone, particularly a transgender person, could be considered a form of harassment and direct discrimination under the Equality Act 2010, although the law is still evolving around this and is currently still complex.

Interim guidance published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has suggested that trans women should not be permitted to use women's facilities, and trans men should not be permitted to use men's facilities, in workplaces and services open to the public. This interim guidance is currently in the process of being challenged by way of a claim for judicial review by the Good Law Project. If the claimants are found to be incorrect, then the submission is that the EHRC interim guidance is incompatible with articles 8 and/or 14 of the European Convention of Human Rights.

The Supreme Court judgement, and following interim guidance from the EHRC, has caused great anxiety, uncertainty, and fear for the trans, non-binary, and intersex communities. It has also encouraged open bigotry, and a further removal of safety measures for trans and non-binary people in workplaces and public spaces due to a lack of understanding of what this Supreme Court judgment actually means.

The law requiring respect for trans/non-binary rights has not changed. The provisions of the Equality Act 2010 on protected characteristics, associated case law, plus the Supreme Court has reaffirmed that trans people's rights must be respected under the law."

An amendment to the motion was proposed by Councillor Wright calling to remove point 5 and to remove "are women", "are men", "and" from the first sentence of the motion. Councillor Hughes accepted the amendment.

In presenting the motion, Councillor Hughes made the following points:

- this motion was important in the current climate;
- 47% of transgender people had been sexually assaulted at some point in their life, and 78% had experienced sexual harassment;
- 35% of transgender people had experienced physical assault;
- 12% of transgender and non-binary individuals had experienced sexual violence;
- 57% had experienced mistreatment by Police;
- the Supreme Court had been very clear that there was no legal requirement for single sex facilities where there are cubicle toilets;
- regulations were separate from Equality Act 2010, and there was no need for establishments to change their approach as a result of this judgement;
- transgender residents of Exeter had experienced a multitude of incidents of discrimination, abuse and hate crimes;
- Councillor Hughes had received hate mail whilst being a councillor which was not acceptable in our city;
- effective allyship was needed more than ever;
- support for this motion was support for transgender and non-binary communities in Exeter; and
- any group marginalisation impacts other marginalised groups.

During discussion, Members made the following comments in support of the motion:

Councillor Knott:-

- shared personal family experience of persecution and bigotry of an LGBT+ person when sadly a motion such as this did not exist;
- that he was elected in 2022 when more did not vote for him than did but he was committed to representing every resident in his ward; and
- this motion would mean that we recognise the LGBT+ community, embrace difference and take meaningful action to support residents.

Councillor Begley:-

- was horrified by the statistics shared by Councillor Hughes;
- believed that this was an essential motion for Exeter;
- the Laurels was a long established and well-respected NHS clinic operating locally which Exeter was fortunate to have;
- in her own career she had worked with adults struggling with gender dysphoria;
- priority had to be given to protecting those who were suffering; and
- motions like this would make discrimination and prejudice as socially unacceptable as racism, ableism, and misogyny.

Councillor Miller-Boam:-

- thanked Councillor Hughes for this motion;
- discussed initiatives in the city which they had attended, such as Exeter Queer Fest and Exeter Pride;
- as a council we must create an inclusive community for the LGBTQ+ community;
- trans people faced discrimination and hostility and have disproportionately poor access to public services;
- it was important to wait for results of EHRC consultation before making any changes to guidance and services provided; and
- wholeheartedly supported the motion.

Councillor Wood:-

- thanked Councillor Hughes for this motion, and for providing an opportunity to discuss the topic at council and learn from others;
- discrimination of one group led to discrimination of another was true;
- he was proud to live in Exeter, and that the city contained a full spectrum of people; and
- as well as transgender and non-binary people existing, they also deserved respect.

Councillor Wright: -

- thanked Councillor Hughes and Councillor K Mitchell for their motion as it provided a chance to reflect;
- she had known many students during her career as a teacher and knew that they were not able to get the support they needed;
- she hoped that this motion would help within the transgender and non-binary community; and
- she believed that the LGBT+ were not a separate community but rather part of the Exeter community.

Councillor Harding: -

- was pleased that Councillor Hughes brought this motion to debate and vote on;
- believed some voices in media and politics sought to divide us;

- it was very important that we as a council re-assert our support for transgender and non-binary people; and
- he was supportive of the shops in Exeter with LGBT stickers on the door and felt that it showed Exeter was an inclusive place to be.

Councillor Vizard: -

- gave thanks to Councillor Hughes;
- touched on Councillor Wright's amendment to the motion and re-stated that trans women were women, trans men were men, and non-binary and intersex people did exist; and
- that there was still work to do, and it would be beneficial to work with the police to support.

Councillor Bialyk: -

- felt that it was important as the Leader of the Labour Group, and the Council to make his position clear;
- he believed we needed to have tolerance and respect;
- hoped it would not take as long for transgender people to be fully as it had for other groups.

Councillor Moore: -

- thanked Councillor Hughes;
- praised Councillors for sharing their personal experiences;
- social media abuse had real life consequences, some of which had been mentioned during this discussion; and
- she wanted Exeter to be a welcome place for all.

Councillor K Mitchell, as seconder, spoke in support of the motion making the following comments: -

- gave thanks for the contributions of members;
- this motion was vitally important and the result of months of discussion;
- Exeter was inclusive, but there was still hatred;
- spoke of personal experience of homophobia he faced in his time as Lord Mayor, and emphasised that there was still prejudice within the city; and
- he felt it was vitally important for the council to make a statement.

Councillor Palmer spoke to explain why she would be abstaining from the vote citing professional reasons, and that she hoped to have an influence professionally and wanted to thank those who had shared very personal stories.

In summing up, Councillor Hughes made the following points: -

- this motion was an excellent example of cross-party work and lots of work had been done by Councillor K Mitchell and the Labour Group;
- without Councillor K Mitchell they may not have had the confidence to bring the motion and it was helpful to have support and allyship of more experienced councillors;
- they thanked Councillor Knott for his unwavering support especially now that they understood the context;
- that many people did not understand the complexities of gender affirming care;
- they reassured Councillor Begley that Devon and Cornwall police showed clear commitment to upholding laws that supported the LGBT+ community;
- clarified that LGBT+ was used instead of LGBTQ+ due to guidance provided by the Intercom Trust;
- it was not enough to be a safe space, and it needed to be a brave space;
- undermining the feelings of young people could end lives;

- they felt that messages coming from central government were similar to Section 28 but for transgender and non-binary people which was worrying; and
- expressed disappointment in Councillor Palmer for abstaining from the vote but expressed respect for standing up and acknowledging the personal stories that had been shared.

Councillor K Mitchell called for a roll call vote on the motion; a named vote was recorded as follows:

Voting for: -

Councillors Asvachin, Atkinson, Banyard, Begley, Bialyk, Bennett, Cookson, Darling, Foale, Fulham, Harding, Holland, Hughes, Hussain, Ketchin, Knott, Miller-Boam, K Mitchell, M Mitchell, Moore, Patrick, Payne, Pole, Rees, Rolstone, Snow, Vizzard, Wardle, Wetenhall, R Williams, Wood, Wright. (32 Members)

Voting Against: - none

Abstentions: -

The Lord Mayor and Councillor Palmer (2 Members)

Absent: -

Councillors Haigh, Parkhouse, Read, Sheridan, and M Williams (5 Members)

Following a vote the motion as amended was CARRIED.

66

NOTICE OF MOTION BY COUNCILLOR K MITCHELL UNDER STANDING ORDER NO.6

Councillor K Mitchell moved, and Councillor M Mitchell seconded a Notice of Motion in the following terms:

“Council notes that:

The Student Class N Council Tax exemption is a national policy that helps to support the accommodation costs of full-time students during their studies.

It receives some reimbursement from the DCLG via the Settlement Funding Assessment to compensate for the loss of Council Tax income, but that the student adjustment was fixed in 2013/14 and has not been updated since.

With the rise in Council Tax rates since 2013/14 and growing student numbers, the current cost of N exemptions within Exeter is estimated to be £10.12m of which £0.8m would be payable to Exeter City Council.

In response to a recent parliamentary question, HMG has indicated that they intend to use the consultation on the Fair Funding Review 2.0 to review the adjustments to the funding formula for local authorities with higher student-exempt properties.

Council believes that:

The review of the funding formula is a welcome first step, but that local authorities with high student populations, like Exeter, should not disproportionately bear the costs of student Council Tax exemptions.

Council resolves to:

Participate fully in the consultation process on the Fair Funding Review 2.0, making the case for the funding gap caused by Class N exemptions to be filled and that future funding assessments should reflect changes in Council Tax rates and student numbers.

Engage with similar authorities and others, locally and nationally, to jointly lobby HMG on this issue.”

In presenting the motion Councillor K Mitchell made the following points: -

- Exeter had become an attraction for students as the University was a top university in the country; and
- this issue was not anti-student or anti-university.

Councillor M Mitchell, as seconder, spoke in support of the motion, making the following points:

- this was similar to the business rates on PBSA in 2019;
- all councillors in inner city wards had a high density of students;
- arrangements had previously been made in 2013/14 for extra allowance for cities with high numbers of students and Exeter believes we meet the high criteria threshold and would like the system reviewed; and
- as Exeter was a low wage area, this makes council tax a burden for those who are paying.

Following a unanimous vote this motion was CARRIED .

67

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

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

“Can the Leader confirm that neither he or his administration will be placing before Council a request to the Secretary of State to cancel the local elections due to be held for Exeter City Council in May 2026?”

The Leader responded stating that he had no intention of cancelling the local elections due to be held in May 2026 and neither did this council.

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

“Your administration has committed to completing the roll-out of food waste collections by the end of this financial year and I and my fellow Green Councillors warmly welcome this. Can you please confirm that this roll-out will include flats in the city centre area, covering both St David’s and Newtown and St Leonard’s wards?”

Councillor Ruth Williams, Portfolio Holder for City Management responded stating that flats would be included, as they had been with all areas of the roll out that had been conducted to date.

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

“Exeter’s baseball team, the Exeter Spitfires, have won Regional League and we wish them well as they go to the National Finals. However, at the moment they are unable to train anywhere as King George V Playing Fields have reverted back to the football team. When will the Exeter Spitfires be able to move onto their permanent home of Bromham’s Farm playing field?”

Councillor Wood, Portfolio Holder for Leisure Services and Healthy Living responded to this question, stating that “Exeter Spitfires current licence agreement for KGV ends on the 3rd of August 2025. The field will continue to be maintained, and they remain able to play up to and including that. The commencement of the use of Brohmams is subject to current and ongoing discussion with the club regarding their

terms of occupation. It is anticipated that terms will be in place prior to the start of the April 2026 formal baseball season. No interim training facilities have been requested.”

In a supplementary question, Councillor Moore stated that there had been discussions about interim arrangements and the need to spend their grant by September to ensure it could be spent, she asked Councillor Wood if he would be able to have an urgent conversation with Exeter Spitfires about these issues. Councillor Wood stated in response that if Exeter Spitfires made an approach the council would engage in discussion.

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

“The Government is currently consulting on proposed changes to the way planning committees operate, in its “Reform of planning committees: technical consultation”, which closes on Wednesday 24th July 2025. Has the Council responded, or does it intend to respond, to this consultation?”

Councillor Patrick, Portfolio Holder for City Development responded stating that “Officers have reviewed in detail, the Government’s *Reform of Planning Committees: Technical Consultation*, and that does close on 24 July 2025, and have discussed the proposals with myself. Many of the measures outlined are actually consistent with approaches already adopted in Exeter, although some aspects – such as a nationally prescribed delegation framework – could have implications for local flexibility.

Following this consideration, the Portfolio Holder and officers concluded that a formal submission from Exeter City Council would not add significant value to the consultation process on this occasion. Nevertheless, officers will continue to monitor developments and will ensure that Members are briefed on any future consultations or emerging guidance with direct implications for the Council’s decision-making arrangements.”

(The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and closed at 8.27 pm)

Chair