

COUNCIL

Tuesday 13 January 2026

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, Haigh, Harding, Holland, Hughes, Hussain, Ketchin, Knott, Miller-Boam, Mitchell, K, Mitchell, M, Moore, Palmer, Parkhouse, Patrick, Payne, Pole, Read, Rees, Sheridan, Snow, Vizard, Wardle, Wetenhall, Williams, M, Williams, R, Wood and Wright

Also Present

Chief Executive, Strategic Director for Corporate Resources, Strategic Director for Place, Head of Legal and Democratic Services & Monitoring Officer, Head of Service - City Centre and Net Zero, Democratic Services Manager, Democratic Services Officer.

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MINUTES

The minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council held on 25 November 2025 were moved by the Lord Mayor, and taken as read, approved and signed as correct.

The minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on 9 December 2025 were moved by the Lord Mayor, taken as read, approved and signed as correct, subject to the amendments tabled.

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DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made by Members.

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OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS

The Lord Mayor advised Members of the events that she and the Deputy Lord Mayor had attended. These included:

- the University of Exeter's winter graduation;
- a number of carol services including the Wonford Community Centre, the Blue Light Services, Exeter Philharmonic Choir, and the Cathedral;
- a service for the victims of the Hong Kong fire at the Sacred Heart Church;
- the epiphany service and mass at St Marys Steps;
- a number of pantomimes including Jack and the Beanstalk at Exeter Northcott Theatre, Cinderella by ELTC, Peter Pan, and the Pinhoe Pantomime Societies production of Beauty and the Beast;
- the Exeter Society for the Blind's Annual Christmas event;
- the Nigerian Community's Christmas party;
- a reception at the Bishop's Palace; and
- the Exeter Classic Motorcycle Club's Christmas display.

The Lord Mayor advised Members that she had been given a cheque for £600 by the Exeter Classic Motorcycle Club for her charity Riding for the Disabled. She had also been given a cheque for £439.56 for Riding for the Disabled following the Christmas Fayre at Exeter City Council.

The Lord Mayor advised Members that a petition had been received in September, regarding the extension of Article 4 in Hillcrest Park and Doriham Close, which would be an item at the Strategic Scrutiny Committee on 15 January.

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PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Lord Mayor advised that two questions from Members of the public had been received.

Question from Mr Timothy Coyle:

The Minister's letter invites councils to consider postponing the May 2026 local elections in order to "release capacity" for local government reorganisation. Does the Leader of the Council accept that postponing a scheduled election would establish precedent whereby democratic terms of office may be extended for administrative or organisation reasons?

The Leader, Councillor Bialyk, responded to the question advising Mr Coyle that he did not accept that any such decision would establish a precedent and the Government has through the appropriate Secretary of State who holds these powers and has exercised them in similar situations involving LGR in the past.

In a supplementary question Mr Coyle asked the Leader if he could explain how the citizens of Exeter could take democracy seriously when elections had been cancelled in a short period of time?

The Leader advised Mr Coyle that the powers lay with the Secretary of State. It was not unusual, and they would hear more about this in the discussion later.

Question from Ms Lucy Findlay MBE:

Section 4.4 sets out the activities that are required to move forward with the new unitary structure. What are the key immediate priorities in this list which will be enabled by the redeployment of the 2026 election resources?

The Leader responded to the question stating that the Chief Executive would deal with this in detail later and it would be best for the Chief Executive to explain in her report.

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STRATEGIC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 20 NOVEMBER 2025

The minutes of the Strategic Scrutiny Committee on 20 November 2025 were presented by the Chair, Councillor Pole, and taken as read.

Councillor Pole advised that she had notified Democratic Services of amendments for accuracy and they had been accepted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Strategic Scrutiny Committee held on 20 November 2025 would be received.

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MINUTES OF MEETING 1 DECEMBER 2025 OF PLANNING COMMITTEE

The minutes of the Planning Committee of 1 December 2025 were presented by the Chair, Councillor Knott, and taken as read.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 1 December 2025 be received.

MINUTES OF MEETING 8 DECEMBER 2025 OF PLANNING COMMITTEE

The minutes of the Planning Committee of 8 December 2025 were presented by the Chair, Councillor Knott, and taken as read.

Councillor Knott thanked Members for their work, and it was clear that they had taken time to read the papers in great detail.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 8 December 2025 be received.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING 11 DECEMBER 2025 OF EXETER HARBOUR BOARD

The minutes of the Exeter Harbour Board of 11 December 2025 were presented by the Chair, Councillor Ruth Williams, and taken as read.

Councillor Read asked if an update could be provided about the status of the public consultation regarding Trews Weir, and if the public event with the contractors had taken place.

Councillor Ruth Williams advised that there had been a delay to the programme, and the consultation had been deferred. She informed Members that she would provide an update at the March meeting of the Harbour Board.

Councillor Atkinson asked if Councillor Ruth Williams was able to provide feedback on how the money diverted from Mallinson Bridge by Devon County Council would be spent.

Councillor Ruth Williams advised Councillor Atkinson that she had written to the Devon County Council Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Bio-diversity but had not received a response as yet and she had also requested a meeting between the Devon County Council Planning Officer, the Health and Wellbeing Team, and the Exeter Port Authority.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Exeter Harbour Board held on 11 December 2025 be received.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING 16 DECEMBER 2025 OF EXECUTIVE

The minutes of the Executive Committee of 16 November 2025 were presented by the Leader, Councillor Bialyk, and taken as read.

In respect of **Minute No.92 - 2026/27 Budget Strategy and Medium Term Financial Plan**, the Leader moved the recommendations, seconded by Councillor Wright. Following a vote the recommendations were CARRIED.

Councillor Moore asked the Leader if he was confident in the budget proposals, and to what extent the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) was still relevant given the Fair Funding Review 2.0 outcomes?

The Leader advised Councillor Moore that he was confident that this would be right, and that there would be a more in-depth discussion on the matter at the Executive and the Council's meeting to set the budget for 2026/27.

In respect of **Minute No.94 – Housing Rents and Services Charges 2026-27**, Councillor Moore asked the Leader about convergence rents and was concerned that it may not be clear to tenants how much their rent would increase. The Leader

advised that he would obtain details from the Strategic Director for Corporate Resources but would be disappointed if this matter had not been discussed at the Council Housing and Development Advisory Board.

In respect of **Minute No.95 - RAMM Collections Development Policy (2026-30)** the Leader moved, and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendations and following a unanimous vote were CARRIED.

Councillor Darling spoke in support of the policy, commending staff and stating that she had no doubt the policy was of the highest standard.

Councillor Foale, Portfolio Holder for Arts, Culture & Tourism felt that the Royal Albert Memorial Museum (RAMM) had an amazing collection and informed Members that it only displayed 1% of the artifacts which it held.

In respect of **Minute No.96 – RAMM Forward Plan (2026-30)** the Leader moved, and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendations and following a vote were CARRIED.

Councillor Banyard asked the Leader if following the break-in last year there would be a review of the insurance policy. Councillor Foale, as Portfolio Holder for Arts, Culture & Tourism advised that the RAMM used the same risk register as that used across Exeter City Council.

In respect of **Minute No.97 – Exeter City Council Housing Services Hate Crime Policy** the Leader moved, and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendations, and following a unanimous vote were CARRIED.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Executive Committee held on 16 December 2025 be received.

128 **RESPONSE TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S LETTER REGARDING LOCAL ELECTIONS IN 2026**

The Leader moved the recommendations of the report, seconded by Councillor Wright, and invited the Chief Executive to present the report.

The Chief Executive highlighted the following points in presenting the report:

The Minister of State for Local Government and Homelessness had invited Council Leaders in areas undergoing Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) to set out their views on whether postponing the May 2026 local elections would better support the delivery of LGR. The deadline for the Leader to respond was midnight on Thursday, 15 January. The letter from the Minister of State could be found in Appendix A.

The purpose of the report was to enable an informed discussion on whether postponing the elections would release capacity to deliver LGR effectively. The report recommended firstly, that Council notes the letter from the Minister of State and considers its implications and secondly, having heard Members' views, the Leader was asked to respond by 15 January, on whether or not to request the postponement of the May 2026 elections.

The Chief Executive clarified that there was no decision being made locally on elections as that was not within the powers of this Council. Only government could make that decision, should they be minded to do so under Section 87 of the Local Government Act 2000, which gave the Secretary of State the authority to

change the electoral cycle through secondary legislation. There was precedent on postponing elections during LGR which had taken place previously.

There were three reasons identified in the report for considering postponing the elections scheduled for 7 May:

1. councillors elected would serve only two years before their roles were abolished under the new unitary structure as opposed to the usual term of four years;
2. the Government's statutory consultation on LGR at the start of February may coincide with the pre-election period, limiting meaningful engagement with residents. If the start of the consultation was delayed, which had happened with other timescales on LGR, the Government's seven-week consultation period could coincide with the pre-election period.
3. Postponement would release approximately £265,000 of resources, both financial and staffing, to focus on critical transition work including governance, service design budgets, workforce changes, and technology. There may also need to be work done, dependent on the Government's decision on the structure of local government in Devon, to prepare for Shadow Elections in 2027. This needed to be balanced against the risks of postponing elections:
 - Residents may feel disenfranchised if elections were postponed.
 - Some councillors may choose to resign rather than extend their term. This would require by-elections to be held which would lead to some costs and workload.

Members were assured that work had already started on preparing for local elections and this would continue until the Government confirmed their position. Venues had been booked and recruitment to the 450 roles required to deliver the election would start in the next few weeks. The cost to deliver local elections was around £265,000 excluding any payments already made.

In terms of work required to deliver LGR, officers had started work as the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) had set out work that needed to commence ahead of the Government's decision. It was highly likely that additional resources would be required to deliver this work and a further report would be brought to Members seeking resources for this.

As described in the report, the work that needed to be started now included:

- Human Resources:
 - review HR data to ensure it accurately reflects the current workforce;
 - ensure that every member of staff had an up-to-date job description accurately describing their daily work and contract of employment;
 - consideration of the process for allocating staff to the new authorities; and
 - identification of business-critical roles and prioritisation of retention strategies.
- Digital and Data:
 - audit of key IT systems including infrastructure, websites, applications, data systems and licences;
 - audit of data and information stored on key IT systems;
 - audit and forward plan of IT contracts; and
 - management of historical records to make sure they are up to date for the new authority.
- Procurement and Contracts:
 - review of all current contracts with third parties to determine what could easily be novated, assigned or varied; and

- update of the contracts register for all systems.
- Assets:
 - audit of the Asset Register to ensure completeness and clarify the terms under which an asset was owned; and
 - review of 'in flight' capital projects.
- Communication and Engagement:
 - communication and engagement with local stakeholders; and
 - working with other councils to identify how services could be disaggregated, to what timeframe, and the resources required.
- Programme and Project Management:
 - establishment of a Programme Management Office and development of local protocols for decision making. To include key risks and opportunities; and
 - this work had to be done before a decision was made by Government.

Once the Government decision had been made, there would be a significant volume of complex work to plan and implement with all councils in Devon, irrespective of which submission was agreed. This council's submission gave an outline of what this would be.

The Chief Executive responded to Members' questions in the following terms:

- arrangements for any by-elections would be set out by the Statutory Order that would be laid before Parliament should the Government decide that local elections would be cancelled;
- Leaders in the areas going through LGR received the Minister of State's letter, not just those due to hold elections;
- Exeter City Council would be a statutory body for the consultation on LGR;
- should the local elections proceed, officers would continue to work on LGR using remaining capacity, and seeking additional resources from Council as identified. As Elections were a statutory responsibility of councils, officers would use best endeavours to deliver them legally and efficiently;
- the invitation from the Government was for the Leader to express his views about LGR work being done more efficiently were the elections postponed;
- the intensity of the work required to deliver LGR and the continuing focus on business as usual was a key issue;
- it was acknowledged that the elections to any new Shadow authority would take place in 2027 and there would need to be resourcing for this;
- the Council already had an Employee Assistance programme in place for officers and work was being done to ensure that senior leadership and through them, all staff, would be supported through LGR;
- the Council had been given £35,000 for developing the LGR submission from Government, as part of an allocation to Devon councils. It was currently not known if there would be Government funding available for the next phase of LGR work, but a meeting would take place with the MHCLG at the end of January 2026, where that may be explored; and
- it was not possible to give a view regarding officers and residents in neighbouring areas being at an advantage if the elections were not postponed.

Councillor Hughes, as co-Leader of the Equity Independent Group, made the following points:

- democracy was crucial and people had died for the right to vote;
- the people of Exeter would not remember the reasons given but would remember how it made them feel, disenfranchised; and
- urged the Leader to consider how the people of Exeter would feel if they did not have a voice.

Councillor Michael Mitchell, as Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, made the following points:

- on July 22 2025, the Leader stated that he had no intention of cancelling elections;
- democracy delayed was democracy denied;
- the Labour Government had already cancelled elections in other areas of the country;
- money could and would always be found to carry out necessary work;
- this Council did not know if their LGR bid would be successful;
- Plymouth City Council would proceed with their elections; and
- this was not a postponement but a cancellation.

Councillor Holland, as Leader of the Conservative Group, made the following points:

- he did not believe that the elections should lapse;
- the elections in 2027 would be for the new shadow council;
- it had been deemed undemocratic to postpone the election in 2018, so why not now;
- it was not possible to know what the future would look like until the Secretary of State had made their decision;
- residents were dismayed that Councillors were spending time considering this;
- it was morally and ethically wrong to cancel residents' democratic right; and
- residents relied on their Councillors to look after their interests.

Councillor Moore, as Leader of the Green Group, proposed an amendment to the recommendations, but this was not allowed by the Lord Mayor as it negated the original motion. Councillor Moore made the following points during debate:

- she was interested to hear what had been said and it was helpful to hear from the Chief Executive;
- this was not an issue of capacity but of confidence;
- there was evidence that the Government could prepare for LGR;
- she was confident in the proposal that was made, and had read the transition document and it did not highlight a funding gap, nor issues with capacity;
- there was no lack of capacity identified within the risk register;
- LGR should be funded by the Government; and
- elections were not a privilege but a right.

Councillor Haigh, as co-Leader of the Equity Independent group, made the following points:

- LGR would be hard;
- she would wholly support what the workforce was being asked to deliver;
- it was reasonable to see any savings as worthwhile, but cancellation did not guarantee savings;
- by-elections may still take place if a Councillor resigned, and if those were cancelled it could cause issues;
- cancelling elections risked being seen as self-protective;
- the May 2026 elections would provide a full and meaningful period of service; and
- democracy mattered to Exeter, especially when decisions were difficult.

During debate, Members speaking in support of the recommendations made the following comments:

- elections had been cancelled previously in 2010 for LGR, which was deemed rare and exceptional;
- disenfranchisement needed to be prevented;

- this was the biggest local government reorganisation in 50 years, and it was very important to balance having elections with the LGR workload;
- these were exceptional circumstances that required exceptional change;
- the best team to deliver LGR was the current team that had dedicated their time to it;
- holding an election would divert energy and capacity into something that would not exist in the future;
- this was not about denying democracy but about ensuring residents were voting for a council that would exist;
- there were many forms of democracy, and it was right to consider postponement in certain circumstances;
- LGR would be hard on staff and cancelling the elections would support staff;
- LGR was creating a one stop shop for better services and outcomes for residents;
- the work post elections would be significant;
- the elections should be postponed if it could ensure the successful release of resources;
- moving rapidly towards unitary status would take up resources, and it could not be allowed to fail;
- LGR was once in a generation;
- postponement of elections was not a new concept;
- the Secretary of State would make the decision to postpone the election;
- this was a matter of capacity rather than money;
- a large amount of case work was assisting residents with issues of a two-tier system and it was hoped that LGR would resolve these;
- people would not know what powers the newly elected Members would hold if elections were held during LGR;
- this was about the extra pressure on officers and senior Councillors;
- this was a postponement and not a cancellation, and would give officers and Councillors the time needed to focus on LGR; and
- the Leader should be encouraged to undertake a community governance review.

During debate, Members speaking against the recommendations made the following comments:

- everyone supported the democratic process, and residents should be involved;
- elections were the only opportunity for residents to have their say;
- residents should be able to decide who would represent them;
- all decisions should be governed by the Nolan Principles;
- elections were critical and gave legitimacy to a council;
- the disruptions caused by elections were a good thing and they were a vital component of a healthy democracy;
- elections were needed to test if those elected would deliver what had been promised;
- this would set a precedent that it was reasonable to cancel elections if they were inconvenient;
- if the elections were postponed, the Council should be reconstituted, and the Leader should resign;
- there was no reason for this Council to decide that the people of Exeter should not have their say;
- elections enabled diverse voices to be heard;
- democracy was precious and must be protected;
- if elections were postponed, residents may feel alienated and develop a sense of political apathy;
- residents should have a say in their governance;

- it was clear that there was a drive from the public to vote in new Councillors;
- democracy must be delivered without excuses;
- postponing elections would cause residents to lose trust in the Council;
- large amounts of the election work was outsourced;
- there were no concerns that the election could not be delivered or that the LGR work would not be able to go ahead, just that it would be more work;
- the Secretary of State would make their decision based on the information provided to them;
- residents would be disenfranchised;
- there was nothing in the report that said there was a capacity problem in relation to elections;
- it was confirmed that the elections work would still be able to be completed if necessary;
- the information given sent a message that democracy was worth less than £265,000, about £2 per resident of Exeter;
- the Leader should include in his letter that many Members wanted the elections to continue;
- two years was a long time to extend the term of a councillor; and
- LGR had always caused capacity pressures.

In summing up the debate, the Leader, Councillor Bialyk made the following points:

- this was a serious matter;
- he had said in July that he would not ask for a postponement, but he had not asked the Minister to send the letter;
- this was not the end of democracy;
- the Council had to give a view about capacity issues;
- his letter would be made available to all Councillors;
- the Chief Executive had told him about capacity issues, and they had already spoken about how this would look going forward;
- there was a lot of work that needed to be done before July;
- he was convinced that there was capacity but that these were exceptional circumstances;
- he would make sure Councillors' remarks were made clear in the letter to the minister; and
- there would be a governance review within this period.

Councillor Hughes called for a roll call vote, and a named vote was recorded as follows:

Voting For:

Councillors Asvachin, Atkinson, Begley, Bialyk, Cookson, Darling, Harding, Knott, Miller-Boam, Parkhouse, Patrick, Pole, Rolstone, Snow, Vizard, Wardle, Williams M, Williams R, Wood, and Wright. (20 Members).

Voting Against:

Councillors Fullam, Mitchell K, Mitchell M, Moore, Palmer, Payne, Read, Sheridan, and Wetenhall. (9 Members).

Abstentions:

Councillors Banyard, Bennett, Haigh, Holland, Hughes, Ketchin, Rees, and the Lord Mayor. (8 Members).

Absent:

Councillor Foale. (1 Member).

Following a vote the recommendations were CARRIED.

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MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES 2026/27

The Leader moved the recommendations, seconded by Councillor Wright, and invited the Strategic Director for Corporate Resources to introduce the report.

The Strategic Director highlighted the key points of the report making reference to:

- an increase in allowances of 3.2% based on the officers pay award, which followed the usual convention; and
- the Independent Remuneration Panel had introduced two new Special Responsibility Allowances, for the Deputy Leader of the Council and the Deputy Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee.

Councillor Read asked if food and drink allowances would be introduced.

The Strategic Director for Corporate Resources advised that food and drink was being looked into.

During debate Councillor Palmer informed Members that she felt uncomfortable discussing allowances following the previous item.

In summing up the Leader advised Members that the rates were set by the Independent Remuneration Panel and followed the staff pay award. He advised that there had been a survey sent out and that Members had had the opportunity to make their thoughts on allowances known.

Following a vote the recommendations were CARRIED.

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EXETER CITY LIVING LTD BUSINESS PLAN FINANCIAL YEAR 2026-27

The Leader moved the recommendations, seconded by Councillor Wright, and invited the Strategic Director for Corporate Resources to introduce the report.

The Strategic Director for Corporate Resources introduced the report making the following points:

- this was the business plan for Exeter City Living (ECL) for 2026/27;
- the company that managed the property did so passively and the Council undertook all the management decisions; and
- this would be the first year that it was entirely reliant on rental income, meaning there was a big reduction in the amount of rent coming into Exeter City Council as costs of ECL were previously covered by development income.

The Strategic Director for Corporate Resources answered Members' questions in the following terms:

- the management fee increase came after it was decided by Members to scale back ECL;
- the cost of the audit outweighs the amount of money going through the company;
- the management company holds the flats on behalf of the City Council but did not do anything else;
- he was happy to get officers to provide an answer on value for money of having a management agent;
- there were currently two void properties which would be filled in due course; and
- in total the flats generated around £70,000.

In summing up the Leader stated that six properties was not a large amount and it was only a small amount of money.

Following a unanimous vote the recommendations were CARRIED.

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COMMUNITY SAFETY

The Leader moved the recommendations, seconded by Councillor Wright, and invited the Strategic Director for Place to introduce the report.

The Strategic Director for Place made the following points:

- this aligned with the Council's Corporate Plan; and
- it was built from the Community Safety Team (CST) pilot that had been judged as a success.

The Strategic Director for Place responded to Members' questions in the following terms:

- a five-year period was proposed in the hope that a future council would continue the commitment;
- the chart in the report was a guide and would be reevaluated each year; and
- the proposal was to broaden the remit beyond the city centre eventually and the team had a vehicle, so were able to do respond in good time.

Councillor Moore, as Leader of the Green Group, made the following points:

- thanked the Portfolio Holder for working with Councillors over a number of years;
- she had seen the impact of the CST and appreciated their efforts;
- there was a need for better advocacy and joining up services for people who were street attached; and
- there was a gap in the budget, how would this be funded?

Councillor Wright as Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services, Community Safety and City Centre made the following points:

- this was important to her and to everyone else;
- the CST would have responsibility for dog fouling in public areas;
- she was regularly updated on the progress and impacts that the team were having, and data proved that anti-social behaviour (ASB) levels were decreasing;
- ASB issues within the city were complex; and
- the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) with Devon and Cornwall Police, InExeter and other organisations were instrumental in getting the CST set up.

During debate Members made the following points:

- this report was welcomed and provided a good tool kit to address issues that came up frequently with the public;
- Joined up services would be improved by a unitary council;
- this was really positive, especially that it had come from points established in the Residents' Survey; and
- empathy was key.

Following a unanimous vote the recommendations were CARRIED.

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 Read to the Leader:

“As ECC has been unable to repair the bollard at the entry point to Cathedral Green what approaches are the Council exploring, such as number plate recognition software and cameras or other options – to protect this public space and keep pedestrians safe, especially at evenings and weekends?”

The Leader responded stating:

“To date, a suitable design has not been identified to allow the bollard to be reinstated. This is due to the archaeology below the yard and the fact that the road construction is very shallow, and it has meant that the electrics and hydraulics for the bollard are easily damaged. However, Council Surveyors are currently assessing alternative options which will be taken forward if financially viable.”

In a supplementary question, Councillor Read advised that she was hoping to hear the alternative solutions that would be proposed.

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

“Could the Portfolio Holder explain why Heras fencing and ‘Danger: Keep Out’ signs have recently been erected around St Catherine’s Almshouses in Princesshay, what risks or issues have been identified, who is responsible for the site, and what is expected timescale is for resolving the situation?”

The Leader responded stating:

“St Catherine’s Almshouses forms part of the Princesshay leased demise. The head lease includes a management agreement for the Almshouses under which the Council is responsible for the repair and regularly survey the property. The site was Heras fenced due to concerns about the stability of the chimneys. The Council is currently working to identify the risks.”

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

“Now the Brown Field Release grant funding has been returned to Government, what options or plans are the Council considering for the future of the Council’s Belle Isle site once the depot moves to an alternative location?”

The Leader responded stating:

“The site would need to be subject to a feasibility assessment to evaluate site constraints and opportunities. This process would also require commercial and planning input together with any wider consultation deemed necessary. The outcome would enable Officers to report on available land use options and associated delivery arrangements.”

In a supplementary question, Councillor Moore asked the Leader:

“Given that the Environment Agency said the site was not suitable for development due to flood risk what sort of feasibility do you think they would be able to undertake?”

The Leader advised that he would ask one of the Directors to respond to this question outside of the meeting.

(The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and closed at 10.17 pm)

Chair