



A meeting of **EXETER CITY COUNCIL** will be held at the **GUILDHALL, HIGH STREET, EXETER** on **TUESDAY 13 JANUARY 2026**, at 6.00 pm, at which you are hereby summoned to attend.

If you have an enquiry regarding any items on this agenda, please contact the Democratic Services Manager - democratic.services@exeter.gov.uk

The following business is proposed to be transacted:

Agenda

1 Minutes

To approve and sign the minutes of the Special meeting held on 25 November 2025 and the ordinary meeting held on 9 December 2025.

(Pages 5 - 30)

2 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.

3 Local Government Act 1972 - Exclusion of the Press and Public

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

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

4 Official Communications

To receive official communications of the Lord Mayor.

5 Public Questions

To receive questions relating to items on the agenda from members of the public and responses.

Details of questions should be notified to Democratic Services by 10am at least three working days prior to the meeting which for this meeting will be Thursday 8 January 2026.

Further information about speaking at a committee can be found here: [Public Speaking at Meetings](#).

TO RECEIVE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING COMMITTEES AND TO DETERMINE THEREON:

6	Strategic Scrutiny Committee - 20 November 2025	(Pages 31 - 56)
7	Minutes of meeting 1 December 2025 of Planning Committee	(Pages 57 - 66)
8	Minutes of meeting 8 December 2025 of Planning Committee	(Pages 67 - 80)
9	Minutes of the meeting 11 December 2025 of Exeter Harbour Board	(Pages 81 - 86)
10	Minutes of the meeting 16 December 2025 of Executive	(Pages 87 - 96)

REPORTS TO COUNCIL

11 **Response to the Secretary of State's letter regarding Local Elections in 2026**

To receive the report of the Chief Executive. (Pages 97 - 106)

12 **Members' Allowances 2026/27**

To consider the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel. (Pages 107 - 118)

13 **Exeter City Living Ltd Business Plan Financial Year 2026-27**

To receive the report of the Strategic Director for Corporate Resources. (Pages 119 - 144)

14 **Community Safety**

To consider the report of the Strategic Director for Place. (Pages 145 - 170)

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

15 **Questions from Members of the Council under Standing Order No. 8**

To receive questions from Members on any matter for which the Council has powers, duties or affects the City.

A plan of seating in the Guildhall is attached

Date: 5 January 2026

Bindu Arjoon
Chief Executive

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Agenda Item 1

COUNCIL

Tuesday 25 November 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, 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, Williams, R, Wood and Wright

Also Present:

Chief Executive, Strategic Director for Corporate Resources, Head of Legal and Democratic Services & Monitoring Officer, Strategic Director for People and Communities, Strategic Director for Place, Strategic Director of Operations, Democratic Services Officer(JM) and Democratic Services Manager

100

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Michael Mitchell and Ketchin declared an interest as serving members of Devon County Council for which they had both informed the Monitoring Officer and had received letters of dispensation.

101

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION: DRAFT SUBMISSION-PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST IN EXETER AND DEVON

The Lord Mayor invited the Chief Executive to present the report, which she did making the following statement:

“Thank you Lord Mayor.

The report before Members this evening is the Council's final draft proposal for Local Government Reorganisation - the culmination of months of detailed work, evidence-gathering, engagement, modelling, and refinement.

It has been shaped by Members across this chamber, the voices of our residents, partners, neighbouring Parish Councils and businesses and it must be submitted by the end of Friday.

Our Case for Change

We know that local government is under pressure across the country and Devon is not immune to this. Demand for services and expectations from residents is growing, rising, costs are increasing, and the geography of our county- large, mostly rural with dispersed populations, and with three urban centres - makes delivering consistent, high-quality responsive services more challenging every year.

Councils have done their best within the two-tier system created in the 1970s but we can all recognise that this system is no longer suited to the scale of the challenges we face today.

Alongside that, Exeter, Plymouth and Torbay - our three principal urban areas in Devon - are constrained by boundaries that no longer reflect how residents live their lives and access council services and acts as a constraint to economic growth which could benefit the county.

Our draft submission seeks to address those challenges.

It meets the government's six criteria by:

- 1) Firstly, proposing a single tier of local government – four unitary councils instead of the current 11 councils;
- 2) it sets out that each proposed council is of an appropriate size to provide financial resilience, with sustainable tax bases and a model that pays back the costs of transition within three years;
- 3) it identifies the approach and principles for delivering high-quality, sustainable services, designed around both urban and rural needs, with a specific focus on those crucial services of Adult Social Care and Children's Services and services for children and young people who need support for special education needs and disabilities (SEND);
- 4) the submission has been developed in collaboration with other Devon Councils, and in particular, Plymouth and Torbay Councils and also through extensive listening to local views;
- 5) it supports devolution, creating balanced authorities ready to drive growth, the skills agenda, enhance delivery of housing and infrastructure and ensure that the needs of Devon's urban, rural and coastal areas are considered equally and alongside each other with the four councils being principal authorities in the current combined authority or a future strategic mayoral authority; and the final criterion,
- 6) the submission enhances local engagement and influence in decision-making, through neighbourhood area committees and an enhanced relationship between upper tier authorities and parish and town councils.

I'd like to address two significant issues presented for the first time formally to members in the report. One is the number of councils being proposed in our submission and the second is the reference to 'a baseline proposal' and a 'modified proposal'.

Four councils

Firstly, on the number of councils. Members will recall that on 14 August, Members agreed the geography proposed for the new council serving Exeter and the surrounding area as well as the geography for two other proposed councils, so a three-unitary proposal.

Members' however, will also recall that the report referred to continuing to collaborate with other Devon councils, as government had asked us to, in order to identify where there may be synergies between different councils' positions and ours, to allow us to reflect the aspirations of members from other councils alongside our own.

Since 14 August, we have worked more closely with the existing unitary councils for Plymouth and Torbay recognising the synergy between the three cities. We also continued to analyse the financial and service data for local government across the area and listen to various views.

As a result, our proposal is now for four unitary councils:

- One for Exeter City and 49 neighbouring parishes as set out in the previous report;
- One for the existing Plymouth City Council and 13 adjacent parishes again as set out in the previous report;

- One council for the current area served by Torbay council plus 23 neighbouring parishes; and
- a fourth unitary council that serves the coastal and countryside area of Devon.

During this work Lord Mayor, the greatest synergy was evident between our emerging proposal and that of Plymouth City Council. Members will note that the submission references throughout the similarities between the two areas as major engines of growth, constrained by historic boundaries. Now that both councils have finalised our draft submissions, it has become clear that our individual proposals are essentially the same although expressed in different words and both proposals meet the government's criteria.

MHCLG has, from the start of this process, urged local areas to work together and where possible submit joint proposals which will streamline the government's statutory consultation process. That is why I would like to add a recommendation to the report before Members tonight. The wording has been circulated but for clarity the proposed recommendation reads,

That Council supports a Joint Submission with Plymouth City Council to be presented as a shared Executive Summary with the two individual proposals as appendices. Members are asked to note that Plymouth City Council supported this approach, and its Cabinet agreed a similar recommendation at their meeting on 24 November 2025.

Baseline and Modified proposals

Turning now to the issue of the Baseline and Modified proposals: Members will also note that the report and draft submission before you introduces the terms 'baseline proposal' and 'modified proposal'.

Under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 Act, any submission must begin with a baseline proposal which is based on existing district boundaries.

Councils must then demonstrate if that baseline proposal meets the Government's criteria, or whether modifications to those boundaries are justified. Where it can be proven that modifications to boundaries are justified, this must be expressed as a request to the Secretary of State for a modification to the boundary.

Our analysis demonstrates that our draft submission meets the test for justifying a request for the modification of existing district and unitary council boundaries.

While meeting some of the government's criteria, the baseline proposal does not meet a key test: it was not financially viable. Additionally, it will not unlock the amplification of economic growth for Exeter, Plymouth or Torbay. It leaves those areas constrained by historic lines that do not reflect how people live, work or access leisure and cultural services.

This is why we have developed a modified proposal which asks the Secretary of State to agree to boundary changes for Exeter, Plymouth and Torbay. Our submission explains clearly why boundary changes are necessary to better meet the government's criteria.

Our modified proposal is the strongest option for Exeter and the surrounding area, as it aligns our governance with our travel-to-work area, our housing market, our innovation zones, and our strategic economic footprint.

But crucially, it is also the strongest option for all of Devon, because it is a model that allows a focus on the needs of Devon's distinct communities and it protects the identity of rural and coastal communities;

- it aligns with functional economic geography; and
- finally, it ensures no authority is left financially advantaged or disadvantaged.

Engagement on developing the draft submission

Lord Mayor, this proposal has been shaped by one of the most extensive engagement programmes Exeter has ever carried out.

We engaged with:

- over 2,000 residents across the city and surrounding parishes;
- businesses, anchor institutions and public sector partners;
- parish and town councils in the area surrounding Exeter; and
- voluntary and community sector organisations.

We held workshops, forums, online sessions, briefings, community events, and sector-specific discussions. We used surveys, interactive tools, and insight sessions to gather views and test ideas.

The key messages that came through consistently are:

- people want decisions to be made closer to where they live;
- they want simpler, clearer accountability and to know who does what;
- there was also clear support for aligning boundaries with how people live their lives;
- we heard a strong call about protecting local identity; and finally
- we heard loud and clear the need for public services that are joined-up, easier to navigate, and designed around people, not departments or districts.

This feedback has helped shape the modified proposal before you tonight and we believe that our submission is stronger and more resonant with local views because of that engagement.

The proposal also reinforces local democracy. Neighbourhood structures will be a core part of the new arrangements. Government expects strong local governance, and our proposal delivers this through Neighbourhood Area Committees, which will be co-designed with the communities they serve, not imposed upon them.

For example, in the unparished city of Exeter, it is proposed that Neighbourhood committees will create a vital link between communities and the new unitary council, addressing the issue of a democratic deficit, ahead of the proposed community governance review which may lead to the creation of new town and parish councils.

Charter Trustees

Lord Mayor, throughout the discussion on the impact of the change in local government, the issue has been raised of Exeter's historic status and strong support for it to be preserved in the absence of a town or council parish for Exeter. This issue is addressed by proposing the creation of Charter Trustees for Exeter when the new unitary councils are legally enacted in 2028. This will protect Exeter's city status, that is, our Lord Mayoralty, civic traditions, regalia and historic rights. This ensures that while the governance structure changes, that aspect of the city so cherished by so many, does not.

Trustees are typically councillors from newly created unitary councils but they do not have any powers over local services or governance like a parish or town council

would. The intention would be that Charter Trustees would be in place until replaced by any future town council for Exeter. An example of this was Taunton which was an unparished area and after the local government restructure in Somerset that created Somerset Council, Charter Trustees were appointed in Taunton, funded by a local precept. These were subsequently replaced by the creation of Taunton Town Council.

Transition Plan

A transition to a new system of local government of this scale must be steady and safe.

Our plan sets out a clear sequence: early work led by Chief Executives and Leaders across the county, Implementation Teams in place before the Structural Change Order, and Joint Committees once the Order is made.

Critical services such as Adult Social Care, Children's Services and SEND will be prioritised throughout. Workforce, finance and digital planning will run in parallel to ensure continuity from day one.

It is a careful, phased approach, grounded in learning from other LGR transitions across the country, and designed to keep services safe, legal and stable at every stage.

Sustainability

On the key issue of sustainability Lord Mayor, this is a thread woven through the draft submission, rather than an add-on.

The proposal supports net-zero planning, resilient transport, nature recovery, and environmentally responsible growth. It aligns with regional climate priorities and puts Exeter's global leadership in climate science at the centre of a county-wide system.

Moving towards the conclusion Lord Mayor. An immense amount of work has gone into this draft submission, both from elected members and officers for which I am grateful. I would especially like to thank the council's Strategic Directors - Jo Yelland, Dave Hodgson, Ian Collinson and Adrian Pengelly, as well as Lorraine Betts and Judith Wellings and other officers who have played their part in shaping this draft submission. I would also like to thank the Leader of the Council for his steer, support and constructive challenge throughout, although I won't be disappointed if I don't hear reference to the Redcliff Maud report for a while. I would also like to acknowledge and thank elected members and our heads of service and their teams who have kept a firm grip on business as usual throughout this year when the Strategic Directors and I have necessarily focused on LGR.

On a personal note, yesterday marked 20 years to the day that I was offered my first position at Exeter City Council. Shortly after I arrived, we began work on a bid for unitary status. It's a reminder that the debate about the appropriate structure of local government in Exeter - how we build something simpler, more accountable and more effective has been with us for decades. That case back then, after various twists and turns was not to be.

Despite that, the officers and members of the council carried on working with partners under sometimes challenging circumstances to deliver great things for the city and its residents.

Twenty years on, I hope that members feel that we have developed a robust, evidence-led proposal that meets the government's criteria and is informed by listening to voices across Devon and my hope is that we are now close to getting

the local government structure right for Devon in service to our communities, current and future residents, businesses and other stakeholders.

I commend this draft submission to Council Lord Mayor, and my colleagues and I are happy to take questions.”

The Chief Executive and Strategic Directors answered questions from Members as follows:

- the views of young people aged under 16 had been gathered by external agencies and unfortunately these had not been received and therefore may not be able to be included in the final submission;
- Plymouth and Exeter City Councils had shared their draft submissions the previous week and identified similarities. They had reminded themselves of the government's request for collaboration and noted both cities were constrained by current boundaries.
- it was impossible to know what precept would be set as Charter Trustee status did not exist yet but unlike parish councils they could only cover costs of administration of trusteeship therefore they would be low;
- preparatory work for transition would begin in the new year and would be based on learning from others and guidance from MHCLG. Resource to take on this work would be planned by the Strategic Management Board in the new year. There would be a focus on business as usual and also the future regardless of the government decision;
- Charter Trustees were not like parish or town councils they were simply for the ceremonial aspects of the city. Public accountability of these was not known;
- sustainability issues had been addressed. There would be an election to a shadow authority and it would be up to them to determine detail regarding environmental stewardship; and
- the population numbers provided were those to be considered. The Executive would look to make a decision and the hope would be to have more detail from Plymouth by that point.

The Lord Mayor invited the Leader to speak to the report which he did, making the following statement:

“Thank you, Lord Mayor. And good evening, Members, colleagues, and members of the public here tonight.

This City Council together with other Local Authorities have been given a chance by government to make changes that will last for generations to come.

I believe we can't as a city and surrounding area miss this opportunity to keep those communities in and around Exeter at heart of economic and sustainable growth, to continue the tradition that Exeter is and will be a centre of civic administration. We have articulated our ambition for the city of Exeter to come under a new unitary council, one that recognises the unique role of the city in driving the economy of the sub-region, and as leader it has been good to see the council united in our ambition for a unitary council.

Our proposals for a Unitary council in Exeter demonstrate we are still a city of ambition, we recognise that residents need jobs, reliable transport and a sense of wellbeing to thrive.

Exeter has the economic potential to power the region, but realising that potential requires infrastructure, resources and powers.

Tackling the structural inequalities in our communities and strengthening education and skills is essential to realising potential and achieving our outcomes.

More of the same from a Unitary Devon Council will not do. Therefore, this coming year will be about achieving a balanced financial discipline with looking ahead to realising potential and improving prospects.

One thing we can all agree on here is that we live in a very special part of Britain. Whether you grew up in Devon, or you moved here, or work here, however you chose to make it home, this county gets into your blood.

It's proud, it's distinctive, and it's full of potential. I am also proud that we a proud and inclusive city and one that welcomes everyone in Exeter.

Exeter is also a place that knows how to get things done – quietly, practically, without fuss. From investing in future infrastructure, which would normally be the responsibility of an upper tier council to building the country's first Passivhaus leisure centre.

That's what this proposal is about. It's about the Devon we know, and the Devon we want to hand on to future generations.

Now yes, Exeter has led this work. And I'm proud of that.

But let me be clear – this isn't just a plan for Exeter alone.

It's a plan for Devon as a whole.

For cities and towns, for coastal communities and rural villages alike. The 49 parishes and towns are all connected to Exeter and Exeter to them.

What we're putting forward tonight is a model that strengthens what already works and fixes what doesn't.

It's about local decision-making, simpler structures, better value for money, and a stronger voice for our communities. Re-enforcing a commitment to work with towns and parishes and communities with Exeter itself being a benefit of us all.

Because the truth is, the further away decisions are made, the less they understand the people they affect.

Lord Mayor, not long ago, I was waiting for a bus at Lichfield Road, in Exwick – and like many people in this city, I waited longer than I should have. A woman next to me turned and said, *"If they had to run this from London, we'd be here all week."* Happily I wasn't there all week but there is truth in that.

Local challenges need local solutions. And that's exactly what this proposal is trying to get us back to – decisions made by the people who understand them and know what needs fixing.

Our proposal is practical, it's evidence-based, and yes, it's ambitious. We've never been afraid of ambition in Exeter.

Because we want more for our city, our county, and our country. More opportunity, more sustainable growth, and higher living standards for everyone who calls this place their home.

We've shown how to grow responsibly, how to bring partners together, how to invest in homes, culture, skills, and sustainability.

And those lessons shape this plan – one that gives Devon the space to grow, to innovate and of course, to lead.

Our cities will play a huge role in that. Cities like Exeter and Plymouth drive ideas, investment, and jobs. We're the engines of regional prosperity. But the countryside, the coast, and the market towns matter every bit as much – they're the heart of our county.

This proposal gives space for all parts of Devon to thrive. It unlocks potential while protecting character. It's bold, balanced, and built to last.

I wish to thank Plymouth City Council and indeed Torbay Council, for both having ambitions of their own, but both recognise the importance of an Exeter Unitary authority and support the city and surrounding areas.

Torbay slightly different but does recognise Exeter and Plymouth.

It's a plan that can deliver real savings, create stability, and put the focus back on people. Housing that's affordable. Transport that works. Services that people can trust.

The submission before you reflects genuine common ground – across political groups, partners, and communities – all backing the same belief: that Devon's future can and should be stronger.

Before I finish, I want to say something important.

This submission didn't appear out of thin air. It has taken real graft, real leadership and real expertise.

I want to thank our Chief Executive, Bindu, for her presentation this evening and for steering this work with clarity and calm.

Her understanding of the detail and her commitment to getting this right for Exeter and Devon has been outstanding.

My thanks also go to our Strategic Directors, to the teams across the Council who have put in the hours in every way, and all contributed in their own way.

You've balanced day-to-day pressures with this enormous task, and you've done it with professionalism and pride.

And finally, I want to thank our elected Members – across all groups – for their steer, your challenge and your support. This is what working together looks like.

Also, thanks to my Executive and my group, who many of them will note I have become a bit obsessive on this subject.

Colleagues, we know the challenges local governments face.

But we also know who we are – and what we can achieve when we work together. This proposal doesn't pretend to solve everything overnight.

But it's a step – a strong, confident step – towards a better, fairer, greener Devon. A Devon that's proud of its people, confident in its purpose, and ready for what comes next.

Let's take that step together, Lord Mayor.

Before I move the recommendations, I have received an amendment from Councillor Moore, which I am more than happy to accept as a friendly amendment. The amendment will change the recommendations to read as follows:

2.1 That this Council endorses, in principle, the Draft Final Proposal for Local Government Reorganisation (Appendix A) in Devon prior to consideration by Executive on 26 November 2025.

To insert 2.2 That the Executive considers the matters raised in the debate at Council, when it meets on 26th November 2025, as part of its decision-making process to finalise the proposal.

Furthermore, I wish to move an additional recommendation as an amendment as follows:

2.3 That the city council supports a Joint Submission with Plymouth City Council to be presented as a shared Executive Summary with the two individual proposals as appendices. Members are asked to note that Plymouth City Council supported this approach and its Cabinet agreed a similar recommendation at their meeting on 24 November 2025.

Lord Mayor Thank you very much."

The Lord Mayor asked for a show of hands of those opposed to the addition of the additional recommendation. As there was an opposition Councillor Wright seconded recommendation 2.1 and 2.2. The Lord Mayor opened debate on the addition of recommendation 2.3 upon which Councillor Payne withdrew his opposition and the amended recommendation as proposed by the Leader and seconded by Councillor Wright became the substantive.

During debate councillors made the following comments in support of the recommendations:

Councillor Wood

- a recent parliamentary constituency review brought three Exeter wards into a new constituency where common issues could be seen and he was conscious that this went beyond current boundaries which were no longer relevant;
- Exeter City Council had control of the River Exe which ran through the middle of the proposed area;
- thanked those councils who had worked with the city council and contributed to the draft submission; and
- he would take on board all that was said without predetermining the decision to be made the following evening.

Councillor Michael Mitchell:

- related the current situation to other historical governance changes and believed that this was an opportunity to get things right;
- that the Minister would make the decision;
- it was positive that there were only three submissions in Devon and that the 1-4-5 model did not appear the best option;
- existing boundaries did not solve problems for the city as demonstrated on the boundary of the Alphington ward where dwellings lay in Teignbridge;
- the One Devon submission would bring continuity and scale to deliver key services but this could bring drawbacks;

- supported the principle of localism and local decision making which gave better representation, especially to rural areas;
- elected members must be considered and constituencies should not be so large that there was no connectivity and ways of working could evolve to allow more working people to be involved; and
- he hoped to work together and cooperate in the interests of the residents of Devon.

Councillor Ruth Williams:

- would reserve her comments for the Executive meeting on 26 November;
- was here to listen with an open mind in order not to be predetermined; and
- was disappointed at the amendment's suggestion that the Executive would not consider all that was said at this meeting.

Councillor Palmer:

- had concerns about the continuation of Neighbourhood plans and St James had been the first urban plan in the UK which was incredibly important as it brought together a fractured community;
- was disappointed that government had de-funded neighbourhood planning and was concerned that government would take control of issues around planning and would seek reassurance that residents voices would carry on making a difference; and
- was concerned that decisions could be made by a councillor 30 miles away, a Strategic Mayor 100 miles away or even in Westminster.

Councillor Vizard

- thanked officers for their cross-party work and unity of purpose and believed it was clear that everyone wanted the best for our city and the whole of Devon;
- he welcomed work on engagement and the shared responsibility for the environment;
- there was interest in greater participation in decision-making;
- the views of young people would be valuable when they arrived as this was their future and their voices needed to be heard more;
- there was an opportunity to get things right and be bold and innovative; and
- he would listen to debate carefully and welcome all contributions.

Councillor Hughes:

- thanked officers not only for their work on the submission but for how accessible they had made the information provided;
- that they were proud of the active choice to remain a city of sanctuary for many marginalised groups;
- it was disappointing not to hear the voices of young people; and
- that they support the proposals and trust the Executive to make the right decision.

Councillor Knott:

- from a planning perspective he had grown frustrated by planning applications in neighbouring authorities attached to Exeter's borders meaning those authorities obtained the council tax and CIL but residents accessed services within Exeter;
- the proposal would allow the green belt to be controlled and a more thoughtful approach to development; and
- neighbourhood plans would be supported.

Councillor Parkhouse:

- as a newly qualified teacher she was aware that SEND and adaptations within the classroom were a top priority for residents;
- need was rising fast but the system was not keeping pace and the timeliness of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) being completed was amongst the worst in the country with 30% being completed within the legal timeframe, causing distress and costing money;
- Devon had received an inadequate rating which was no criticism of staff or schools but of the system; and
- SEND must be at the heart of a new authority with better integration between education and health and a system which served children better must be built.

Councillor Miller-Boam

- the proposal would support the city to drive growth which the other proposals would dilute;
- the proposal was not for Exeter alone and was shaped by meaningful engagement which sought to reach beyond current boundaries; and
- local voices would be heard and represented, fragmentation would be removed and services would be efficient and reliable.

Councillor Atkinson:

- the proposal would replace an outdated system where no one understood who was responsible for what;
- there were failings in Devon County Council's Adult Social Care with some older people waiting three years for assessment;
- had spoken to other local authorities where things had been done differently and saw this as an opportunity to make a difference here;
- there would be an opportunity to have more neighbourhood plans;
- councillors from the proposed authorities would have a seat on the Torbay and Devon Combined County Authority rather than current situation where they were only able to listen;
- was excited that Alphington would be united;
- it was disappointing not to hear from young people but government would be consulting with them on giving the vote to 16 and 17 year olds; and
- the proposal represented value for money.

Councillor Cookson:

- wanted to design a system which matched a modern city;
- the case rested on three principles – decisions closer to the communities they serve, strong partnership and growth;
- he was tired of making excuses for poor Devon County Council services and apologising that he could not influence SEND provision and potholes; and
- this was a chance for residents to have one councillor to get things done.

Councillor Moore:

- welcomed her amendment being accepted as friendly;
- work on the proposal had not been supported financially by government other than a small grant;
- welcomed the stated intention of stronger local engagement and empowerment, working jointly with communities to improve lives and localities;
- the role, purpose and budget of Neighbourhood Area Committees needed to be clear;

- the proposal stated that a Community Governance Review ‘could’ be undertaken rather than ‘should’ be undertaken in order to address the democratic deficit in Exeter;
- there had been a critical challenge around geography and the move to a 4 unitary model was welcomed although there remained concern at the large size of the coastal and rural area;
- a neighbourhood of 30-60,000 was large and it would be preferential for neighbourhoods to be the size of a local WhatsApp group;
- the current model drove money away and it would be good to focus on building wealth within our communities and keeping it there;
- comments about social enterprise were welcomed;
- increased prosperity, decent pay, ensuring that those who can contribute and invest in our community and environment and create an economy good for our climate would be a good principle for a strategic mayoral authority to model on if done well;
- consider strategic housing as there was no mention on what would happen to Exeter’s housing stock, which the Council should be proud of. Request clear commitment to Exeter growing the number of councils houses it has and recognise the number of people sleeping rough or homeless and the difficulties some in communities face;
- ambitions for Homelessness should go beyond safe and legal;
- request to ask government to fund transitions in order to be realistic about significant debt, that forecast savings can only come after redundancies whilst SEND and social care will remain high costs; and
- a modern unitary authority was needed and to learn from rural areas by having Neighbourhood Area Committees and would love to see a youth council created.

Councillor Patrick:

- would reflect tomorrow and agreed with Councillor Knott regarding planning that she did not believe that there was a risk in becoming a unitary authority;
- the Local Plan had been submitted to the Inspectorate, comprising years of work not only by this authority but with engagement with stakeholders and community groups, which would not be lost. The adopted plan would be the authority’s guide; and
- planning must be done strategically but local people and communities would have a voice.

Councillor Kevin Mitchell:

- that all districts and Devon County Council would go and new authorities would be created rather than a new Exeter City Council;
- this was an opportunity to create a new structure for the city and surrounding areas to the benefit of communities in and around the city;
- hoped that the Executive would reflect on what community was;
- St James had a unique status which should be treated in a distinct way and a Community Governance Review would be welcomed;
- it was important to maintain civic life and ensure a structure for the Lord Mayoralty and ensure that cultural life remained in place; and
- supported a joint proposal with Plymouth.

Councillor Wright:

- was present to listen and would reserve comment until the meeting of the Executive on 26 November;
- she believed all present were behind the devolution of power, funds and decision making and that Devon County Council was too large and yet held all the funds; and

- the neighbourhood plan in St James may be a good starting point on how to address democracy from the bottom up.

Councillor Harding:

- was proud of the city already and that pride must be taken forward into the new council;
- that everyone was welcome in Exeter no matter their background, diversity or circumstances; and
- hoped it was clear that this was not an Exeter takeover but a coming together of communities.

Councillor Wardle:

- it was a long time since Exeter had control over their own transport; and
- he hoped that possibilities for transport would be considered including bus services, in line with the Bus Service Act, and re-doubling of railway lines to increase services and therefore remove congestion on roads.

All members who spoke thanked officers for the tremendous amount of work undertaken on the proposal before them.

In summing up the Leader, Councillor Bialyk made the following remarks:

- there had been a disappointing degree of collaboration with other Leaders in the county;
- some councils had reached out and good discussions were had and he had been prepared to amend where possible;
- this was not a Labour proposal and cross-party engagement and support had been received throughout;
- the Plymouth and Exeter proposals matched and therefore they had come together;
- he was disappointed that there was no provision for an elected city council with town council powers;
- detail surrounding neighbourhood plans, and parish councils would be for a future authority to decide and he was reluctant to state what may come forward;
- governance would be considered within a review and for planning purposes there were plans for Exeter, Teignbridge and East Devon which would be followed until the new council had its own plan;
- he found it interesting who responded to engagement and it was not the younger generations;
- Exeter was a city of sanctuary and welcomed everyone even if we disagreed with their views;
- SEND services could be a lot better and the failure of adult services was noted;
- Neighbourhood Area Committees would be for the new authority to consider;
- bins were important but he would look to parishes and towns as it would not be possible to address everything within the new authority;
- a governance review would be key;
- communities must be engaged and the role of councillors was also important for local democracy;
- he would be visiting Crediton next week to look at issues they are dealing with and what they are able to take on and he would not be diminishing the role of parish or town councils – some would be asked to take on more and he would want to work with them to see what they were able to deliver;
- his personal view was that a new form of council structure was needed in Exeter;

- the Government questions before the council had been answered in the following terms:
 - Economic performance – work with partners to drive the economy, including social partnerships;
 - Housing – the new authority would be part of the Combined County Authority and work would take place with communities and the third sector;
 - Costs – he was not looking to make redundancies but if there were any, appropriate packages would be offered and costs must be considered;
 - Viability and council cost – if the new authority was not what this council requested then these issues would remain. There would be a new funding arrangement and it may not be appropriate to make demands but he would ask officers;
- he had suggested that concessionary bus fares be extended but as a non-constituent Member of the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority, he had little influence; and
- he requested that Councillors M Mitchell and Moore email their comments in order that he give them full consideration ahead of the Executive meeting on the 26 November.

The Leader called for a roll call vote, a named vote was recorded as follows:

Voted For: Councillors Asvachin, Atkinson, Banyard, Begley, Bennett, Bialyk, Cookson, Foale, Fullam, Haigh, Harding, Holland, Hughes, Hussain, Knott, Miller-Boam, Mitchell K., Mitchell M., Moore, Palmer, Parkhouse, Patrick, Payne, Pole, Read, Rees, Rolstone, Sheridan, Snow, Vizard, Wardle, Williams M., Wood, Wright and The Lord Mayor, Councillor Jobson.

Voted Against: none

Abstentions: Councillor Ketchin

Absent: Councillors Darling and Williams, M.

(The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and closed at 8.24 pm)

Chair

COUNCIL

Tuesday 9 December 2025

Present:

The Right Worshipful the Lord Mayor Councillor Jobson (Chair)
Councillors Asvachin, Banyard, Begley, Bialyk, Cookson, Fullam, Haigh, Harding, Holland, Hussain, Ketchin, Knott, Miller-Boam, Mitchell, M, Moore, Palmer, Parkhouse, Payne, Pole, Read, Rees, Rolstone, Sheridan, Vizard, Wetenhall, Williams, M, Williams, R and Wood

Apologies:

Councillors Atkinson, Bennett, Darling, Foale, Hughes, Mitchell, K, Patrick, Snow, Wardle and Wright

Also present:

Chief Executive, Head of Legal and Democratic Services & Monitoring Officer, Democratic Services Manager, Head of Service - City Centre and Net Zero, Head of Service - Finance and Democratic Services Officer

102

MINUTES

The minutes of the Ordinary meeting of the Council held on 14 October 2025 were moved by the Lord Mayor, taken as read, approved and signed as correct.

The minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council held on 14 October 2025 were moved by the Lord Mayor, and taken as read, and following an amendment for accuracy, approved and signed as correct as amended.

103

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made by Members.

104

OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS

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

- the Sweepers lunch;
- Riding for Disable Exeter Evening Concert;
- the raising of the Polish Flag and exhibition;
- the remembrance procession to Northernhay gardens War Memorial;
- Exeter College Higher Graduation Awards;
- the Annual Trafalgar Service;
- the County Remembrance Service;
- the Civic, Women's Institute, and Exeter College carol services at the Cathedral;
- on Armistice Day she added a wreath to the Poppy Train and attended the service in Higher Cemetery;
- met with her Royal Highness, the Princess Royal at Luminous;
- she met with the Company of Communicators, the Weavers, Fullers and Shearmen, and the Royal Devon Cricket Club;
- joined the SWGL for their 25th Anniversary;
- attended the Garden of Eden Charity Lunch, and the St Johns Hospital Educational Foundation Trust Awards;

- opened both the Willow Grande Development, and the Cornish Bakery;
- attended the installation of the new Bishop of Plymouth, the Exeter Sea Cadets Royal Navy Parade, the RBL Festival of Remembrance, the Meet and Remember Club's 10th Anniversary, the launch of the Wilton Wat Mural, Exeter Symphony Orchestra's Winter Concern and the Let's Face It Immersive Exhibition at the Mint; and
- watched Exeter Otters Wheelchair Basketball, and Chance to Dance.

Members were also advised that the Lord Mayor had attended the funeral service of the former Chief Executive, Bernard Frowd, and that she had sent a letter of condolence following the fire in Hong Kong, to the Exeter Community.

The Lord Mayor also advised Members that a petition entitled Stop Exeter Heat Network had been received and that it would be responded to as a letter, by officers in line with the petition scheme.

105

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Lord Mayor informed Members that there were no public questions to receive in the meeting.

A public question had been asked but the member of the public was unable to attend the meeting so the question and response would be appended to the minutes.

106

CUSTOMER FOCUS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 25 SEPTEMBER 2025

The Minutes of the Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee of 25 September 2025 were presented by the Chair, Councillor Rees, and taken as read.

During discussion Councillor Moore asked the Portfolio Holder to provide an update on what had been done regarding following up points made previously, and when the minutes of the Community Safety Partnership would be published.

Councillor Wright, the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services, Community Safety and City Centre had sent her apologies, so the question was answered by Councillor Vizard, the Portfolio Holder for Climate, Ecological Change and Communities. Councillor Vizard informed Councillor Moore that Safer Exeter had not met since the Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee on 25 September, but the issues were being picked up and would inform the work carried out with Safer Exeter partner organisations.

Councillor Read raised a question about the Scrutiny Annual Report and asked for a follow up on the box-shifting letter that had been sent to Government.

Councillor Rees advised that the Annual Scrutiny Report would be appended to the relevant minutes. Councillor Asvachin advised Councillor Read that the Box-shifting letter to the Government would be chased up by her.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee held on 25 September 2025 be received

107

STRATEGIC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 3 NOVEMBER 2025 (SPECIAL)

The minutes of the Special Strategic Scrutiny Committee of 3 November 2025 were presented by the Chair, Councillor Pole, and taken as read.

Councillor Pole advised that she would be raising an amendment at the next meeting of the Strategic Scrutiny Committee before the minutes would be signed.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Special Strategic Scrutiny Committee held on 3 November 2025 be received.

108

PLANNING COMMITTEE - 10 NOVEMBER 2025

The minutes of the Planning Committee of 10 November 2025 were presented by the Chair, Councillor Knott, and taken as read.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 10 November 2025 be received.

109

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE - 4 NOVEMBER 2025

The minutes of the Executive Committee of 4 November 2025 were presented by the Leader, Councillor Bialyk, and taken as read.

In respect of **Minute 84 – Air Quality Annual Status Report and Revision of the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)**, the Leader moved, and Councillor Wood seconded the recommendation and following a unanimous vote were CARRIED.

Councillor Banyard asked the Leader if he would, while he still could, work with Officers at Devon County Council and local MPs to deliver greater active travel and clean transport investment. The Leader advised that he would.

In respect of **Minute 85 – Proposed Policy of the Council for an Indemnity to Members and Officers**, the Leader moved, and Councillor Wood seconded the recommendations, which following a unanimous vote were CARRIED.

Councillor Moore asked the Leader what provision there would be to protect partisan decisions that would leave Members open to liabilities. The Leader advised Councillor Moore that any Councillor acting within the Constitution would be protected and that he would support the recommendations of the Monitoring Officer.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Executive Committee 4 November 2025 be received.

110

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE - 26 NOVEMBER 2025 (SPECIAL)

The minutes of the Special Executive Committee of 26 November 2025 were presented by the Leader, Councillor Bialyk, and taken as read.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Special Executive Committee 26 November 2025 be received.

111

INVESTMENT APPROVAL FOR NEW SOLAR PV SITES

The Leader moved the recommendations of the report, seconded by Councillor Wood, and invited the Head of Service – City Centre & Net Zero to present the report.

The Head of Service – City Centre & Net Zero presented the report, making the following points:

- this would deliver 511,000kw of solar power;
- it was expected to be operational by 2026; and
- the budget for this project was £1,000,000.

The Head of Service – City Centre & Net Zero responded to Members' questions in the following terms:

- there would be a more in-depth discussion about the Senate Court building in January;
- this had required a large business case for each building, and comments would be provided after the meeting regarding the differences in cost;
- a response regarding the provider of the loan would be given outside of the meeting;
- grid capacity and connection agreements with the National Grid had already been confirmed;
- works were being aligned with those for Wonford Community Centre;
- there was a working group considering development of the Mary Arches Car Park; and
- the solar panels had not yet been procured but the length of the warranty would be taken into consideration when they were.

During debate Councillor Vizard thanked the Head of Service – City Centre and Net Zero for her hard work on this project. He was delighted that this was moving forward and felt it was crucial partnership work with South West Net Zero Park, and that it was an investment in Exeter's future.

Councillor Moore thanked the Net Zero Team and hoped this would have a significant impact on the emissions at St Sidwell's Point. She felt it very important to clarify where the funds were coming from as soon as possible and asked the Portfolio Holder to provide information about the impact this would have on gas boiler use.

The Leader advised that a response to Councillor Moore would be given after the meeting.

Following a vote the recommendations of this report were CARRIED.

112

OVERVIEW OF THE GENERAL FUND BUDGET Q2

The Leader moved the recommendations of the report, seconded by Councillor Wood, and invited the Head of Service – Finance to present the report.

The Head of Service – Finance presented the report, making the following points:

- this was an update after six months of the financial year;
- the Section 151 Officer recommended that council take no action at this stage;
- the General Fund working balance was expected to return to the required level soon; and
- the Council would continue to receive a recovery grant.

The Head of Service – Finance responded to Member's questions in the following terms:

- an answer would be provided regarding the RingGo charges outside of the meeting; and

- the underspend on the Civic Centre relocation had been carried forward to pay an instalment of the compensation payment next financial year.

Following a vote the recommendations of this report were CARRIED.

113

GENERAL FUND CAPITAL MONITORING Q2

The Leader moved the recommendations of the report, seconded by Councillor Wood, and invited the Head of Service – Finance to present the report.

The Head of Service – Finance presented the report, making the following points:

- this update came after 6 months of the financial year;
- the Chief Executive had set up a meeting of the Capital Programme Board on the 15th of December;
- the maintenance fee was close to being finalised;
- there had been a budget increase in 5 areas; and
- this proposal would be able to see through to the new unitary council.

The Head of Service – Finance advised Members that she would answer all their questions outside of the meeting.

During debate Members made the following points;

- they were pleased that the Chief Executive was taking action on the capital budget;
- what specific improvements were they looking for; and
- thanked Officers for their work on the playing fields in Pinhoe.

In summing up the Leader stated that they were focusing on the Materials Reclamation Facility (MRF) and information would be brought to meetings of the Executive and Full Council in due course.

Following a vote, the recommendations were CARRIED.

114

HRA BUDGET MONITORING REPORT – Q2

The Leader moved the recommendations of the report, seconded by Councillor Wood, and invited the Head of Service – Finance to present the report.

The Head of Service – Finance presented the report stating that there was nothing significant to highlight.

The Head of Service – Finance advised Members that their questions would be answered outside of the meeting.

In summing up the Leader highlighted that this work was being done on top of the retrofitting work.

Following a vote, the recommendations were unanimously CARRIED.

115

TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY REPORT 2026/27

The Leader moved the recommendations of the report, seconded by Councillor Wood, and invited the Head of Service – Finance to present the report.

The Head of Service – Finance presented the report, making the following points:

- the base rate was steadily reducing; and

- the Council were avoiding borrowing where possible using cash balances.

During debate Councillor Moore was interested to hear the Leader's opinion and understand the cautious approach to borrowing. She was concerned that this could put the Council at risk in the short to medium term.

The Leader felt that it was responsible to not borrow and clarified the reasons why.

Following a vote, the recommendations were unanimously CARRIED.

116

UPDATE OF EXETER CITY COUNCIL'S COMPANIES, ALTERNATIVE DELIVERY MODELS AND CHARITIES.

The Leader moved the recommendations of the report, seconded by Councillor Wood, and invited the Head of Service – Finance to present the report.

The Head of Service – Finance presented the report and advised that this report was to update Members and that 2 dormant subsidiaries had been dissolved. She advised Members that she would respond to their questions outside of the meeting.

During debate the Leader felt that it was beneficial that this report had come to Council and it had provided an opportunity for understanding and transparency.

Following a vote, the recommendations were unanimously CARRIED

117

NOTICE OF MOTION BY COUNCILLOR WOOD UNDER STANDING ORDER NO.

6

Councillor Wood moved, and Councillor Miller-Boam seconded a Notice of Motion in the following terms:

"This Council notes:

The increasing use of private management companies on new residential estates in Exeter to maintain roads, open spaces and shared facilities.

That many residents experience poor service, rising costs and a lack of transparency, while having limited rights to challenge or change their management company.

That the planning system can shape how estates are designed, adopted and maintained, and therefore has a key role in reducing reliance of private management arrangements.

Key reports and evidence on the performance and of management companies, including:

- **The findings of the Competition and Markets Authority's Residential Property Management Services Market Study**, highlighting issues with poor transparency, high charges, and lack of leaseholder control.
- **The Leasehold Advisory Service's National Leasehold Survey (2016)**, which found that 68% of leaseholders had little or no confidence in their managing agents.
- **The Law Commission's Commonhold and Leasehold Reform reports**, identifying the need for stronger homeowner rights and fairer management structures.

- The **Housing Ombudsman's Learning from Severe Maladministration** reports, which detail systemic failings in housing management and governance.

That this is a national issue, and **Exeter MP Steve Rache** has been working extensively with other Labour Members of Parliament to challenge poor performance and lack of accountability under the current system.

The Labour government's commitment to modernise housing law through the **Leasehold and Freehold Reform Bill** and welcomes its plans for further radical reforms to address ongoing issues faced by homeowners and deliver essential change through the upcoming Commonhold White Paper and **planned Leasehold and Commonhold Reform Bill**.

[Beginning of the end for the 'feudal' leasehold system - GOV.UK](#)

This Council Believes:

That public areas on new developments, wherever possible, should be designed and built to adoptable standards, so they can be maintained by the City or County Council (or their successor). There appropriate this may require the provision of a commuted sum to fund ongoing maintenance.

That when private management companies are proposed, residents should be fully informed at about future costs and responsibilities and accountability of services before any homes are sold.

That developers must provide sufficient financial safeguards, including bonds, to ensure essential infrastructure works are completed even if the development or the management company ceases trading.

That stronger regulation is required at a national level to protect homeowners where management companies are unavoidable.

This Council resolves to:

1. Strengthen the use of the planning system to seek adoption by local authorities of roads, play areas, open spaces and other infrastructure where possible, and to consider the provision of a commuted sum for the ongoing maintenance and management of such facilities, in order to limit reliance on private management arrangements.
2. Ensure due diligence in the planning process so that developers have sufficient bonds or other financial guarantees in place to cover the completion of essential infrastructure works.
3. Require developers, through planning conditions or legal agreements, to set out clearly the costs and responsibilities of any proposed management company before homes are sold.
4. Ask the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government calling for stronger national regulation of residential management companies.
5. Work with the Local Government Association and other councils to campaign for reform and highlight the experiences of Exeter residents.
6. Publicise advice and support available to residents who face difficulties with their management companies.
7. The matter of monitoring the implementation of the resolutions be referred to the relevant Scrutiny Committee."

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

- people buying homes on new developments were facing rising charges;

- there was a lack of transparency and accountability under the current system;
- some responsibility sat with Devon County Council, but reform was needed at a national level;
- this motion sought to maximise adoption of roads and play areas, and ensure that promised infrastructure was delivered;
- this motion encouraged ongoing maintenance funding, in a fair and sustainable way; and
- would work towards improving outcomes for residents today and in future for buyers.

As Seconder, Councillor Miller-Boam spoke in support of the motion making the following points:

- there had been a rapid increase in the rise of private management companies;
- costs were often not made fully clear to residents when they were buying their homes and it was often not clear who was responsible for maintenance;
- Exeter City Council was working hard to support residents but local and national policy needed to be reformed;
- tools that existed already within the planning process could be used;
- this motion was calling for strong safeguards and clear information for residents; and
- it was recommending that this could go to Scrutiny Committee to benefit current and future residents.

Councillor Parkhouse:

- in her ward there were several City Council owned public spaces and parks that were well maintained;
- she was going back and forth with a private company regarding the maintenance of a private park without much success; and
- it was not really possible to hold private companies accountable.

Councillor Knott:

- some houses that had been built by housing associations had their service charges increase 4 times;
- roads serving homes needed to meet standards for public use; and
- this motion was the start of highlighting this problem and protecting residents.

Councillor Harding:

- this was an excellent motion;
- residents were signing up for estate management fees without knowing what the level was; and
- residents should be offered protection and be told exactly what they're signing up for.

Councillor R Williams:

- this motion had been sense checked by the Strategic Directors and Heads of Service;
- Exeter City Council had 85 parks;
- some residents were paying more for access to parks, some of which were closed;
- Exeter City Council carried out regular safety checks on their parks; and
- it was unfair for residents to pay council tax for private services.

Councillor Vizard:

- it was clear that there were cases in all wards;
- he welcomed the opportunity for the Council to help with this;
- he also welcomed the fact that the government were underway in creating relevant legislation for this; and
- the Secretary of State for MHCLG was listening.

Councillor M Williams:

- there had been lots of development in Pinhoe and Topsham;
- what was happening to the unfinished roads and green spaces on new estates;
- when he was campaigning one of the key issues he addressed was overflowing dog bins in a privately owned park; and
- residents were not bothered with how things got done or who did them, just that they were being done.

Councillor Moore proposed an amendment to the motion but was advised by the Lord Mayor that this would not be possible as it was an amendment to the Local Plan which had been submitted and therefore could not be amended.

Councillor M Mitchell:

- wanted to emphasise item 6 in the motion and hoped that Exeter City Council would be willing to promote the ability for tenants to work for themselves.

Councillor Palmer:

- asked why this was not included in the local plan, and felt that it was not focusing on the cause;
- there needed to be changes to government planning policy to address the cause; and
- it was disappointing that there was not anything included about purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA).

Councillor Fullam:

- was supportive of the motion;
- the issue of transparency was vital;
- this would cut costs to the lease holder;
- the price of providing services was high and getting higher;
- there were issues with a current Exeter City Council property where the charge had increased but the maintenance was not being done; and
- this motion was about transparency, realism and putting the onus on the landowner rather than the tenant.

Councillor Rolstone:

- it was known that more houses were needed in Exeter; and
- better support needed to be provided for residents.

Councillor Pole:

- this was the privatisation of profit and socialisation of loss; and
- thanked the Parks and Green Spaces teams for their hard work.

Councillor Read:

- was concerned that this had not been written into the local plan; and
- could this not have been done earlier and included into the local plan.

In summing up, Councillor Wood as seconder made the following points:

- this motion was focused on residential management companies;
- this had been stress tested to ensure it was achievable; and
- sending it to Scrutiny Committee would make sure the intentions were achieved.

Following a vote, the motion was CARRIED.

118

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 Moore to the Leader, Councillor Bialyk:

“Will the leader commit to meeting with local ward and division councillors and relevant officers to discuss options and actions for improving the flow of pedestrians, cyclists and wheelers around the Quay?”

The Leader, Councillor Bialyk, responded to this question stating that this was a Devon County Council function, but he would ensure that Officers attended relevant meetings to deal with these things and he was happy to go to any meeting he was invited to but it was up to Devon County Council to initiate.

In a supplementary question Councillor Moore stated that Exeter City Council was a significant landowner in the area and needed to be committed to working with Devon County Council. She also felt that the Leader needed to work with the Leader of Devon County Council to identify issues and asks.

The Leader advised that he would contact the Leader of Devon County Council but it had to be dealt with through officers with the relevant expertise.

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

“As the Deputy Leader knows there have been discussions between significant stakeholders in the city about the concept of a community toilet scheme, would the council give consideration to working with organisations in the community to reopen the public toilets in Musgrave Row?”

Councillor R Williams, Portfolio Holder for City Management responded to this question in the following terms:

“The Council agreed in principle to the potential of a community toilet scheme in 2019.

If a community or other organisation wishes to take on the running of the toilets and can lead on, and demonstrate a business case with community support, then we can work with them to achieve that outcome.

There are significant challenges the group will need to overcome, not least the significant remedial work needed to bring facilities - such as the Musgrove, which have been closed since 2019 and were already in poor condition prompting their closure — back into operation. Officers have informed me that in 2019, at the point Musgrove was closed, annual running costs were approximately £14,000 per year. Those costs will be higher now, whilst that is in no way meant to put anyone off, it's merely to be open and honest about the true costs and risks of running a public toilet.”.

In a supplementary question Councillor Read stated that she wanted to enable cafes and restaurants to be part of the scheme, and if that did happen would Exeter City Council be happy to do that?

The Leader advised that he would speak to Councillor Wright, the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services, Community Safety, and City Centre and provide a response outside of the meeting.

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

“Since the Council passed the plant-based policy in December 2022 is the council satisfied that it is being adhered to in letter and in spirit? Has there recently been an audit of the offerings at council run events and venues to ensure a good range of plant-based options are always on offer?”

The Leader advised that he was not aware of any audits taking place, nor aware of any that were expected to take place and felt that the Council would be carrying out the terms as agreed.

In a supplementary question Councillor Read asked if the Council were aware of the plant-based policy at the university, and if they were happy for her to make arrangements for meetings.

The Leader responded saying that it was not for Members to arrange meetings with the university and that he would discuss this with the Chief Executive.

(The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and closed at 8.10 pm)

Chair

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Agenda Item 6

STRATEGIC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

20 November 2025

Present:

Councillor Liz Pole (Chair)

Councillors Mitchell, K, Atkinson, Haigh, Harding, Miller-Boam, Moore, Rolstone, Wetenhall and Williams, M

Also present:

Strategic Director for Operations, Head of Service – Environment and Waste, Head of Service – City Centre and Net Zero and Democratic Services Manager

Public Health Specialist – Devon County Council

In attendance as Portfolio Holder:

Councillor Philip Bialyk
Councillor Ruth Williams
Councillor Laura Wright
Councillor Matthew Vizard

19 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2025 were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair as correct.

20 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made by Members.

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

There were no questions submitted by the public.

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

There were no questions submitted in advance by Members and no questions put to Portfolio Holders present.

23 Portfolio Holder report - Councillor Wright

Councillor Wright presented her report which was taken as read.

Councillor Wright, the Head of Service – Net Zero and City Centre and Head of Service – Environment and Waste responded to Members' questions in the following terms:

- the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) had been supportive in the past, including giving grants which were well received, what was required across

the country as well as in Exeter was more police officers. The demise of the PCC would return funds to the policing budget which should have a positive impact on operational policing and on the streets of Exeter;

- the new city centre strategy would include the action plan and would be produced with relevant partners but the timeline had been impacted by Local Government Reorganisation. Before the strategy was finalised it would be ensured that partners could deliver their parts. The Strategy would be added to the Executive Forward Plan to seek consent for public consultation;
- the CCTV covered as far down as Fore Street but the Council had worked with Devon County Council who had traffic cameras in Cowick Street could be monitored giving the Control Centre sight of them;
- the yellow signs were all within sight of cameras and it was known that people were less likely to call the police if they felt they were being followed but they might ring the control centre. Each yellow sign had the number of the nearest camera on them in order that people didn't need to say where they are and locations of cameras could be shared with councillors;
- dialogue with ward councillors would be helpful regarding potential sites for additional cameras as they did obtain information which the police didn't always receive from residents. Crime statistics had informed current camera locations as well as ensuring good coverage of the city centre area;
- the InExeter hyper local ASB Group had worked hard with ward councillors on issues as well as local businesses;
- data from the CCTV control centre would be tracked and shared. A walk-around the city centre with Mr Cox had taken place and it had been identified that some signs were too high and were programmed in to be adjusted;
- Councillor Wright was Member Champion for the SWAN charter and all organisations signed up to the scheme must have a champion. Bystander information was no longer available as part of the scheme but the aim was to encourage men to stand up when they saw inappropriate actions from others. Some venues that had signed up to the Charter have been removed. The CSP intended to look into the SWAN charter in the new year. The Charter was linked to the Best Bar None initially and this did require reaccreditation. These schemes had been resource intensive using short-term government funding which had now ceased. Organisations were still working within the ethos of the Charter;
- Data from MyExeter would be utilised at an operational level but may feed-in to strategic priorities in future;
- the Chair of the ASB sub-group of the CSP was to be handed over to Exeter City Council due to politicisation of ASB and the Monitoring Officer was looking at the constitution with regard to the mechanism for the CSP to feed back into the council and would report back;
- a review of council processes for encampments and traveller sites was being undertaken as there was a clear process by which officers collaborated but this was not currently shared clearly with councillors until there were travellers within their ward. There was tension between new police powers which did not allow them to move people on unless there was a designated site for them to move to and designated sites provisions did not take into account two-tier authorities. Work with Devon County Council hadn't been fruitful in the past and protected characteristics must be taken into account. Scheduled activities on Exeter City Council land did allow eviction as this was not classed as common land; and
- whilst incursion was a strong word, encampments and incursion were the terms used in legislation. Outreach is important but also some people are street-attached rather than homeless.

During discussion Councillor Rolstone commented that in leading a well-run council the revision of the processes and committees, especially in Planning were highlighted as best practice at a recent training session held nationally.

The Chair moved the recommendation, seconded by Councillor Kevin Mitchell, that the report be noted and following a vote was CARRIED.

24 Air Quality

The Chair invited Public Health and Councillor Rees, as proposer of the item to the table and explained that there was also a recommendation from the Executive.

Councillor Rees, under Standing Order No. 45, presented her Scrutiny Proforma and in doing so, made the following points:

- that this had been submitted in May 2024 prior to the previous Air Quality Action Plan coming to an end with the intention of evaluation before a new one was written;
- there was consensus that many targets were difficult to evaluate as they were not SMART therefore successes could not be celebrated or areas for improvement seen;
- the decision from Executive to have a wider strategy document with clear information for the public and also detailing aspirations;
- the Air Quality Action Plan had a specific remit and a wider strategy would provide a holistic picture of the ambitions for the city; and
- it was great to see Public Health represented.

The Strategic Director for Operations presented the report making the following points:

- the status report had been reviewed for twelve years;
- the annual status report had to be presented on a Government issued template which the council couldn't change.
- data from 2024 had been surprising as it had not been expected that East Wonford Hill would fall below the exceedance level set by the government;
- this was a positive situation but there was still work to do to improve air quality further;
- officers were now seeking to go on a different journey and were present at the meeting to hear from and to listen to members of the scrutiny committee;
- The Air Quality Action Plan was now required to be reviewed;
- this was highly specialist work which couldn't be resourced in-house due to the current vacancy; and
- in drawing the strategy together there would likely be workshops and other opportunities for member to engage.

The Public Health Specialist gave evidence making the following points:

- the Director of Public Health must see and sign off the air quality status reports;
- public health were keen to work with officers and members to look at how this could be better coordinated across the wider Devon area;
- Exeter was influenced by being one of the biggest commuting-in areas in the country;
- there was a desire to streamline the process by becoming involved earlier and looking more strategically across the area, including looking to have one data-set;
- once areas had moved beyond Air Quality Management Areas they were looking to address how authorities could work as a system; and

- looking across the whole region included Europe as everyone must be mindful of large forest fires having a wider-ranging impact on air quality.

The Strategic Director for Operations, Head of Service – Environment and Waste and Public Health Specialist responded to Members' questions in the following terms:

- the Executive had decided not to consult on reviewing the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), as the AQMA would be short-lived;
- there was a legal requirement to look at the Air Quality Action Plan and comments about SMART objectives would be taken on board;
- there was a desire to have a strategy which would contain resourcing and costs to achieve the actions required;
- the government may decide to review current air quality targets, but no announcements had been made to date;
- the timescale for drafting the strategy would be as soon as was feasibly possible and feedback would be given but it was important to note that external resource would be needed and a procurement exercise would be required;
- views of those in the current area at East Wonford Hill that had not been below the government objective were important to the action plan.
- Local Transport Plan 4 had just been released and air quality was mentioned in it and a health impact assessment had been undertaken;
- there was a legal duty on Exeter City Council duty to measure nitrogen dioxide;
- air quality had no boundaries but there were certain controls which could be put in place both locally and nationally;
- locally there were statutory bodies who could take action but individual responsibility played a big part;
- cycling in Exeter was increasing;
- electric buses were due to come into service imminently;
- the duty to measure would continue and there was no plan to reduce the current monitoring network. The kit at the RAMM and Alphington corridor showed Exeter City Council's commitment to measuring air quality;
- transport was a major contributor to air quality as well as domestic heating;
- nitrogen dioxide was reduced through the introduction of electric vehicles, however, particulates would remain through wear and tear of tyres and brakes;
- cars becoming bigger and heavier means increased weight and therefore greater wear and tear on the road;
- the transport plan stated that it was desirable to use alternative modes of transport with the wish to give choice rather than remove options;
- hydrogen was likely to be dismissed nationally as a realistic solution as it produced nitrous oxide;
- there would be a natural drop-off of gas boilers with the installation of more air-source heat pumps;
- The Council's Housing Team oversaw damp and mould in both their own housing properties as well as the Private Sector. They were responsible for the Council's web content with respect to Awaab's Law. Work had been done ahead of introduction and implementation of the law, ensuring contractors working for housing delivered to appropriate timescales;
- improvements in technology would also bring improvements through the reduction of gas cookers in homes which were harmful;
- wood burners had an impact on the external environment but also internal as pollutants were brought directly into the home;

- there was information regarding air quality in deprived areas and it was known that there was often traffic in poorer neighbourhoods and residents were more susceptible to chronic health conditions. Hospital episodes were being looked at and modelling carried out replicating a Liverpool and London study;
- the relationship between internal and external air quality was not as straightforward in Devon as it was in London;
- Exeter's Passivhaus and other initiatives were being held up as examples of good practice;
- wood burners were permitted within a controlled area if they met the DEFRA standard and were burning the correct DEFRA approved fuel. At the point of purchase advice should be given and this would be a trading standards issue otherwise.
- There was legislation regarding Idling vehicles which was an offence not to comply with an officer's request to switch off, but would require enforcement resource;
- the action plan had included items which were out with the city council control and were that of the transport and highway's authority and engagement would be required to meet the actions and since the Public Health Specialist had been in post productive discussion had taken place;
- electric buses were reliant on funding external to Devon County Council and other areas with worse air quality had been more successful in attracting funding in the past;
- all work would look at transition with regard to local government reorganisation;
- cumulative impact came under planning law and it was difficult to demonstrate in planning term but public health and planning worked closely together and could be strengthened;
- permits were issued by the Environment Agency and local authorities depending upon the nature of the business being regulated; and
- a national consultation on permits had recently closed and the questions were wide-ranging which government were looking at, with a report expected in the new year.

During discussion Members' noted that:

- it would be useful to map other policies in existence, such as, Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and the local transport plan as these all had targets which already existed and could be updated;
- realistic targets should be set which may not only be exceedance of legal limits;
- it would be good to see a return of a car club initiative and enforcement where there was poor practice from developers;
- there could be an opportunity for procurement across Devon which would be to Exeter's advantage as some housing developments were on the edges of the city but out with Exeter City Council boundary;
- internal air quality should be included and advice could be given to residents on how to manage this within their home;
- trees and green infrastructure should be included;
- consideration of a rapid health impact assessment ([Rapid Health Impact Assessment for Local Transport Plan 4.pdf](#));
- Lower layer Super Output Areas(LSOAs) and areas of multiple deprivation should be considered within the strategy as some areas had deteriorated and now had two indicators including health outcomes;
- it was important to draw on best practices from other places and York and Winchester were examples which had links to other policies to ensure clarity

- of the whole air quality picture within an areas and the information was easy to read and understand;
- would a joint strategy with Devon County Council be possible;
- could measures of education and enforcement be clearly stated in the strategy including the costs;
- London had Breathe Cities – request to look at how to involve communities, for example in monitoring, identifying idling hotspots and children designing posters;
- that there was discussion with Planning to identify how developers could be encouraged to think about minimising air pollution at all stages of their building work;
- that single emitters be considered as each was treated separately and not included in wider data;
- it would be good to have more smokeless zones in the city, giving more coverage as well as a review, based on transparent principles, of where the NO2 monitors were. This could include looking at secondary roads which carried regular peak hour flow;
- which polluting chemicals would be considered in the strategy and which wouldn't as a councillor had recently learned about Butedine;
- plans should include all housing stock and be based on Energy Performance Certificate (EPC);
- on development sites dampening work could be undertaken before work began;
- some displacement of traffic may have led to increased traffic in areas of deprivation.

The Portfolio Holder for City Management responded to Members' questions in the following terms:

- there was a particular type of birch tree which was not good for air quality and the Parks and Green Spaces Team would give advice to the Planning department in order not to aggravate people's breathing issues;
- the original recommendation to the Executive was to focus on the East Wonford Hill area but that gave the wrong message, that there was no need to worry about the rest of the city;
- monitoring of the 85 sites would continue;
- there were interim World Health Organisation (WHO) targets; and
- her priority was to consider the city as a whole.

The Chair requested that a report be brought back to the Strategic Scrutiny Committee in June 2026 and that particulates be included as well as nitrous oxide.

The Chair proposed, seconded by Councillor Kevin Mitchell that the Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee note that officers note their comments and request clarification on the timetable of the Air Quality Management Area and Action Plan, balancing the need to make progress with space to have further workshops and hear back within six months.

Following a unanimous vote the motion was CARRIED.

25 Motion referred by Council

The Chair invited Councillor Wetenhall to present her motion, which she did making the following points:

- there were three resolutions and in order to achieve these some would be easy, cheap or quick and others would be difficult or more expensive;

- some could be done easily and there were best practice websites to compare to; and
- this work was important and relevant.

During discussion Councillors made the following points:

- easy to understand information was required for residents rather than technical detail;
- Denis the Dustcart was an excellent example of how information could be provided and it would be good to have something similar for air quality;
- people may not know the issues of wood burners;
- consultation could feed in information about communicating information and this could be reviewed within the action plan;
- communications could be incorporated into longer term work but it would be good to hear from officers if there were some simple wins; and
- it would be good to bring together technical and communications experts.

The Strategic Director for Operations, Head of Service – Environment and Waste and Portfolio Holder for City Management responded to Members' questions in the following terms:

- the Digital and Data team were seeking to address website issues, including making information more easily understandable;
- Awaab's law only applied to social housing at present but would be introduced into the private sector in 2026;
- the non-technical summary was now included on the Air Quality webpage and mapping was available despite some technical difficulties which had arisen;
- some things had been moved from the Air Quality webpage, such as bonfires information which could now be found under pollution and some links maybe required;
- the DCC transport plan had no reference to Air Quality until Exeter City Council's feedback had been responded to;
- the UK legal limits were included in the non-technical summary;
- the example given of York to look at how information was presented was welcomed; and
- some work was outside the remit of officers present, for example responsibility for damp and mould lay with Housing but all points made would be taken on board.

Councillor Atkinson made a proposal which was subsequently withdrawn that all aspects of the motion be considered as part of the strategy review.

Councillor Miller-Boam proposed, seconded by Councillor Rolstone that Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee:

- recognises that this council continues to be open and transparent with Air Quality data at the monitoring site and road level;
- recommends that officers consider additional website content to help improve understanding, for example, links to external organisations, regarding air pollution sources inside and outside the home; and
- guidance to residents and wider review of communications around air quality be brought forward as part of the air quality strategy in collaboration with Strata and Digital and Data teams.

During debate on the proposal Councillor Kevin Mitchell commented that there was no reference to the motion. Councillor Williams stated that he was pleased this motion had come to scrutiny and that relevant officers had increased his understanding and that as a communications professional he would be happy to

support informally where helpful and supported the recommendation. Councillor Wetenhall could not support the wording about being clear and honest as information on the website stated that air quality in this area had low impact and was unlikely to affect residents.

Following a vote the proposal was CARRIED.

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

The Chair made suggestions of changes to the timetabling on the work plan, as follows:

- that the Leader's Portfolio Holder Update be heard in January;
- Rivers Transparency Template, referred by Council be heard in January;
- Portfolio Holder Update on Arts, Culture and Tourism, Stagecoach and Shared Prosperity items be moved to April;

Councillor Moore enquired of her Empty Homes proforma which the Chair confirmed had been received and would be considered by the Scrutiny Programme Board in January after the Strategic Management Board had made comments.

The Chair proposed, seconded by Councillor Haigh, that the committee consider Unauthorised Encampments which she had submitted on a proforma and following a vote was CARRIED.

The Chair invited Councillor Wetenhall to put forward her proforma on Bike Storage. Councillor Wetenhall explained that Devon County Council were producing a report on Devonwide secure bike hanging and partnership working would be required. The Chair explained that a feasibility study would come forward which would be carried out in Exeter with a view to being rolled out. She added that the Green Travel Plan had been impacted by LGR and that a question about bike storage would be added to the tenants' survey.

Councillor Wetenhall proposed, seconded by Councillor Moore that the committee consider Bike Storage and following a unanimous vote was CARRIED.

Following a unanimous vote the draft Scrutiny Work Plan as amended was **AGREED**.

The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 8.50 pm

Chair

Corrections to Motion to Council, October 14th 2025

Cllr Lynn Wetenhall

This Council notes that:

1. According to the World Health Organisation's (WHO)s latest guidelines the annual mean concentration of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), a potent pollutant affecting human health, should not exceed 10 µg/m³. The UK has set a legal limit at 40 µg/m³. This means that ~~whilst one NO₂ monitoring site in Exeter continues to breach UK law, 92% of Exeter's monitoring sites don't meet the WHO guidelines~~¹.
2. **Devon's Director of Public Health is clear on the dangers of air pollution from traffic**, pointing out that there are long term impacts on a wide range of health conditions². As the Director points out it is now accepted that there is no safe level of NO₂.
3. Exeter City Council is responsible for Air quality monitoring, and the production of an annual Air Quality Status report and an Air Quality Action Plan which sets out measures that will improve air quality in any Air Quality Management Area-
4. Regular movement along a road with high pollution levels impacts on health³. **Several roads which are used regularly by pedestrians, cyclists and motorists, have very high levels of NO₂**⁴. Many of these are also residential roads. For example, in 2023 ECC monitoring data recorded: Honiton Road 35.4 µg/m³,, Alphington St 34.3µg/m³, Red Cow Village 31.7; Fore St, Heavitree 30.6 µg/m³; York Road 26.9 Cowley Bridge Road 25.9; Longbrook Street 20 µg/m³
5. **People deserve to have clear, easy to understand information about the risks posed by walking, cycling or driving on roads in Exeter with high levels of NO₂**

¹ Based on Air Quality Status Report 2024 figures,

² Email to ECC from DCC Director Public Health, June 2024.

There is clear international evidence for a 'dose response effect' where on average a 10 µg/m³ increase in NO₂ concentrations (previous day) was significantly associated with increased risk of total (0.46%), cardiovascular (0.37%), and respiratory (0.47%) mortality. The concentration-response curves were almost linear, even below the current WHO air quality guidelines (There is no 'safe' level, with disagreement between UK Government's higher limits, and the World Health Organisation as to appropriate and achievable limits). Around 1 in 20 deaths in Exeter were attributable to air pollution (NB. old modelling, updated 2022, data now available states 3.1%).

We need to be clear there are acute and chronic effects of air pollution, including nitrogen dioxide; exceedance is only one part of a complex picture. Long-term exposure can cause chronic conditions through systemic inflammation, whilst acute episodes can exacerbate existing conditions, such as asthma. Exposure to traffic pollution can create overall effects, such as reduction in lung function in population, with an increase in prevalence of, for example, children with clinically relevant declines.

It should be borne in mind that there are a number of other pollutants from vehicles that can cause additional harms such as, of those studied, benzene or particulate matter. Whether NO₂ is a good proxy is open to debate, particularly when the proportion of PM is increasing due to heavier electric vehicles."

³ <https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/air-pollution/effects?view=short-term>

⁴ Figures from Air Quality Status Report 2024.

pollution. This will enable people to understand air pollution levels and their health impacts, helping them make informed choices about travel routes. Currently, such information is not easily accessible or clear on any Council webpages.

6. **Woodburning stoves and open fires in homes create small air particles (PM) which pose a serious health risk to those in the home and add to external pollution.**
7. **Black mould and damp** cause significant health issues to those living with it and pollute internal living environment. Awaab's Law⁵ is a new law that comes into force on 27th October 2025. It requires social landlords to fix reported damp, mould and emergency repairs within strict timeframes. However, damp and mould can affect all types of housing and tenures. Whilst the ~~The~~ City Council's council housing webpages mention damp and mould, they make no reference to the specific health risks posed by mould and damp in the home for all tenures.

Therefore this Council resolves that:

- The Council's webpages are updated to provide:
 - **Full and easy to understand transparent-information about air pollution levels on specific roads and the health impacts of living on or regularly using those roads** whether as a pedestrian, cyclist or motorist.
 - **Fuller information on the health impacts of air pollution from all sources**, both inside the home (for wood burners, open fires, mould and damp) and outside, and actions by residents to help reduce to take to these impacts
 - **Information on alternative walking and cycling routes or travel modes for known regular commuter and school run routes**, avoiding the most polluted roads

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/awaabs-law-draft-guidance-for-social-landlords/awaabs-law-draft-guidance-for-social-landlords>

Air Quality in Exeter: Non-Technical Summary 2025

Air quality across Exeter generally meets national objectives, with long-term monitoring showing consistent downward trends in pollutant concentrations. The city performs well overall, with only one identified small area where nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) levels have exceeded the government's objectives in the last three calendar years. However, in 2024, no location in Exeter exceeded the government's objectives for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂). This report provides an overview of the monitoring undertaken by Exeter City Council and presents the latest data on air pollution levels within the city.

The Air Quality Management Area and the Air Quality Action Plan

An **Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)** is declared when monitoring identifies an exceedance of a national air quality objective. With an AQMA, the Council must implement measures aimed at improving air quality.

Exeter's AQMA aims to address levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) within the defined area for both the **1-hour mean** and **annual mean objectives**.

When an AQMA is declared, the local authority must prepare an **Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP)** setting out actions to achieve compliance with the objectives. Exeter's current AQAP was published in **2018** and runs until **2024**. It includes **17 measures** designed to reduce pollutant concentrations and limit exposure to air pollution, thereby improving health and quality of life for residents and visitors.

A new AQAP will be developed in **2026** and will be informed by the latest monitoring results. Public consultation will take place during 2026 in accordance with statutory requirements.

Further details of the Council's Air Quality Action Plan can be found on the Exeter City Council website under [Air Quality Action Plan](#).

Monitoring

Automatic monitoring

Exeter City Council operates two automatic (continuous) monitoring stations:

- **Royal Albert Memorial Museum (RAMM), Queen Street**
- **Alphington Street**

In **2024**, the RAMM site measured **nitrogen dioxide (NO₂)**, **ozone (O₃)** and **particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5})**. The Alphington Street site monitored **PM₁₀** and **PM_{2.5}**.

The NO₂ monitor at Exeter Roadside is part of the [UK Automatic Urban and Rural Network \(AURN\)](#), with data collected and ratified by the AURN. Particulate data is collected, validated and ratified by Exeter City Council.

Non-automatic monitoring

In **2024**, Exeter City Council carried out non-automatic (passive) monitoring of NO₂ at **85 sites** across the city using **diffusion tubes**.

Diffusion tubes are small clear plastic tubes with a grey cap containing a steel mesh disc coated with a chemical that absorbs NO₂. As gases pass over the mesh, the chemical changes, indicating the NO₂ concentration during the monitoring period.

These tubes are positioned throughout the city on lampposts and drainpipes at locations chosen to represent relevant exposure points while avoiding interference from other pollution sources. Tubes are collected and replaced monthly, then sent to a laboratory for analysis.

A map of monitoring locations and the AQMA can be found on [page 5](#) of this document. An interactive map is available on the Exeter City Council website under [Air Quality Monitoring](#).

Air Quality in 2024

Monitoring data is ratified and adjusted to allow comparison with England's statutory air quality objectives as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Air quality objectives in England

Pollutant	Concentration	Measured as
PM ₁₀	50 µg/m ³ , not to be exceeded more than 35 times a year	24-hour average
PM ₁₀	40 µg/m ³	Annual average
NO ₂	200 µg/m ³ not to be exceeded more than 18 times a year	1-hour average
NO ₂	40 µg/m ³	Annual average
PM _{2.5}	20 µg/m ³	Annual average
PM _{2.5}	10 µg/m ³ target by 2040	Annual average

PM₁₀

Since August 2018, Exeter City Council has operated two continuous PM₁₀ analysers. However, equipment faults at the **Exeter Roadside (RAMM)** site meant that no PM₁₀ data was available from this location in 2024.

The **Alphington Street** roadside site recorded an annual mean concentration of 14.1 µg/m³, well below the objective of 40µg/m³. There were **no exceedances** of the 24-hour mean objective (50µg/m³) in 2024.

Table 2. PM₁₀ annual average concentrations since 2020

Site Name	2020 PM ₁₀ Annual Average Concentration (µg/m ³)	2021 PM ₁₀ Annual Average Concentration (µg/m ³)	2022 PM ₁₀ Annual Average Concentration (µg/m ³)	2023 PM ₁₀ Annual Average Concentration (µg/m ³)	2024 PM ₁₀ Annual Average Concentration (µg/m ³)
Exeter Roadside (RAMM)	14.1	13.9	17.1(19.2)	18.8 (20.1)	-
Alphington Street	11.5	12.0	14.7	15.2	14.1

PM_{2.5}

Similarly, Exeter City Council operates two continuous PM_{2.5} analysers. Due to equipment faults at RAMM, no PM_{2.5} data was available from that site in 2024.

The **Alphington Street** site recorded an annual mean of 8.5 µg/m³, well below both the current limit (20µg/m³) and the 2040 target (10µg/m³).

Table 3. PM_{2.5} annual average concentrations since 2020

Site Name	2020 PM _{2.5} Annual Average Concentration (µg/m ³)	2021 PM _{2.5} Annual Average Concentration (µg/m ³)	2022 PM _{2.5} Annual Average Concentration (µg/m ³)	2023 PM _{2.5} Annual Average Concentration (µg/m ³)	2024 PM _{2.5} Annual Average Concentration (µg/m ³)
Exeter Roadside (RAMM)	8.6	8.4	11.1 (12.7)	13.2	-
Alphington Street	6.8	7.5	9.0	8.8	8.5

NO₂

Diffusion tube monitoring in 2024 showed **no** exceedances of the annual mean objective (40µg/m³) at any site. This is the **first year** all measurements have been below the objective, marking a significant milestone in Exeter's air quality improvement.

East Wonford Hill, the only site above the objective in 2023, recorded 38.1µg/m³ in 2024, 1.9 µg/m³ below the limit.

Table 4. NO₂ annual average concentrations since 2020 for East Wonford Hill

Site Name	2020 NO ₂ Annual Average Concentration (µg/m ³)	2021 NO ₂ Annual Average Concentration (µg/m ³)	2022 NO ₂ Annual Average Concentration (µg/m ³)	2023 NO ₂ Annual Average Concentration (µg/m ³)	2024 NO ₂ Annual Average Concentration (µg/m ³)
East Wonford Hill	38.2	42.2	40.4	40.5	38.1

Trend analysis:

- Significant reduction in NO₂ between **2019 and 2020**, likely due to COVID-19 restrictions and changes in travel behaviour.
- Partial rebound in 2021, followed by stable levels through 2024.
- Improvements attributed to:
 - Reduced traffic flows.
 - Cleaner vehicle technologies.
 - Measures in the Air Quality Action Plan.
 - Natural variability (roadworks, weather patterns, etc.).

Full NO₂ data for all the diffusion tubes and the RAMM continuous monitor (2020-2024) is available on pages 6 to 11 of this document.

Long-Term Trends in Air Quality

Figures 1 and 2 illustrate a clear downward trend in annual average concentrations of NO₂ and PM₁₀ since around 2009. For NO₂, this reduction is clear at both **urban background** and **roadside** monitoring sites.

This sustained improvement is particularly encouraging given the significant housing and commercial development in Exeter over the same period. However, it has not been possible to attribute this trend to any single national or local intervention. Some degree of **year-to-year** variability is expected due to factors such as **weather conditions** and temporary changes in traffic patterns.

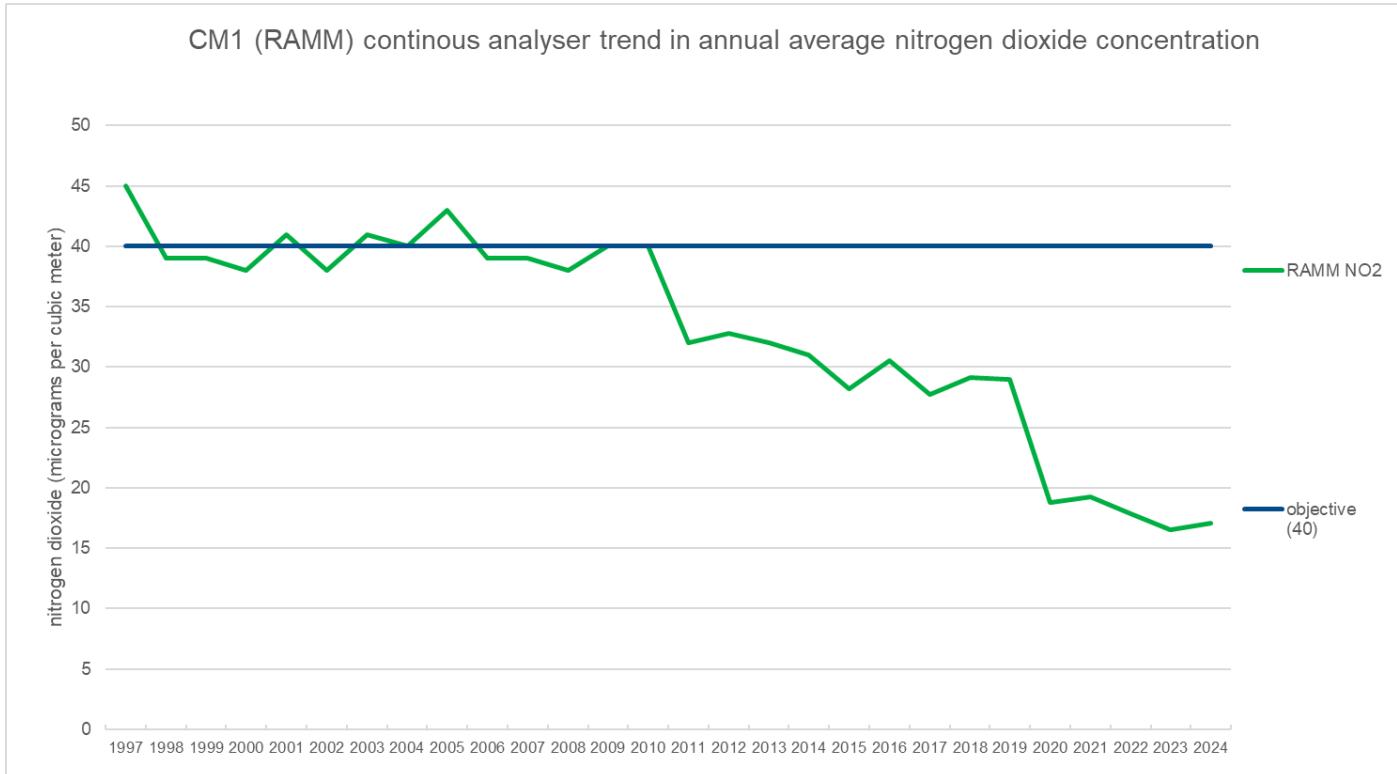


Figure 1. Trends in annual average NO₂ concentrations at the continuous monitoring site between years 1997 and 2024. There are no exceedances of the annual mean objective in 2024. There is a general trend of reduction since 2010.

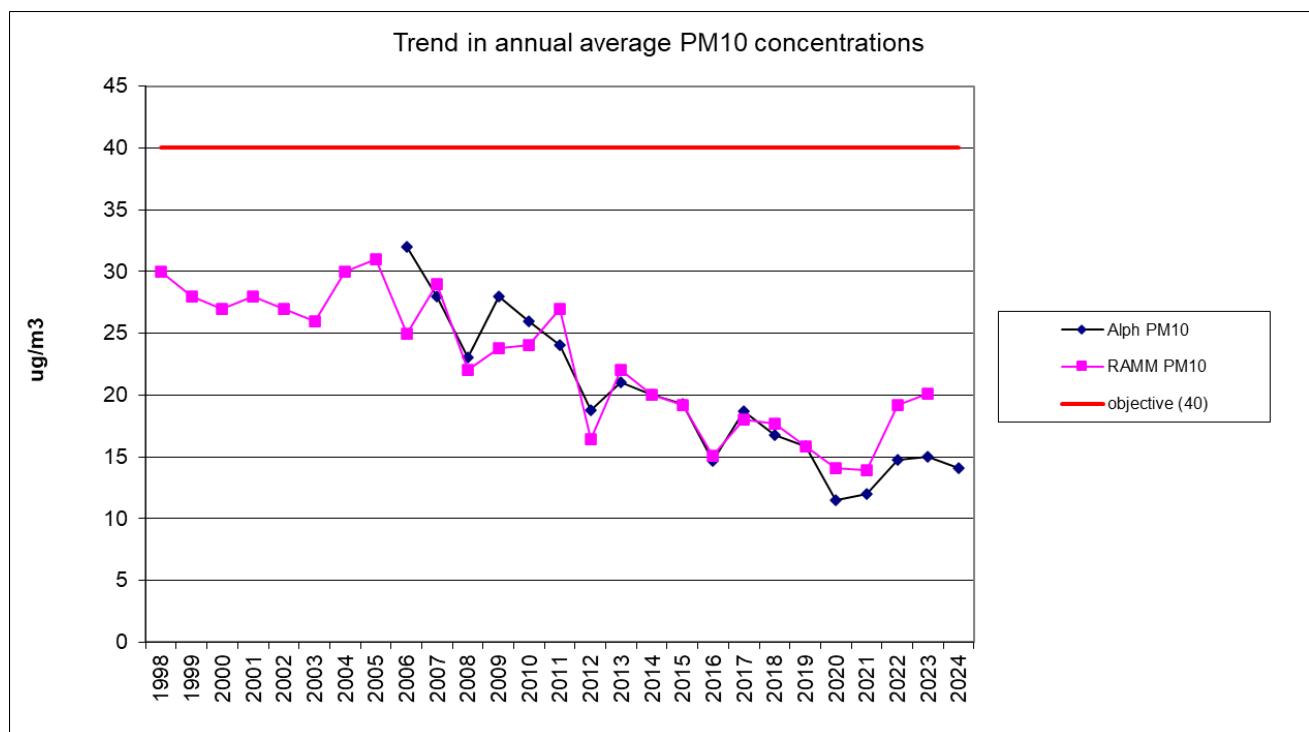


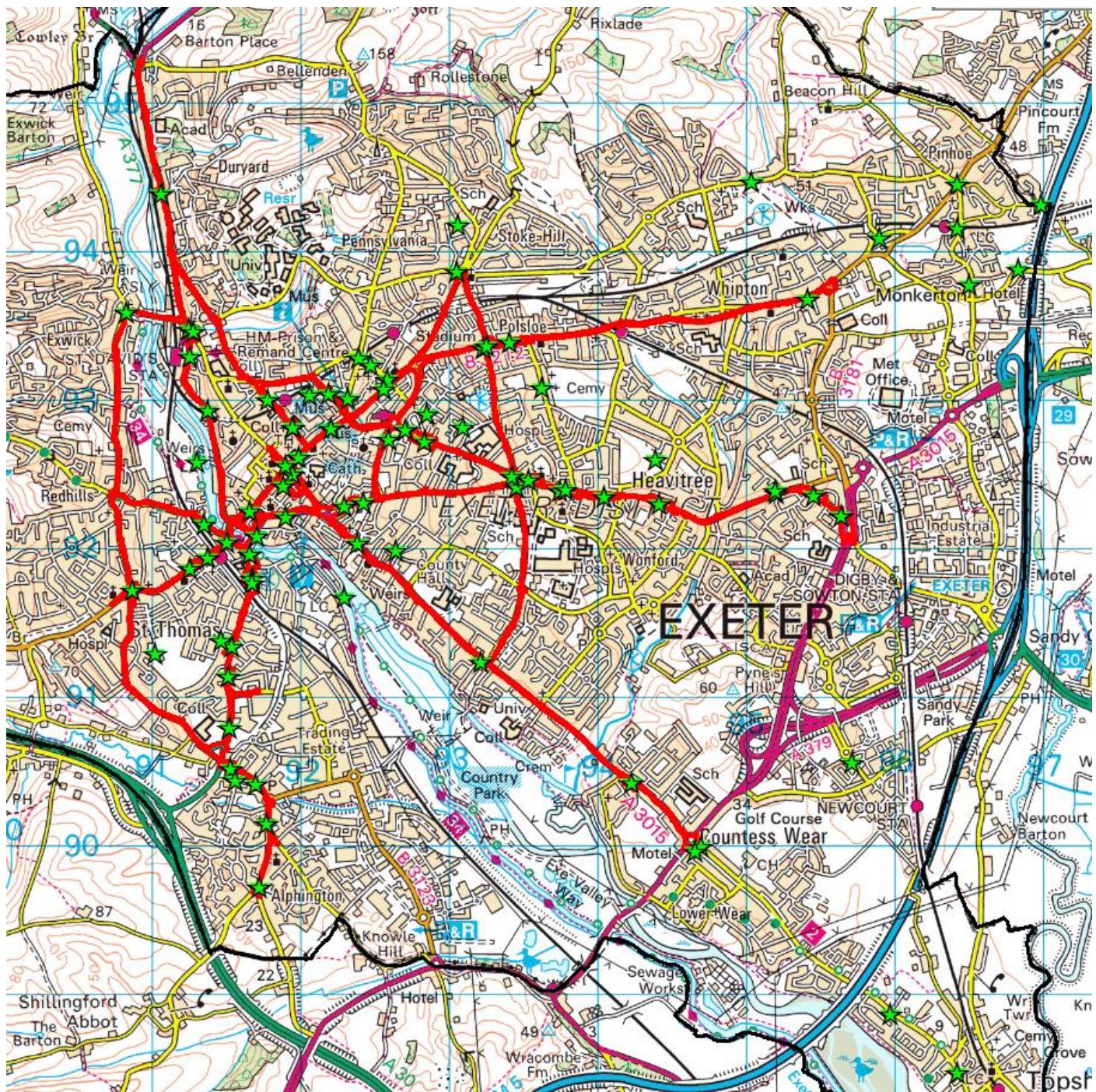
Figure 2. Trends in annual average PM₁₀ concentrations for the two monitoring sites in Exeter between 1998 and 2024. There are no exceedances of the annual mean objective in 2024 although concentrations have increased since 2021. Otherwise, there is a general trend of reduction experienced across both sites.

Further Information

Exeter City Council publishes an **Annual Status Report (ASR)** each year, providing a more detailed summary of the city's latest air pollution levels and actions being taken to reduce pollution.

The report covering work during **2025** is available to download at the exeter.gov.uk webpage on air quality monitoring ([Annual Status Report 2025](#)).

Exeter's air quality monitoring locations and AQMA



 represents an air quality monitoring location |  represents the Air Quality Management Area boundary

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An online map of the monitoring locations and AQMA can be found at the [exeter.gov.uk webpage on air quality monitoring](http://exeter.gov.uk/webpage_on_air_quality_monitoring).

Annual average NO₂ monitoring results since 2020

- Exceedances of the NO₂ annual average objective (40µg/m³) are shown in **bold**.
- NO₂ annual averages exceeding **60µg/m³**, which may indicate a potential exceedance of the 1-hour mean objective are shown in **bold and underlined**.
- An asterisk (*) after the site name indicates that the data is **not representative of exposure**. These results would be corrected for distance to the nearest receptor before comparison with objective levels.

Site Name	2020 NO ₂ Annual Average Concentration (µg/m ³)	2021 NO ₂ Annual Average Concentration (µg/m ³)	2022 NO ₂ Annual Average Concentration (µg/m ³)	2023 NO ₂ Annual Average Concentration (µg/m ³)	2024 NO ₂ Annual Average Concentration (µg/m ³)
Alphington Cross	20.4	25.6	22.5	23.8	22.9
Alphington Road inbound	22.4	27.4	24.3	24.5	23.6
Alphington Road outbound	17.7	21.2	20.6	18.4	17.2
Alphington Road outer*	15.3	20.6	18.7	18.1	16.5
Alphington Street	28.5	35.7	33.1	34.3	31.5
Archibald Road	13.2	16.8	15.2	15.7	14.3
Beacon Heath*	13.6	15.1	13.6	14.6	12.8
Blackboy Road (Polsloe Road)	19.2	23.5	20.6	21.0	21.8
Bonhay Road (St Clements Lane)	19.2	24.7	21.8	22.6	22.8
Bonhay Road bridge	-	-	26.9	27.1	26.6
Bridge Road (Countess Wear)	17.8	16.9	15.6	15.0	13.8

Site Name	2020 NO ₂ Annual Average Concentration ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	2021 NO ₂ Annual Average Concentration ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	2022 NO ₂ Annual Average Concentration ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	2023 NO ₂ Annual Average Concentration ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	2024 NO ₂ Annual Average Concentration ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)
Carder's Court, Shilhay	15.5	18.3	15.7	15.9	16.1
Chudleigh Road	11.1	13.7	12.6	12.3	12.1
Church Road Alphington	18.3	24.3	18.5	17.8	17.2
Church Road II	16.2	19.8	20.9	22.1	20.1
Cowick Barton Playing Fields	7.6	9.3	8.9	8.3	7.2
Cowick Street (Cowick Lane)	26.8	31.6	30.1	31.2	29.9
Cowick Street (Exe Bridges)	22.1	28.2	26.7	27.5	26.5
Cowick Street (inbound)	15.6	19.9	17.5	18.1	17.1
Cowick Street (outbound)	24.3	29.8	28.7	29.2	28.1
Cowley Bridge Road	22.9	27.5	26.5	25.9	24.2
East John Walk	9.7	11.6	10.4	9.7	9.6
East Wonford Hill	38.2	42.2	40.4	40.5	38.1
Exeter Road	14.3	16.4	16.6	16.6	15.2
Exwick Playing Fields	12.3	15.9	13.9	12.7	15.1

Site Name	2020 NO ₂ Annual Average Concentration ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	2021 NO ₂ Annual Average Concentration ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	2022 NO ₂ Annual Average Concentration ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	2023 NO ₂ Annual Average Concentration ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	2024 NO ₂ Annual Average Concentration ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)
Fore Street Heavitree inbound	29.0	32.2	30.5	30.6	28.5
Fore Street Heavitree outbound*	19.8	23.4	20.7	20.9	19.9
Heavitree Pleasure Grounds	7.6	9.1	8.7	7.8	7.2
Heavitree Road inbound	13.2	16.5	14.6	14.5	14.0
Heavitree Road outbound	22.3	28.0	24.0	25.8	23.8
High Street /Castle Street*	17.0	20.9	15.7	17.5	18.1
High Street Guildhall	15.7	20.4	18.1	18.3	19.6
High Street Topsham	17.2	22.1	18.7	18.7	17.7
Holloway Street	21.3	26.6	21.9	21.5	23.5
Honiton Road façade	14.8	16.0	14.9	14.9	13.7
Honiton Road*	33.2	35.4	31.7	33.5	32.2
Ladysmith School/Pretoria Road	10.6	12.2	10.5	10.9	9.7
Langaton Lane*	13.3	15.1	12.7	13.1	10.8
Livery Dole	31.1	34.9	32.3	34.7	32.0
Longbrook Street	17.5	21.4	19.0	20.0	18.9

Site Name	2020 NO ₂ Annual Average Concentration ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	2021 NO ₂ Annual Average Concentration ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	2022 NO ₂ Annual Average Concentration ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	2023 NO ₂ Annual Average Concentration ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	2024 NO ₂ Annual Average Concentration ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)
Lower Coombe Street	15.5	18.6	15.4	16.5	17.0
Magdalen Road (Barrack Road)	24.3	29.4	27.6	27.9	26.4
Magdalen Street façade	20.0	23.8	22.9	18.7	18.6
Magdalen Street*	19.5	24.7	22.5	22.0	21.0
Market Street	18.6	23.4	20.7	20.1	19.7
Mill Lane	9.6	12.3	11.3	11.5	11.0
New Bridge Street	19.5	24.0	22.5	22.7	21.8
New North Road	18.8	22.6	20.1	19.6	19.0
Newcourt Way*	11.5	14.7	13.6	13.5	12.6
Newtown	10.8	12.6	12.0	11.9	11.3
North Street	22.6	27.9	24.0	23.9	28.8
Northernhay Gardens	8.3	10.7	8.4	9.4	-
Okehampton Street	17.3	20.6	18.7	19.0	18.6
Pennsylvania	7.5	8.3	7.8	7.6	7.2
Pennsylvania Road	18.3	23.2	21.6	21.5	20.5
Pinhoe Road (Fairfield Avenue)	12.6	15.8	15.9	13.7	13.8

Site Name	2020 NO ₂ Annual Average Concentration ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	2021 NO ₂ Annual Average Concentration ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	2022 NO ₂ Annual Average Concentration ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	2023 NO ₂ Annual Average Concentration ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	2024 NO ₂ Annual Average Concentration ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)
Pinhoe Road (Polsloe Road)	25.6	30.6	28.0	29.6	28.6
Pinhoe Road inbound	20.9	24.0	22.3	23.5	22.3
Pinhoe*	18.4	21.8	18.6	20.5	19.1
Pinn Lane*	12.8	15.5	14.3	16.2	-
Queen Street	16.2	19.0	16.6	17.4	16.1
Queen's Road	9.1	11.7	10.1	9.9	9.7
RAMM 1 & 2	18.5	21.3	17.8	17.3	17.9
RAMM continuous analyser	18.8	19.2	17.9	16.4	17.1
Rear of Gervase Avenue*	15.8	19.2	17.5	17.6	17.5
Red Cow II	21.5	26.0	23.1	24.2	23.1
Red Cow Village	26.5	32.1	29.7	31.7	27.1
Riverside Valley Park	9.4	11.7	9.9	10.3	10.1
Rowancroft	27.4	32.1	27.2	28.6	27.1
Salutary Mount*	32.7	37.3	33.5	32.2	31.4
Sidmouth Road lamp post*	23.5	26.8	25.0	24.7	23.6
Sidmouth Road Middlemoor	15.5	19.2	17.5	17.5	16.6
Sidwell Street	18.6	23.8	20.5	21.6	22.5
South Gate	-	-	-	-	22.4

Site Name	2020 NO ₂ Annual Average Concentration ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	2021 NO ₂ Annual Average Concentration ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	2022 NO ₂ Annual Average Concentration ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	2023 NO ₂ Annual Average Concentration ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	2024 NO ₂ Annual Average Concentration ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)
South Street*	18.7	24.2	20.6	20.2	20.5
St. Leonards Road	11.2	13.9	12.2	11.9	11.1
Station Road	17.7	21.2	20.3	20.7	19.6
Station Road Pinhoe	10.6	13.4	12.5	13.5	12.1
Tithebarn Link Road	14.5	17.3	15.4	15.8	15.2
Topsham Road (Barrack Road)	15.9	19.1	19.2	18.3	17.2
Topsham Road (Countess Wear)	18.1	20.7	17.4	19.1	17.7
Topsham Road (Tollards Road)	25.0	30.0	27.9	28.8	27.5
Union Road	16.7	21.0	19.3	18.7	17.7
Venny Bridge*	14.2	16.6	15.3	15.2	15.6
Western Way (Acorn)	-	-	-	-	28.0
York Road School*	18.1	23.0	20.7	20.3	19.0
York Road*	23.3	31.2	27.8	26.9	25.2

WORK PLAN FOR SCRUTINY ITEMS 2025/26*Working Draft*

Strategic Scrutiny Committee	Item	Strategic Director	Portfolio Holder	Origin of Business	Status
15 January 2026	Portfolio Holder Update – The Leader of the Council, Cllr Bialyk	Chief Executive	Leader (Cllr Bialyk)		
15 January 2026	Unauthorised encampments	Strategic Director for Operations (AP)	City Management (Cllr R Williams)	Proforma from Cllr Pole	
15 January 2026	Rivers Transparency Template	Strategic Director for Operations (AP)	City Management (Cllr R Williams)	Motion referred from Council 2 September 2025	Invite South West Water to attend and give evidence.
15 January 2026	Petition – To extend Article 4 direction to include all of Hillcrest Park & Doriam Close	Strategic Director for Place (IC)	Portfolio Holder for City Development (Cllr Patrick)	Petition - online	
12 March 2026	Portfolio Holder Update (Cllr Wood)	Strategic Director for Place	Portfolio Holder for Leisure Services & Healthy Living (Cllr Wood)		
12 March 2026	City Wide Net Zero - Programme of work and update on delivery	Strategic Director for Place (IC) Service Lead Net Zero & Business (VH)	Portfolio Holder Climate, Ecological Change and Communities (Cllr Vizard)		
12 March 2026	Live and Move Programme Update	Chief Executive	Portfolio Holder Leisure Services & Healthy Living (Cllr Wood)	Report from Strategic Scrutiny Committee 16 March 2023 half yearly	

Strategic Scrutiny Committee	Item	Strategic Director	Portfolio Holder	Origin of Business	Status
2 April 2026	Portfolio Holder Update (Cllr Foale)	Strategic Director for Place	Portfolio Holder for Arts, Culture and Tourism (Cllr Foale)		
2 April 2026	Progress Report Shared Prosperity Fund - Update	Strategic Director for Place (IC) Service Lead Net Zero & Business (VH)	Portfolio Holder Climate & Ecological Crisis (Cllr Vizard)	Report from Strategic Scrutiny Committee 29 September 2022 half yearly report	
2 April 2026	Performance and Service Provided to Customers and Stakeholders of Stagecoach South West in Exeter	Strategic Director for Place (IC)	Communities (Cllr Vizard)	Scrutiny proposal Cllrs Snow, Parkhouse and Hughes	

Items to be considered 15 January 2026:

Items to be timetabled 15 January 2026:

Portfolio Holder Update – City Development	Cllr Patrick		

Items to be scoped 15 January 2026

Bike Parking	Proforma from Cllr Wetenhall		Poss April

Items to be added to forward plan in new municipal year

Air Quality			Result of Air Quality item in

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Agenda Item 7

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Monday 1 December 2025

Present:-

Councillor Knott (Chair)

Councillors Rolstone, Asvachin, Banyard, Hughes, Hussain, Ketchin, Mitchell, M and Pole

Apologies

Councillors Atkinson and Williams, M

Councillors in attendance under Standing Order No. 44

Councillors Darling, Fullam and Wright speaking on item 4 (Minute No. 43 below)

Also Present

Head of Service - City Development, Head of Legal and Democratic Services & Monitoring Officer, Assistant Service Lead – Development Management (Major Projects), Principal Project Manager – Development Management, Principal Project Manager – Development Management and Democratic Services Officer

40

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made by Members.

41

LIST OF DECISIONS MADE AND WITHDRAWN APPLICATIONS

The report of the Strategic Director for Place was noted.

42

APPEALS REPORT

Members noted that there were no appeals items to consider.

43

PLANNING APPLICATION NO. 25/0957/OUT - LAND AT BARLEY LANE

Councillor Hussain arrived during the item and did not participate in the debate or vote on this item.

The Chair invited Councillor Wright to speak under Standing Order No. 44, who made reference to:

- as a St. Thomas ward Councillor, she strongly objected to the proposed development, and welcomed the detailed officer report recommending refusal;
- there were a large number of resident objections who recognised the need for affordable and sustainable housing in Exeter;
- resident objections were on the proposal's scale and design, which were considered to be out of character with the area and conflicted with Exeter's long-standing avoidance of building along the ridgeline area;
- there were unresolved issues around infrastructure, public services, and transport, as well as significant environmental concerns, notably on increased flood risk, which was insufficiently addressed by the developer;
- development in Exeter should enhance the city, rather than diminish it; and
- the Planning Committee was urged to refuse the application, which would place undue pressure on the community, harm local environment, and lacked proper resident engagement.

The Chair invited Councillor Darling to speak under Standing Order No. 44, who made reference to:

- their objection was focussed on active travel and transport issues;
- despite the transport assessment deeming the risk acceptable, the development would increase car use and congestion on Dunsford Road, as well as across the city;
- residents had already reported heavy traffic in the area with buses currently struggling to access the area due to obstructions from parked cars;
- walking and cycling access was unrealistic, given that the nearest railway station was a 20-minutes' walk away and the site required walking up a steep hill;
- walking routes to bus stops exceeded the 10-minute threshold, which would encourage further use of cars;
- the proposed development would diminish the rural character of the Exeter Green Circle walking route;
- cycling was considered to be unsafe and impractical due to fast traffic, lack of cycle lanes, steep gradients, and that the National Cycle Network route was only suitable for highly confident cyclists;
- transport issues were beyond the control of the developer and geography was the main barrier to active travel in this area, making the site inherently unsuitable for sustainable transport; and
- significant transport limitations and the wider aesthetic and environmental concerns justified refusing the application in line with officers' and residents' views.

The Chair invited Councillor Fullam to speak under Standing Order No. 44, who made reference to:

- officers, Councillors and the 200 plus residents who unanimously opposed the proposal were thanked;
- the urban context of St. Thomas was described as a dense area, with very limited green space and Barley Lane acting as a vital green escape from the urban environment;
- the area offered countryside for local residents, walkers, and dog owners and developing the site would push the accessible green space much farther away, whilst further deepening the urban footprint;
- the issue was not about resisting development, but about the principle of protecting the prominent ridgeline of the city. Building on the ridgeline would permanently damage Exeter's character defined by its views and surrounding hills, trees, and fields;
- the ridgeline needed to be protected and by allowing the proposal to proceed, it would set a precedent for further ridge-line development; and
- the Planning Committee was urgently requested to uphold the officers' recommendation for refusal.

The Chair invited Dr Keith Howe, to speak for five minutes, against the application, who made the following points:

- he was speaking as a Barley Farm Road resident of 50 years and as an economist with environmental expertise;
- he argued against the proposed development using a social cost-benefit perspective aligned with the National Planning Policy Framework and the Exeter Plan;
- the development would incur significant costs, a loss of tranquillity and

landscape quality, harm to biodiversity, increased flood risk, road safety issues, congestion, and poor access to transport and amenities. These concerns raised reflected the genuine lived experience shared by over 200 objectors;

- in contrast, the benefits to the development were limited, with only 65 homes, the development would make only a marginal contribution to Exeter's wider housing needs;
- for existing residents, green circle walkers, and nature users, the development offered no benefits and would permanently destroy a valued green space; and
- the loss of well-being to the community far outweighed any gains and therefore the Planning Committee was urged to reject the application.

The Principal Project Manager – Development Management presented the application for an outline planning permission (with all matters reserved apart from access) for the phased development of up to 65 residential dwellings, two access points from Nadder Park Road, public open space and associated infrastructure (including land for biodiversity enhancements), which was recommended for refusal.

Members received a presentation and received the following information:

- the applicant had recently submitted extra drainage information, in which the Lead Local Flood Authority was still to respond to, and therefore the recommended drainage-related refusal reason remained in place;
- the application was for outline planning permission for up to 65 homes on a highly visible greenfield site on Exeter's north-west ridge, within the landscape setting area and valley park, which adjoined Barley Valley Nature Reserve and the Exeter Green Circle route;
- the application had attracted 214 public objections;
- the parameter plan provided an indication of what the development would be like and the proposal included two new access points onto Nadder Park Road, both of which have been assessed as suitable for large vehicles, with the Highway Authority raising no objections;
- access onto Nadder Park Road access was considered technically acceptable, and concerns about ecology and highways had been resolved, with a proposed £700-per-dwelling contribution to walking and cycling improvements;
- a core issue was on the harm to the landscape, in which the development would protrude above existing rooflines and disrupt key ridgeline views;
- officers had identified flaws in the applicant's landscape assessment, including missing viewpoints and misleading photo locations;
- officer photographs (presented during the presentation) showed the site was visible from multiple prominent locations across the city, including Ludwell Valley Park, Bartholomew Terrace, Colleton Terrace, the Quay, and Exe Bridges;
- the scheme proposed 35% affordable housing and the Council currently lacked a five-year land supply, which triggered the tilted balance, however, it was officers view that the significant and demonstrable landscape harm outweighed the benefits of the development;
- suitable drainage had also not been demonstrated, and planning obligations had not yet been secured;
- the application as recommended for refusal on three grounds: landscape impact, unresolved drainage issues, and absence of completed planning obligations.

The Principal Project Manager – Development Management responded to Member questions and clarification points as follows:

- the Barley Lane school was located just slightly beyond the edge of the aerial images shown in the presentation;
- no reason was provided for why the developer was not in attendance at the meeting;
- the proposed biodiversity space was on a slope but was suitable for biodiversity net gain and would be publicly accessible, not reserved for new residents;
- no illustrations of house designs were provided as this was an outline application, but the indicative plans suggested the development would be mostly two-storey homes, unlike the nearby lower rooflines used to protect the ridgeline;
- any building, including single-storey buildings would significantly harm the ridgeline and Valley Park landscape due to the site's high visibility;
- only two nearby schemes existed which set a precedent. One development at Barley Lane was refused and another at Redhills was allowed at appeal. There were no other similar large-scale developments in the immediate area, and a previous pre-application for this site had been discouraged;
- extra drainage information was submitted late in the process and the Lead Local Flood Authority had not responded to being consulted on the information. Therefore, the view that there was inadequate drainage remained a reason for refusal;
- no legal agreement had been signed, so its absence was listed as a reason for refusal, which was standard practice;
- unlike other appeal sites, this development would protrude above the ridgeline, lacking tree cover, and obscure existing trees;
- the applicant had not provided long-distance view assessments, which officers considered to be necessary to assess the full impact of the proposals;
- all vehicle access would be from Nadder Park Road, and there would be no access from the north; and
- a PIC was a Personal Injury Collision, which was a record of accidents involving injury.

During debate, Members expressed the following views:

- the application did not consider specific transport needs for the nearby Barley Lane School, where pupils arrived by taxis and minibuses;
- the development would increase congestion, creating safety risks for vulnerable children, and assumptions about peak-time impacts were considered to be inaccurate;
- there were potential risks to community wellbeing, including flooding impacts on neighbouring homes and general safety concerns related to access;
- the importance of protecting Exeter's distinctive ridgeline was highlighted;
- the development would cause significant visual harm, and would erode the city's green edge, and negatively affect Exeter's character and views from across the city;
- the development was far from bus stops and the railway station, and would increase car dependency;
- there was also inadequate options for sustainable transport, notably cycling provisions would require a hard uphill cycle which would not be sustainable to all residents;
- the developer's failure to attend the meeting or present a case, was noted should the matter be appealed;
- the report had not provided any reason to go against the officer recommendation to refuse;
- the application offered a benefit in developing affordable housing;

- previous appeal decisions on different sites were not valid comparators because the proposal was higher and in a more sensitive landscape position; and
- the traffic impacts were considered to underestimated, with additional road vehicles more likely, given the topography.

Councillor M. Mitchell moved, and Councillor Ketchin seconded the recommendation, which was voted upon and CARRIED unanimously.

RESOLVED that planning permission for outline planning permission for the phased development of up to 65 residential dwellings, two access points from Nadder Park Road, public open space and associated infrastructure (including land for biodiversity enhancements) be refused for the reasons listed in the committee report.

44

PLANNING APPLICATION NO. 24/0785/FUL - TOPSHAM GOLF ACADEMY

The Chair invited Mr Andy Martinovic, to speak for five minutes in support of the application, who made the following points:

- his company was a local family company who had been engaging with officers and consultees since validation in September 2020;
- there had been numerous consultees, including EEA, RSPB, Highways Authority, Lead Local Flood Authority, Waste Planning Authority, South West Water, Police, and Ecologists;
- the Local Plan team had confirmed that there was a lack of a five-year land supply;
- infrastructure works would be delivered within the site boundary, avoiding disruption to Topsham Road;
- the site was already allocated within the emerging local plan;
- the scheme had been developed collaboratively with heritage development consultants and officers;
- the reason for Members to consider approval was that there was no five-year housing land supply, was a sustainable location, acceptable design and visual impacts, would cause no significant harm to neighbouring amenities and there were no material considerations justifying refusal;
- proposed benefits included: carbon-neutral homes, 19 affordable homes, of which 70% would be for social rent units, totalling at 35% overall contribution;
- NHS contributions would be £16,990 for Foundation Trust and £35,032 for NHS Integrated Care Board;
- the CIL contribution would be £1,177,000 for managing public open spaces, children's play areas, biodiversity net gain, SUDS, and habitats mitigation; and
- there would be a continuity of work for local trades and suppliers, supporting the local economy as part of the company's values.

Mr Martinovic responded to Members' questions as follows:

- homes were being built to A+ rating under EPC standards, which was the highest energy-efficiency rating;
- he lived locally and knew the area well and considered the site location to be sustainable;
- the proposed road would extend to the site boundary, for a future link road to Newcourt Road with a cycleway. This was subject to adjoining land becoming available;
- although the developer was willing to work with others, they could not control what other landowners or developers decided to do;

- the scheme included 19 social homes, of which, 35% would be affordable housing;
- access for vehicles, pedestrians and bikes was designed to reach the boundary, as requested by the Highways Authority;
- there would be no direct connection beyond the boundary because the developer did not own the next field; and
- biodiversity net gain was being handled by the consultants but the planning officer may provide the explanation.

The Principal Project Manager – Development Management presented the application for demolition of existing buildings/structures and proposed residential development of 54 residential units, including affordable housing, plus open space, landscaping, car parking, drainage, vehicular access, internal roads and all associated infrastructure and development which was recommended for approval.

Members received a presentation and the following information:

- a key added obligation in the update sheet was on ensuring the road and cycle/pedestrian route extend to the site boundary to secure future connectivity;
- aerial views showed the new development to the east; heritage site to the south and motorway to the west, which required noise mitigation;
- access arrangements had been approved by Highways, in which applications needed to connect fully to the public highway;
- the extended red-line boundary was explained in the site plan;
- the site was low-lying and heavily concealed by hedges, making it difficult to view from surrounding areas and the landscape impact assessment was very limited;
- over a 14-month period, negotiations and design changes had improved the scheme. Improvements included a redesigned and extended main access road, the provision of a large public open space and two internal access routes;
- other improvements included: the provision for a future link road being incorporated into the scheme and road alignment being moved away from hedgerows with hedges being protected,
- the site was conditioned for long-term improvements;
- drainage constraints meant most water runoff and storage must be underground with open water storage features being unfeasible;
- because the site was a greenfield, replacing existing habitat types was not possible, which required biodiversity credits;
- the proposed changes had minimal impact on the landscape, with visibility from surrounding fields being low to negligible;
- the planning principle was for residential use, which was already established through adjacent permissions and appeal decisions;
- given there was no five-year land supply, the scheme qualified as a sustainable development;
- the community asset policy (CP10) was not a reason for refusal, because the asset had been replaced elsewhere;
- the emerging Exeter Plan provided the site with some support, though with limited weight;
- the scheme provided 35% affordable housing, including 70% social rent, which fully met policy requirements;
- the overall assessment: the proposal, despite having a very limited landscape impact, met policy expectations, and positively contributed to housing delivery; and
- the recommendation was to delegate approval subject to completing the

Section 106 agreement.

The Principal Project Manager – Development Management and the Assistant Service Lead – Development Management (Major Projects) responded to Member questions and clarification points as follows:

- the road design had been reviewed and approved by Highways and included a dedicated pedestrian-side route;
- safety concerns had been raised and appropriate fencing and protection for public open spaces and play areas would be secured through conditions;
- NHS Integrated Care Board had provided the £35,232 GP contribution using a standard formula which was applied across the city;
- the southern entrance was approved under a previous application and the current scheme completed the connection;
- the north western hedgerow formed an existing natural boundary which would be retained and included in the Landscape & Environmental Management Plan;
- that achieving full on-site biodiversity net gain on greenfield sites was generally impossible but required off-site credits;
- no connection was proposed between this site and Plover Close and the hedgerow boundary would remain;
- several previous appeals had already eroded the Topsham gap and the site was now enclosed by development, which was not visible from outside;
- the gap carried very limited planning weight, especially given the city's lack of a five-year housing land supply;
- planning relied on expert consultees and if the NHS stated the contribution made the development acceptable, planning would accept that advice;
- though it was possible for health bodies to recommend refusal due to capacity issues, this had not occurred for this application. Infrastructure bodies used formulae to justify contributions;
- the 19 affordable homes were on the blue and pink squares on the site layout plan (as indicated on the presentation slide) and were located in small clusters;
- the application was a full application, rather than a reserved matter; and
- affordable homes needed to be grouped for management but were designed to avoid being visually distinct or inferior and were secured by conditions.

During debate, Members expressed the following views:

- the comparison slide was commended and highlighted the applicant's commitment to working collaboratively with officers and adapt plans based on expert input;
- meaningful changes had been made to the layout in response to feedback;
- there were visible green space and presence of wildlife-friendly areas indicated on the plans and based on the information presented, there were no reasons for refusal;
- officers and developers were thanked for improvements made to the final plans, notably due to the wider situation in the Topsham gap;
- the 19 affordable housing units, larger public green spaces and future-proofed road alignment were welcomed;
- there were some concerns raised on fencing screening along green spaces adjacent to the road and a need to avoid unattractive barriers while ensuring safety for residents and children;
- examples of where unfenced areas near roads in the local area were highlighted, which created safety risks for children;
- resident concerns about the broader Topsham Gap were noted and concerns

- were raised on the pressures on local doctor services;
- the comparison images provided were appreciated and service provision issues would continue to be sought;
- there were no material planning reasons to refuse the application;
- the revised plan was a strong template and officers were praised for significant improvements made;
- traffic calming issues were raised with the nearby Newcourt area referenced as an example of where engineered speed-reducing measures had been effective;
- the collaborative improvements made to the application and work undertaken between officers and the developer was commended;
- the A-rated carbon-efficient homes with a cycle infrastructure was welcomed, particularly for being near play areas, bus stops;
- significant progress had been made to the design over the course of the application and plans highlighted a pedestrian-friendly area;
- the relocation of affordable housing to more integrated positions near the road was welcomed; and
- if a greenfield site needed to be developed, this approach was acceptable.

A Member enquired about including a condition relating to traffic calming, especially near the green spaces and enquired on what traffic calming measures had been proposed to date.

The Principal Project Manager – Development Management advised Members that specific highway conditions were already included and that Highways officers had reviewed and approved detailed highway drawings. Four highways related conditions had been included to allow further detailed discussions during implementation as part of those existing conditions.

Another Member noted that the Planning Committee may not be able to add a traffic calming condition but requested that the committee note that Members had raised the issue of traffic calming in this area and would like Devon County Council to follow up on traffic-calming measures.

The Chair agreed to note the committee concerns for issue of traffic calming in the minutes.

The Head of Service - City Development made the following concluding points:

- Members had highlighted a number of key benefits, which included improved layout, provision of green space, delivering affordable housing and future-proofed site access;
- fencing/screening concerns could be managed through existing conditions on materials and boundary treatments;
- the site was already enclosed by development and did not contribute to wider openness and therefore there was no harm to strategic separation;
- there had been no NHS objections and the S106 health contribution had been secured; and
- the lack of health capacity were insufficient grounds for refusal;
- the proposal complied with policy and S106 and conditions adequately mitigated concerns.

The Chair moved, and Councillor Ketchin seconded the recommendation, which was voted upon and CARRIED unanimously.

RESOLVED to delegate to the Head of City Development to GRANT permission

subject to completion of a legal agreement under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) to secure the following:

- a Local Health Care contribution of £35,232 towards GP surgeries in the area;
- 35% affordable housing;
- management of public open space;
- children's play (including LAP/LEAP);
- biodiversity net gain (off-site units);
- habitats mitigation for affordable housing;
- SuDS management;
- monitoring costs; and
- Unencumbered vehicle and pedestrian/cycle access to existing north site boundary.

With the conditions outlined in the report and on the additional information update sheet.

RESOLVED to REFUSE permission in the event the S106 Agreement is not completed by 1 June 2026 or such extended time as agreed by the City Development Manager for the reasons set out in Part B of the recommendation on the additional information update sheet.

(The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 7.30 pm)

Chair

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Agenda Item 8

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Monday 8 December 2025

Present:-

Councillor Knott (Chair)

Councillors Rolstone, Asvachin, Banyard, Hussain, Ketchin, Mitchell, M, Pole, Williams, M and Wood (as substitute for Councillor Atkinson)

Apologies

Councillors Atkinson and Hughes

Councillors in attendance under Standing Order No. 44

Councillor Vizard speaking on item 5 (Minute No. 48 below)

Also Present

Strategic Director for Place, Head of Service - City Development, Planning Solicitor, Principal Project Manager - Development Management and Democratic Services Officer

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APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Atkinson, with Councillor Wood attending as her substitute. It was confirmed Councillor Wood had undertaken the required training and understood the responsibilities of the role.

Apologies were also received from Councillor Hughes.

46

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2025 were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair as correct.

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DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made by Members.

48

PLANNING APPLICATION NO. 25/0676/FUL DEVON AND CORNWALL CONSTABULARY, HEAVITREE ROAD, EXETER

A Member raised a point of order regarding receipt of an 82-page presentation less than five hours before the meeting and enquired about any potential legal risk for Members who had a statutory duty to read all papers before the meeting.

The Planning Solicitor advised that he was unaware of any legal risk and highlighted that officers provided presentations ahead of meetings and Members had the opportunity ask questions on it.

The Chair invited Councillor Vizard to speak under Standing Order No. 44, who made reference to:

- planning officers were thanked for their extensive work on the appeal that followed the committee's refusal of the previous application and welcomed the Planning inspector's decision to uphold the refusal of the earlier scheme in dismissing the appeal;

- the project was not part of the Liveable Exeter initiative and did not provide the required mix of homes;
- it was disappointing that neither the public-sector landowner nor the Police & Crime Commissioner Office had not brought forward a scheme which supported the Council's Liveable Exeter vision for a car-free garden-city neighbourhood, but acknowledged the outcome being attributed to market forces;
- the affordable housing element was welcomed, but it was hoped that it would be higher;
- he noted that the argument for PBSA (Purpose-Built Student Accommodation) and Co-living had been made, and his objections were not about the type of housing, and his preference would be for more affordable and social family housing;
- although the scheme had improved significantly, it was not a development suitable for this key gateway site;
- the loss of 79 mature trees was a huge disappointment, and the landscaping was not enough for such an important site;
- comments from Dorset Council's ecologist stated that the scheme would result in the loss of most of the existing trees and grassland;
- onsite gains would be in the form of a new habitat rather than an enhancing the existing habitat resulting in the loss of mature trees lost;
- he expressed concerns about tree canopy losses and the arboriculture impact assessment had not adequately assessed the wider effects of tree loss;
- the trees along the western boundary, formed a strong green feature, and would be threatened, reducing visual amenity and screening;
- the residents of the houses and flats at Higher Summerland's would be overlooked and dominated by the development;
- privacy distances were below the 22 metres requirement set out in the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD);
- the Conservation Officer also shared concerns that the proposed tree planting would appear small compared with the proposed buildings;
- there were concerns about flood risks and the missed opportunity to improve climate resilience;
- Devon County Council, as the local flood authority, had objected, and their points needed to be addressed before the application was approved;
- the points raised from the cycling-campaign needed to be considered and scrutinised;
- if the application was approved, it needed to be suitably conditioned to ensure a car-free status, and a pedestrian crossing at the Waitrose junction; and
- recommendations from the Police Crime Officer needed to be included to secure full contributions to parks and open spaces.

In responses to questions from Members, Councillor Wizard made the following further comments:

- the current scheme was an improvement, notably the 'monolithic blocks' being replaced with eight moderate buildings;
- concerns raised were about trees, impacts on the conservation area, and effects on residents;
- given the Planning Committee's limited scope for refusal due to a previous Planning Inspectorate decision, conditions were critically important if approval was granted;
- the type of housing for PBSA and Co-Living was not a relevant consideration for the committee's decision, but it was disappointing that the important site, could have offered much more;
- the Planning Committee's scope was limited but the committee could ask the

- developer if there was a genuine need to lose so many mature trees;
- the tree canopy and plant species were very important and there were ways to mitigate the loss through conditions; and
- it was acknowledged that refusing the application solely on tree grounds would be difficult to uphold and the committee could examine whether anything in the application differed from what the inspector previously considered.

The Chair invited Mr Keith Lewis, to speak for five minutes, to speak against the application, who made the following points:

- he was speaking on behalf of the Exeter Civic Society, and acknowledged that despite the application being an improvement on the previous one, the Society continued to have concerns;
- the main objection was that the scheme failed to take residents privacy into account, contrary to the council's policies;
- paragraph 7.2 of the Council's residential design guide required that designs allowed people to feel at ease and comfortable;
- paragraph 7.16 of the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) stated that people should be able to enjoy their privacy without being overlooked or restricted and entail a 22 metre minimum distance between habitable rooms;
- this was a very large site and there was no reason why the applicant could not design within the 22-metre line;
- the 22-metre issue was also raised during pre-application advice and during the first application, giving the applicant two opportunities to comply with the request;
- the proposed five and six-storey buildings would overlook Higher Summerland's homes and create a sense of being restricted and paragraph 7.24 of the SPD ensured residents should enjoy a good quality outlook without neighbouring buildings being overbearing;
- the guidance stated that where habitable room windows faced blank walls, the distance must be equal to twice the height of the building. An example of the guidance was block 3, which was only 14 metres from 9 Higher Summerland's as was 16 metres high, and required a distance of 32 metres to comply; and
- there were three possible decisions, which were rejecting the application, which was considered unnecessary, approving it, which would cause harm to residents or deferral to allow the developer and planning officer to redesign Blocks 2 and 3 to avoid harming residents.

Mr Lewis responded to questions from Members as follows:

- the idea that net curtains could mitigate planning rules was considered extreme, and while the inspector suggested the buildings wouldn't cause significant harm, some impact was still implied; and
- ultimately it was for the committee to decide whether to approve the scheme as it was or to ask the developer to redesign the blocks to avoid harming residents.

The Chair invited Mr Gareth Hooper, to speak for five minutes to speak in support of the application, who made the following points:

- he was the agent for the previous applications on the site and had attended the public inquiry two years earlier, and highlighted his 28 year personal knowledge of the site and of the six year redevelopment proposal period;
- the site had been vacant since 2021, and had deteriorated since that time as well as suffering recent fire damage;
- the site had been allocated for redevelopment in the 2012 local plan and

remained allocated in the new emerging local plan as a sustainable location and there was no uncertainty about the acceptability of redeveloping the site for residential use;

- currently the Council was unable to meet its five-year housing land supply and under national policy, the Council must apply a presumption in favour of granting permission for residential developments unless, in doing so, would lead to significant adverse effects outweighing the benefits;
- despite the objections received regarding tree loss, it was not considered significant because most of the trees were self-seeded Category C and 183 new trees would be planted, including a number of specimen trees;
- he shared the officer's view, that there were no significant adverse effects and that national guidance should be followed;
- if Members disagreed with the officer's professional judgment, they would need to conclude that the impacts of the development outweighed the urgent need for additional housing, including affordable housing, which would be inconsistent with national and local policy;
- the scheme had been revised following 18 months' work with a conservation-focused architect;
- the previous reasons for refusal related solely to scale, mass, and architectural design, rather than tree loss;
- having worked closely with officers, the proposals now included a major reduction in height from eight to six storeys and the building mass had been broken up through the introduction of smaller blocks;
- work had led to a reduction in the number of units from 955 to 813, and the proposed level was included in the emerging Local Plan and as such the scale of development being proposed was acceptable;
- the design had been fully welcomed by officers and an independent design review panel as a high-quality scheme reflecting the local context and also met nationally recognised accommodation standards;
- the proposal exceeded the level of amenity provided by other council approved developments and would meet growing university demand while releasing the burden of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs);
- the reduction in the scale of the development meant the impact on neighbouring residents' amenity's was less and therefore did not constitute significant harm and demonstrated six years of dialogue and evolution with officers, stakeholders, Members, and the public;
- the recommendation to approve was supported following the officer's thorough assessment, which weighed the objections against the conclusions of the previous refusal and current policy and highlighted the urgent need for housing; and
- approval needed to be granted unless Members disagreed with the officer's conclusions and that the proposals addressed the reasons why the previous schemes were rejected to deliver a high-quality development capable of enhancing the city.

Mr Hooper responded to Members' questions as follows:

- there was no issue with the proposed scheme and extensive engagement had taken place. The scheme had evolved over time through engagement with officers and an external design review panel;
- changes related to scale, massing, and appropriateness within the site's setting and the proposal maximised development potential on a sustainably located brownfield site;
- the impacts remained acceptable by the inspector and the current design reflected a natural and appropriate evolution of the scheme;
- there were two different formulas used to calculate housing contribution, with

- ratios generally around 3:1, which differed between PBSA (Purpose-Built Student Accommodation) and Co-living developments;
- the Council counted both student accommodation and co-living units toward housing needs, as did other authorities;
- while the contribution was not 800 units, the formulas in the emerging local plan equated the scheme's contribution to approximately 350 units;
- the Council had an established the approach that PBSA's should help meet growth in the student population and supported the aim of increasing housing supply and reducing the number of HMOs;
- the scheme accommodated demand from residents privacy University Exeter in a more appropriate form than HMOs;
- full cycle parking provisions had been met in accordance with policy requirements and a condition was included to provide electric-bike charging; and
- a market report was submitted with the application, which showed there was a growing demand for PBSA and the report indicated a rising demand for co-living, driven by students moving on from PBSA into the co-living market.

The Principal Project Manager - Development Management presented the application for the demolition of the existing buildings and erection of mixed-use development comprising Purpose-Built Student Accommodation and Co-Living with associated infrastructure at Devon And Cornwall Constabulary, Heavitree Road.

The recommendation was for approval subject to S106 obligations and conditions as set out in the report and as amended on the update sheet.

Members received a presentation and the following information:

- the application was to redevelop the site for Co-living and Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA).
- The immediate surroundings of the site were described with reference to an aerial photograph as follows:
 - there are residential flats immediately to the north, which were Council housing, managed by Exeter City Council, with some occupied by leaseholders;
 - also, immediately to the north was 'the Gorge' development, which was the city's only co-living scheme with 133 studios, now completed and with high levels of occupation. A high proportion of residents were understood to be employed at the nearby hospital;
 - aerial photos identified terraced streets further north, with Sandford Walk being the closest to the development;
 - to the eastern area was Waitrose and the hospital;
 - to the south of the development was St. Luke's Campus which had been allocated in the emerging local plan for 44,000 sqm of transformational employment space. Officers were working with the university to develop a masterplan to expand the campus; and
 - to the west was Higher and Lower Summerland's housing, with St. Matthew's Church and Newtown Primary School also nearby.
- A map of the immediate area was presented in order to confirm the boundaries of the Article 4 area, Conservation Areas, and Listed Buildings.
- The Article 4 area was close to the site and highlighted the existing student population and desire to manage the use of traditional housing stock as HMOs.
- St Leonards Conservation Area was to the south of the site (including St

Luke's campus and housing to its west).

- The Higher Summerland's Conservation Area, included properties in the Lower Summerland's area was to the west of the site but does not adjoin it directly
- Listed buildings were indicated on the map in pink.
- A series of photographs of the site were shown, including access points, critical impact areas, views from Heavitree Road, uncontrolled pedestrian crossings needing improvement, and the relationship to the Gorge, and communal amenity areas.
- The key aspect of the planning history is that a previous application was made in 2021 for the same use for student accommodation and co-living.
- The scale had been significantly reduced as a result of discussions with officers and the application was presented to Planning committee three times before it was decided.
- The Planning Committee had refused the application on 20 February 2023 for six reasons: design and scale, harm to neighbour amenity's, insufficient outdoor amenity space for future residents, additional demand on public green space, tree loss, and missing Section 106 contributions.
- The decision had been appealed through a Public Inquiry in December 2023 and following legal advice the reasons for refusal considered through the hearings themselves had been reduced to two - design and neighbour amenity.
- Agreement had been reached on the S106 issue and officers had been advised that the reasons for refusal relating to future residents' amenity and green spaces were unlikely to be upheld against policy.
- Officers had also conceded the tree loss reason for refusal after the appellant's evidence demonstrated that tree loss could be mitigated through the planting of new trees.
- The appeal was dismissed on design grounds only, and the inspector had agreed that harm to character/appearance was severe and overly assertive. Neighbour amenity was not considered harmful enough to justify refusal and therefore the inspector's findings carried very significant material weight for the current application.
- The appeal outcome led to a redesign. Officers worked in collaboration with the applicant to assess revised proposals through a pre-application submission made in May 2024.
- The applicant appointed new architects with experience in sensitive heritage environments to adopt a new approach and the scheme underwent a design review and several iterations with the officers' design team.
- The current application was submitted in June 2025, with minor design refinements made in October 2025.
- The officer explained the proposed scheme, which comprised of 813 studio split between 399 student studio bedspaces and 414 co-living units, all as studio format, which was broadly a 50/50 balance.
- The new scheme consisted of seven blocks, where the previous scheme had been two large buildings with a clear separation of use.
- A new north to south pedestrian and cycle route separated the two block areas, linking Heavitree Road with the car park behind St. Matthew's Place;
- The route would be open between 7am–10pm and required opening hours would be secured through a S106 agreement.
- The route would be privately managed and secured through a S106 agreement.
- This aspect of the scheme was considered a significant improvement over the previous scheme and promoted active travel and aligned with national good design practice and the Liveable Exeter proposals.
- The route would provide a direct and safer route for residents to facilities in

Newtown and the applicant had agreed to allow public access to the route during the day.

- On the ground floor, the main entrance to the Co-living scheme was from Heavitree Road and most of the shared community co-living facilities (gym, cycle store, community workspaces) would be located close to the front (with some additional facilities to the rear of one of the blocks).
- Due to the rise in the ground level towards Gladstone Road, the ground floor level of the student scheme would be broadly equivalent to the first floor of the Co-Living scheme.
- The student scheme entrance would be close to the junction with Gladstone Road, and the ground floor would include two integrated cycle stores as well as a bin store in each block.
- The floor layouts were similar at levels Co-Living 02 to 04, above which the accommodation was mainly towards the east of the site to mitigate amenity impacts for residents to the west.
- The landscaping scheme included extensive soft landscaping and despite the loss of trees, the scheme would deliver a 14% net biodiversity gain, all on site, including new tree planting.
- Several buildings would contain recessed planting wells at roof level for integrating air-handling equipment such that it would not be visible from the street.
- The Gorge, behind the site, was taller than the tallest proposed building (Student Block 3) and the building had been reduced through the use of pitched roofs incorporating a flat section of roof at the top;
- Street elevations showed how the proposed building heights compared with neighbouring buildings.
- Internal elevations of the co-living scheme showed how balconies would be restricted to the courtyard area to avoid overlooking impacts to existing residents.
- The application had been advertised twice due to redesigns, with more than 500 letters sent out. Only 40 objections were received and seven supporting comments and was not considered to be a high number of public responses;
- The officer explained that the report contained a comprehensive assessment of all the key issues, but that the presentation would focus on four key issues as well as the principle of the uses proposed. These were living standards for future residents, impact on neighbouring residents, loss of trees, and design.
- Officers considered both the co-living and student accommodation elements acceptable in principle and acknowledged that although the density was very high, it was supported by national and local policy.
- The scheme included 20% of co-living units as affordable private rent and 5% of all units were accessible, including four accessible affordable units. Accessible rooms would be located near the lift and use the space behind the lift shaft for accessible wet rooms.
- the scheme would be entirely studio-based, providing a mix of co-living and student accommodation and four studio types were proposed, ranging from 17.5 to 28 square metres.
- Co-living units would have communal kitchens and dining spaces for each cluster of 12–26 residents and every resident would also have access to the larger communal facilities which included a ‘theatre kitchen’, lounge, a gym and wellbeing area, and workspace.
- A total of 242 cycle parking spaces would be available for the co-living scheme, including two-tier racks and spaces for non-standard bicycles near the entrance.
- Specially designed ‘Oriel’ windows would address privacy concerns even though the standard 22-metre distance was not met everywhere.

- The local plan policy (DD4) and the Residential Design SPD recommended 22 metres between windows and although this distance was not met in all locations, the relationships were considered acceptable.
- Where the separation distance narrowed to 14.5 metres between Co-Living Block 3 and 9 Higher Summerland's, 'Oriel' windows with obscured glazing would be installed to avoid direct overlooking while maintaining daylight – these would be secured by condition 21.
- Condition 22 required the same privacy measure between the student and co-living blocks to stop students overlooking residents of the Co-Living units.
- Amenity impacts were considered acceptable because the current scheme improved privacy and was similar in sunlight/daylight terms to the appeal scheme which had been considered to be acceptable by the inspector.
- A total of 79 trees would be removed including 41 category B, and 32 category C trees but the category A tree (in the car park to the north), would be retained.
- 56 of the trees to be removed grew in dense groups and some were affected by ash dieback.
- Legal advice from the appeal confirmed that tree loss could be compensated through new planting, and therefore 183 new trees of various species were being proposed.
- The Urban Design and Landscape Officer considered the scheme to be acceptable, but the Conservation Officer had noted that creating opportunities for larger specimen trees to grow would be desirable; Officers had drafted the proposed conditions to allow for this change to be negotiated.
- The scheme would deliver a 14% net biodiversity gain, above the 10% requirement, providing flexibility to meet landscape objectives such as the desire to allow more space for selected trees to grow to maturity.
- Design was the key issue for the previous application and appeal processes and was the only point on which the Inspector agreed with the Planning Committee – officers concluded that the improvement to the scheme's design were such that it aligned much better with the surrounding area than the appeal scheme did.
- The most effective design improvements had been splitting the two previously large building into several smaller buildings.
- The positioning of the accommodation was strategically designed to reduce massing along key public routes and ensured the scheme fitted more appropriately into the local area.
- Comparative images were provided to show improvements between the refused scheme and the current proposal.
- The design included gable ends facing the road, reflecting the nearby listed terraces (Lower Summerland's) and the proposed use of brick was considered contextually appropriate.
- Architectural detailing had been incorporated to reflect features found on buildings in the St. Leonards Conservation Area across the road;
- All required Section 106 planning obligations had been agreed without a viability exercise, and most had agreed been during the appeal process.
- The design of the building had been significantly improved, with reduced scale and a more appropriate response to the townscape and although a loss of trees was unfortunate, new tree planting would compensate for this.
- Benefits of the scheme included regenerating a derelict site, significant economic benefits and a major contribution to housing supply, including affordable private-rent and accessible studio units.
- Amendments to the conditions had been proposed on the update sheet.
- It was clarified that the recommendation included an option to refuse the application should the Section 106 agreement not be completed within six months (in accordance with standard practice).

The Principal Project Manager - Development Management responded to Member questions and clarification points as follows:-

- there was existing national mandatory condition for the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Plan, so the council could not impose one as a local condition;
- the applicant would submit the BNG and habitat mitigation plan to discharge this condition. The BNG plan would show how net gains would be managed over the required 30-year period and would be sourced through an additional S106 agreement;
- the biodiversity gain condition must be addressed before works start, meaning detailed discussions about soft landscaping and trees would need to happen in advance of works commencing;
- the Council had added extra conditions, including condition 18 for hard/soft landscaping and for a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan to ensure additional safeguards;
- the footway along Heavitree Road outside the site would be widened to 3.5 metres and would become a shared walking/cycling path, which extended to Gladstone Road;
- a push button pedestrian crossing would be added to allow better crossing at Gladstone Road and on the existing crossing over Heavitree Road east of the junction would also be improved;
- there was the potential for improvements to the informal crossing (which would be close to the new site access) to improve crossing by cyclists – this could be considered through a Section 278 (Highways) agreement;
- the references to unresolved design issues in the report reflected the fact that the application had been submitted before officers had had the opportunity to feedback on all detailed aspects of the design – however following assessment of the application proposals officers had concluded that only minor additional changes were required - these had already been made in response to feedback and form part of the scheme now before the committee;
- conditions would be required to secure final details, such as window section drawings and roof finishes. Materials were broadly agreed in principle, but final approval would be through conditions;
- the 'affordable private rent' requirement had been secured on all approved Co-living schemes in the city, in-line with national guidance for affordable housing in 'build-to-rent' developments;
- for affordable private rent, the applicant was responsible for finding tenants based on eligibility criteria set out in the Section 106 agreement, which included prioritising key workers;
- there was no link to Local Housing Allowance rates used in the benefits system and rent was set by applying a 20% discount to the market rent of comparable units (typically those within the same building);
- the potential future bus lane would run along the site frontage on Heavitree Road and the land would also be sufficient to re-provide a shared footway/cycleway, reaching roughly to the top of the steps within the scheme;
- the ramp/steps leading up to the scheme would need to be redesigned and relocated to make space for the bus lane but this would be a future matter for Devon County Council to discuss with the applicant if/when they wish to progress the Bus Lane project;
- the applicant had agreed to safeguard the land but were not pledging themselves to building the bus lane itself. The main consideration for officers and the committee at this stage is that the development would not prejudice the future introduction of a Bus Lane;
- a condition was recommended for a comprehensive security package, including access control, which applied to both internal and external safety,

and it was common for these type of schemes to use swipe-card systems to limit residents' access to specific areas;

- the applicant had submitted a detailed management plan demonstrating thorough consideration of safety;
- the closure of the through-route at night was a compromise - it was officer preference that it remained open 24/7. The decision to install a gate reflected the fact that the applicant wishes to prevent public access at certain times.
- Although the police crime prevention officer had raised concerns about the impacts of users entering the scheme and finding the gate locked. However, if pedestrians approaching from the south found the gate closed, they would be relatively close to the exit to Gladstone Road;
- signs could be installed to guide people when the gate was closed and the site would be managed 24/7 with on-site staff and CCTV;
- it was hoped that the developer would agree in future that the gate could remain open 24/7, but for now they insisted on it remaining closed at night;
- Officers had received some feedback from neighbours via ward Councillors during the pre-application stage that they are concerned about the potential for noise and disturbance from residents entering and existing the site via St Matthews Close, and the applicant's desire for the gate to be closed at night may help to prevent such issues;
- the Fire and Rescue Service response had been forwarded to the applicant, their agent, and the architect and the scheme now addressed all concerns with no outstanding fire-related issues from a planning standpoint;
- further details relating to building regulations would need to be addressed during the construction phase;
- the site was not at flood risk and the flood risk authority's concern related to highly technical matters connected to the proposed surface-water drainage system, and the model used to calculate runoff rates and storage;
- there were concerns related to the proposed rain gardens and how exceedance flows would be managed when rainfall was beyond system capacity. Officers considered that those issues could be resolved at the condition stage because there would be sufficient storage space available on the site;
- it was unfortunate that the Lead Local Flood Authority had not been able to review the most recent details in time for the meeting, but officers felt confident that this technical matter could be adequately resolved at the planning condition stage (and that the site would be privately managed to ensure drainage systems are maintained);
- there was no national policy or guidance specifying technical standards for electric-bike charging, but an informative note was proposed alongside the proposed revisions to the condition wording to advise the developer that they would need to provide appropriate charging solutions; and
- In respect of safety concerns relating to users of the permissive path who found the gate to be closed, that windows to accommodation in The Gorge so provide some surveillance over the car park, and that CCTV coverage over the entrance gate area from within the application site would be possible, but that the safety concerns are acknowledged.

The meeting was briefly adjourned at 19:54 and resumed at 20:00.

During debate, Members expressed the following views:

- the inspector's report should be considered as a guide for decision making;
- there were concerns about the extent of tree loss and the scale and form of replacement species not being proportionate to the building scale;
- there was a missed opportunity to retain mature trees to the west of the site,

especially in the north west area which could create a future conflict with the existing category A tree;

- the oriel windows would satisfactorily address the overlooking issues;
- improved massing and less monolithic buildings were welcomed, but a key test was on whether mass was disproportionate to the suburban setting – as queried by the appeal Inspector;
- the PBSA quality was good, but the Co-Living blocks lacked a level of style which did not match the PBSA design standard and have an institutional appearance (particularly the gable ends facing Heavitree Road);
- Street scene design and layouts were good
- the site was a good location for walking, shops (including the city centre), and hospital;
- the housing units would reduce pressure that HMOs place on family housing;
- widened pavements, improved shared cycle path to Heavitree Road and safer Gladstone Road crossings were commended;
- additional higher-quality tree planting and bird/bat boxes were welcomed;
- car ownership restrictions were commended, and any contribution towards the delivery of an e-bike rental scheme, would be beneficial;
- any development on the derelict site would be an improvement to the area;
- the massing being broken into smaller blocks was appreciated;
- there were major concerns about safety, notably the gated through-route and diversion into a car park at night with 24/7 open access needed, especially for women's safety – the route through is welcomed but closure at night will give rise to safety problems (as well as potential of residents);
- Cycling parking and means to prevent car ownership are welcomed
- there were some concerns about E-bike charging arrangements;
- the proposal was far better than previous schemes with a reduction in townscape impacts;
- the positive applicant and officer engagement was commended but there was some disappointment that the scheme didn't meet the Council's 22m privacy guideline;
- the higher ratio of co-living and reduction in PBSA proportion was welcomed;
- there was some discomfort about tree loss and co-living block design (including the chimney stacks), but the scheme was supported;
- the application was a significant improvement over previous schemes, but Members of the Committee needed to consider both the inspector's report and new issues not previously raised – a comprehensive view must be taken;
- the site was a major gateway site into the city and the scale and long-term impact of the development, alongside other large nearby developments (including those that are approved but haven't been built) needed to be considered;
- concerns were raised about declining university numbers against the unknown demand for large-scale Co-living in Exeter, affordability issues of Co-living units, and the level of flexibility between PBSA and Co-living use – some flexibility between the uses may be helpful to address changes in demand;
- tree loss and potential future tree losses, should a bus lane be installed was raised as a concern;
- the proposed public walkway may not be needed, and would likely increase the risk of late-night disturbances and safety for nearby residents;
- there was a lack of connection between the St Luke's SPD and the University's adjacent development plans, although it was noted that no accommodation is proposed on campus;
- the PBSA design was broadly acceptable but the co-living design needed improvement; and
- concerns remained about height, massing, and visual impacts and the CGI

images presented may not fully demonstrate the real effect once the development was built.

The Chair in concluding the debate, made the following points:

- the appeal was recently upheld at a full public inquiry, with the design issues being notably relevant;
- the co-living element blended better with the surrounding area due to its design features, but design can be subjective;
- it was hoped the PBSA was built to such a good standard that it could potentially be subject to future change of use to co-living;
- more trees would be planted than those lost, and important mature trees would be removed and replaced;
- the reserved bus lane area was largely outside the committee's remit;
- concerns about the lack of cover for e-bike charging, managing 24/7 access to balance permeability with safety, particularly for women and girls at night was noted; and
- the proposal was better than previous versions and the officer recommendations were supported.

The Strategic Director for Place made the following concluding points:

- the recent planning history of the site was very significant, with the original scheme being first considered in 2021 and rejected following a full public inquiry solely on design grounds;
- the current proposal had since been significantly improved, with a focus on resolving design concerns by officers;
- officers had carefully considered other key issues raised, including amenity for future occupants, impact to neighbouring residents and tree loss;
- the matter had come back to committee as a full planning application rather than an outline application with landscaping reserved, and as such it has been possible to give proper consideration to landscaping and tree impacts;
- concerns about tree loss were acknowledged but there was a greater scope for mitigation, including conditions to allow new trees to grow into specimen trees;
- the design has been substantially transformed to reduce scale and massing, more than 140 units had been removed, and smaller blocks had been arranged in a finer grain proposal to incorporate a more generous landscaping amenity space and public walkway;
- a potential future bus lane was uncertain, but it had helped influence the site layout;
- concerns about the public walkway, particularly its daytime-only opening were acknowledged, but it had a wider role in connecting Newtown and the city centre;
- improvements to the application were achieved through close collaboration between officers and the applicant's new architects;
- the strategic benefit of the PBSA bedspaces, which can now be counted on a 1:1 basis to help Local Plan housing targets, which was an important consideration ahead of the Local Plan examination;
- the relevance of the nearby St. Luke's campus expansion, especially for medical and healthcare facilities was highlighted, especially for making the site suitable for student accommodation; and
- the scheme would deliver significant and positive benefits that outweighed the remaining concerns, many of which could be addressed through conditions and S106 agreements.

It was proposed by Councillor Rolstone and seconded by Councillor Asvachin that the recommendation be amended as follows:

- to amend the terms of the proposed S106 agreement so that the public access route through the site shall remain open 24 hours a day.

The amendment was put to the vote and was carried (8 in favour, 2 against, and 0 abstentions).

The Chair moved, and Councillor Rolstone seconded the recommendation as amended, which was voted upon and CARRIED (8 in favour, 2 against and 0 abstentions).

RESOLVED to delegate to the Head of Service (City Development) to GRANT permission subject to completion of a legal agreement under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) to the identified matters and conditions as set out in the committee report, update sheet and as amended at the meeting.

RESOLVED to REFUSE if that Legal Agreement is not finalised in the six month requisite timeframe.

49

LIST OF DECISIONS MADE AND WITHDRAWN APPLICATIONS

The report of the Strategic Director for Place was noted.

50

APPEALS REPORT

The Strategic Director for Place advised that the planning decision for 371 Topsham Road, which was refused by Planning Committee, against officer recommendations was appealed and that that an application for costs was submitted but refused and there were no findings for unreasonable behaviour by the council.

The report of the Strategic Director for Place was noted.

(The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 8.38 pm)

Chair

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Agenda Item 9

EXETER HARBOUR BOARD

Thursday 11 December 2025

Present:-

Councillor Williams, R (Chair)
Councillors Read, Rolstone, Snow and Sheridan

Jane Green, Lt Col David Marino, James Prescott, Charles Temple, Shelley Rhodes.

Apologies

Councillor Cookson.
Colin Seddon.

Also Present

Harbour Master Exeter Port Authority, Harbour Patroller, Head of Service Operations,
Democratic Services Officer and Engineer and Asset Manager.

33

APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Cookson, and Colin Seddon.

34

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting on 29th September were taken as read, approved, and signed following an amendment to the attendance list to include external members of the Exeter Harbour Board.

35

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

36

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Chair advised that there had been 4 questions received by members of the public.

The Chair invited David Clarke to ask his question:

Will the work on Trew Weir include clearance of the trees and bushes growing in the adjacent Mill Pond, including the restoration of the barriers which previously prevented large logs entering the Mill Pond?

The Chair responded in the following terms:

As part of the works, the Bypass channel will be fully de-vegetated in early 2026, to deter birds from establishing nests in that area for the period covering the works.

This is largely to prevent later disturbance of nests during the works.

If the Bypass Channel is retained in its current form then we do anticipate some form of barrier being installed near the entrance to prevent large floating debris entering the channel.

In a supplementary question Mr Clarke advised that this would not be possible without dredging. Councillor Williams noted this comment.

The Chair invited Stephanie Ward to ask the following question:

During the restoration of Trews Weir could the trees growing in the river and undermining the riverside footpaths between the Port Royal and the weir be removed and the accumulated silt bed they are growing in also be removed to prevent regrowth?

The Chair responded in the following terms:

There are no plans to remove the silt and riparian vegetation on the eastern bank of the river, nor the trees growing in this bank, as part of the Trews Weir work.

The silt bank and self-set trees provide valuable habitat not found elsewhere within this reach of the River Exe and would not be removed without a strong operational need to do so.

These habitats are widely used by a range of birds, mammals, amphibians, fish and invertebrates for feeding, shelter, and nesting. They are not currently creating any operational issues for ECC. Devon County Council have not reported issues or undermining concerns with regard to the public highway, nor have any significant issues been raised by river users or other statutory bodies, so there is no justification for its removal.

Some areas of riverside vegetation on the silt bank nearest to the weir may be cut back in early 2026, prior to the works starting, to discourage birds establishing nests close to the works area which would likely be disturbed during the main works phase. This is good practice, as an established nest being disturbed has a much higher failure rate than the same birds being diverted to alternative nesting sites early in the year

In a supplementary question Ms Ward asked why it had been decided that these trees were no longer undermining the path?

The Chair advised that this questions would be answered outside of the meeting.

The Chair invited David Thompson to ask the following question:

Local residents would prefer the lagoon to remain and be dredged. It is a visual amenity and wildlife haven. If the council decides to infill, please confirm a railing will be installed along the northern edge protecting the privacy of the ground of The Mills, Pitts Court and Weirside Place.

The Chair responded in the following terms:

A public consultation exercise will be held in January 2026, in which residents will be asked to provide their views on the Trews Weir scheme, including works to modify the Bypass Channel.

If the recommendation is to infill the Bypass Channel, we can confirm that a railing could be installed along the northern edge of the channel to protect the privacy of The Mills, Pitts Court and Weirside Place, and we would also engage with local residents about possible additional privacy screening such as planting

The Chair invited Judith Read to ask her presentation but was advised that she was unable to attend. David Clark asked the question in her place:

I understand that there may have been some discussion re future of Trews Weir Mill Pond as part of the Trews Weir Upgrade.

I should like to know if this matter is under discussion and what options are being considered.

The Chair responded in the following terms:

Our designers are considering options to make the bypass channel outlet significantly less attractive as a route for migrating fish. Migrating fish follow fast, aerated water and at Trews Weir are often drawn to the bypass channel's outfall

instead of the fish pass, where they repeatedly fail to jump. Failed jumps can injure fish and make them vulnerable to disease, while repeated attempts drain their energy reserves. The outcome is potentially they die by predation or disease, or migration is delayed reducing successful spawning.

The upgrade works aims to improve migratory fish passage over the weir and reduce the Bypass channel outlet as an attraction flow, especially during dry-weather conditions.

Designers are exploring several ways to make the bypass channel less attractive to fish, the leading option are:

- Infill the channel, removing all attraction flows and preventing injury and entrapment of fish entirely.
- adding boulders to reduce water energy
- piping the outlet elsewhere, but these options could still attract fish and require high-maintenance screening.

37

CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair advised the Members of the following announcements:

- the Malinson Bridge development was not going ahead as the cost was now in excess of the grant that had been approved, and she was going to write to Devon County Council to suggest where the grant could be diverted;
- there had been issues with the leat at Cricklepit Mill but Exeter City Council were working with Devon Wildlife Trust to identify the necessary contacts at the Environment Agency; and
- the presentation due to be given by the Exe Estuary Management Partnership had been postponed to the meeting in March.

38

HARBOUR REVISION ORDER

The Chair advised that the consultation period was now closed and that the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) was currently compiling the submitted responses. Until the process is complete and the advisors at Ashfords have reviewed the responses, it is not possible to provide any further information. However, all individuals who submitted correspondence as part of the consultation would receive a formal consultation response in due course.

39

PORT MARINE SAFETY CODE MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

The Harbour Master provided an update on the Port Marine Safety Code Management Objectives making the following points:

- this as for the safety of the port and management of the waterway;
- there had been a quarterly meeting regarding the risk assessment as it had not been as good as it could be. The risk assessment and method statement for all activities would be updated;
- he had been working within the Designated Person since the last quarter and a HazID workshop had been scheduled in late January;
- the PMSC audit would hopefully be completed by March 26; and
- the conservancy duty survey would start in March 2026.

Councillor Read asked where the funding for the training course would come from, as it had not been highlighted in the accounts.

The Head of Service – Operations advised that the funding for training was held centrally within the HR budget. She was not sure of the total but the total for the PMSC compliance elements had been approved for this year, and it refreshed every three years.

HARBOUR MASTER'S REPORT

The Harbour Master updated Members on the following:

- it was always busy on the waterway;
- he had met with the resilience forum;
- in the last month one yacht had been sunk and 4 boats had broken free from their moorings;
- there would be staff covering the Christmas swim as it was within port limits;
- the deadline for licence request for pontoons at Topsham and Turf had been extended with the MMO until the 18th of December; and
- BBC Countryfile were going out on the river to film on the 16th December.

In response to Member questions, the Harbour Master provided the following answers:

- Selling abandoned boats required a number of steps;
- they would be communicating more with other areas for events in the water;
- they would be looking to recruit a casual employee but there was a planned restructure of the service coming so it would not be good to hire permanently; and
- the reported events were only a fraction of what is happening and they relied on the community to feed information in so it could be reported.

EXETER PORT USERS GROUP UPDATE

The Chair advised that Rex Frost, the Chair of the Exeter Port User Group was unable to attend the meeting and did not have an update to give.

TREWS WEIR UPDATE PRESENTATION

The Engineering and Asset Manager gave a presentation to update Members of the Board on the progress at Trews Weir making the following points:

- they were working behind the scenes to come up with a design;
- the biggest outstanding point of the public consultation was the bypass channel;
- there was lots of hidden damage that was uncovered through intrusive investigations;
- work had been done in 2020 with the Environment Agency regarding the fish pass;
- the work done would not increase the flood risk;
- it was complicated and had taken a large amount of work to get correct;
- the Weir would look similar but would be safer for boats and fish;
- as much of the Weir as possible would be kept in place;
- if the budget allowed the concrete would be coloured;
- it was worth spending the money now to ensure that the fish pass was correct and was better to do it at the time rather than have it retrofit;
- the project would take approximately nine to ten months and would be split into two, May – September 2026 and March/April – September 2027;
- the materials would be brought upstream and then work would be carried out from the Weir;
- Haven Banks Road would be closed during that period but would be open were possible in the evenings and over the winter;
- he was confident that this could be delivered.

In response to Members' questions the Engineering and Asset Manager provided the following responses:

- the public consultation was planned for January and people living in close proximity would be invited to consultation event to give initial comments

- an establish best practices for engagement;
- a public event with the contractors would be held by the end of January;
- the shape of the Weir would be changed to a gentler shape, which would have a benefit on fish migration and would provide more of a push over the top;
- the East side of the Weir would be repaired first;
- they were working with a fish pass designer, and the benefits of each option were being considered;
- health and safety were a primary concern; and
- it was unlikely that the marine timber removed from the Weir could be used. Archaeological recording was taking place throughout the process, and the advice was that the timber was not saveable.

The Chair thanked the Engineering and Assets Manager for his presentation and advised Members that the slides would be appended to the minutes.

43

STATUTORY HARBOUR AUTHORITY STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

There were no questions from Members regarding the budget information.

(The meeting commenced at Time Not Specified and closed at Time Not Specified)

Chair

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Agenda Item 10

EXECUTIVE

Tuesday 16 December 2025

Present:

Councillor Bialyk (Chair)

Councillors Asvachin, Foale, Patrick, Vizard, Williams, R and Wood

Apologies:

Councillor Wright

Also present:

Chief Executive, Strategic Director for Place, Head of Legal and Democratic Services & Monitoring Officer, Head of Service - Finance, Interim Head of Service - Housing, Collections & Content Manager and Democratic Services Officer

88

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2025, were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair as correct, subject to the following amendment:

- Minute No. 81 – replace the word Carter's Court with Carder's Court.

The minutes of the special meeting held on 26 November 2025, were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

89

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests were made.

90

QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC UNDER STANDING ORDER NO. 19

No questions from members of the public were received.

91

MATTERS REFERRED BY SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

There were no matters referred from the Scrutiny Committees for this meeting.

92

2026/27 BUDGET STRATEGY AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

The Executive received the report which provided a strategic overview of the budgetary position for the 2026/27 financial year and beyond which included the likely level of available resources, the known demand for resources and the proposals to ensure that a balanced budget could be achieved. It was noted the Council was required to set a balanced budget and Council Tax prior to the start of the financial year.

Particular reference was made to:

- the report was being presented early due to there being no January Executive meeting and the report was prepared before the final central government finance settlement was received;
- the report reflected the current estimates of the Fair Funding review and was the first multi-year settlement in over a decade;

- the report set out the assumptions for the current estimates for the next financial year, which included inflation and interest rates;
- external consultants had been used for forecasting the Fair Funding review and business rate resets;
- the government was using a new national formula to assess how much income the Council could raise from council tax and the report outlined expected changes to council tax capacity, business rates retention, and formula grants;
- the overall financial outlook was more positive, with a balanced budget achievable without difficult decisions and over £1 million of budget reductions had been identified, mainly from aligning budgets with actual income and spending;
- the largest saving would be £645,000 from reduced gas and electricity costs; and
- budget proposals would be given to Members at a briefing in January 2026 once the settlement was confirmed and the final budget would be presented to Council for approval in February 2026.

During the discussion, Executive Members raised the following points and questions:

- the positive budget outlook was welcomed and officers were thanked for identifying major savings;
- the council was praised for its long term long-term prudence and leadership for the current financial position and avoiding major service cuts;
- the upcoming government finance settlement, fair funding review, and multi-year settlement was welcomed;
- the budget would provide a positive impact, especially given Exeter's historically low council tax and it was a more positive year-end than in recent years;
- clarification was sought on inflation assumptions in the budget table, including gas at 0%, motor fuel, and insurance increases;
- the positive savings relating to the City Management Portfolio were highlighted and the £100,000 additional income from recycling sales was commended, and residents were thanked for their participation;
- the £100,000 savings on fleet hire costs and £30,000 reduction in fuel costs were praised, which supported reduced carbon emissions;
- officer leadership and assurances on budget management was commended; and
- it was enquired whether the Fair Funding Review would close the funding gap for Devon authorities or whether the area was likely to remain low-funded compared to other councils despite the reforms?

In response to questions raised by Executive Members, the Head of Service Finance advised that:

- the 5 - 18% insurance increase reflected the different uplifts across various insurance policies and insurance inflation was based on an insurers' assessment of risk profiles and wider market conditions, not just council-specific factors;
- policies likely to be affected included public liability and motor fleets; and
- the intention of the fair funding review was on creating a consistent and fair national funding formula for all districts. Council Tax equalisation was a key mechanism for reducing funding imbalances between authorities.

Opposition group leaders made the following points and questions:

- clarification was sought on the £2.1 million funding gap in the Medium Term Financial Strategy and whether the gap applied across the full three-year period or mainly in the first year?
- clarification on committee expenditure was sought, which appeared much higher in the current year compared to future years;
- further explanation of the revenue figures was sought;
- appendix 2 of the report identified £1 million in proposed income generation or savings, but the budget highlighted an additional £500,000 being carried forward from previous budget decisions and further clarification was sought; and
- public communications suggested that there would be no cuts required and clarity on the budget position was sought.

In response to questions raised by opposition Members, the Head of Service Finance advised that:

- the funding gap table covered multiple years because it reflected the required three year period of Medium Term Financial Plan;
- savings taken in one year were recurring and become part of the base budget;
- the peak in committee expenditure in 2025–26 reflected the approved supplementary budgets, which were typically one off, and as such reduced in later years;
- the £590,000 of prior-year savings included £500,000 from the digitalisation programme and £90,000 from additional income at the Matford Centre.

The Head of Service Finance advised that the term 'committee expenditure' was largely historic terminology and agreed that a more accurate description would be 'net service expenditure' which would be used in future years.

The Leader moved the recommendations, which were seconded by Councillor Foale, voted upon, and CARRIED unanimously.

RECOMMENDED that Council note the contents of the report and approve the proposals to establish a balanced Revenue Budget and Capital Programme.

93

COUNCIL TAXBASE AND NNDR 1 2026/27

The Executive received the statutory report which set the 2026/27 Council Tax base in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012. The report also sought approval to delegate the Council's estimate of Business Rate Income (NNDR1) for the next financial year to Strategic Director Corporate Resources and S151 Officer.

Particular reference was made to:

- the Government referendum principles remain unchanged and therefore with the Council tax increases remaining below £5 or 3% there would be no referendum trigger;
- the budget strategy had assumed a 2.99% council tax increase, which was consistent with recent years and there was a modest increase in Band D equivalent properties compared to the current year;
- 334 additional Band D equivalent properties would be subject to council tax;
- recommendation 2.3 of the report requested delegating authority be granted to the Section 151 Officer to complete and submit the annual business rates

return by the end of January 2026, which calculated the forecast income for 2026–27; and

- a collection fund surplus of just over £1 million was being proposed, which was a statutory, ring-fenced account for council tax and business rates and any surplus or deficit would be declared by the billing authority and shared with precepting bodies in the following financial year.

During the discussion, Executive Members raised the following points and questions:

- it was highlighted that Exeter City Council only received 8% of the total council tax collected, with the majority of it going to other agencies;
- the council tax collection rate of 97.5%, was 0.2% above the national average and officers were commended for their effective collection performance;
- clarification was sought on the tax base of £40,186 against 59,000 households and whether the difference represented households from which council tax was not collected; and
- an enquiry was made about the council tax banding review process for properties that had undergone significant changes and whether there was a set process to capture those changes and if they affected future council tax income projections?

In response to questions raised by Executive Members, the Head of Service Finance advised that:

- the difference between total households and the tax base was due to adjustments for properties where council tax could not be collected. Those adjustments mainly reflected the Council Tax Support Scheme, which reduced the effective tax base; and
- inspection officers did visit properties undergoing major changes, but a more detailed response would be provided to Members outside of the meeting.

The Head of Service Finance, advised that recommendation 2.1 needed to be amended to reference the correct regulations as follows:

- the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012.

The Leader agreed for the amendment to be accepted.

The Leader moved the recommendations as amended, which were seconded by Councillor Foale, voted upon, and CARRIED unanimously.

RESOLVED that Executive approve:

- (1) that in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by Exeter City Council as its tax base for the year 2026/27 will be £40,186;
- (2) the Collection Fund Surplus of £1,060,596; and
- (3) that the Section 151 Officer be granted delegated responsibility to approve the Council's NNDR1 return by 31 January 2026.

The Executive received the report which set out the proposed changes to Council dwelling rents, garage rents and service charges with effect from 1 April 2026.

Particular reference was made to:

- the rent increases followed the Government's social rent setting policy with rises to CPI + 1%, which took September 2025 CPI inconsideration and equated to 4.8%;
- the Service charges and garage rents were outside the scope of the social rent setting policy but were proposed to rise by 4.8% for consistency;
- the government had indicated its intention to implement a convergence policy, to allow rents currently below formula levels to be increased annually, so tenants in similar properties within the same area pay comparable rents; and
- delegated powers were sought to implement the convergence policy once government guidance was issued.

During the discussion, Executive Members raised the following points and questions:

- would the reinstatement of the Winter Fuel Allowance affect the outcomes under the cost of living/energy on page 56 of report?
- £15,192,519 had been spent on capital works, £11,293,222 spent on revenue works and 152 homes were retrofitted which highlighted the service charge increases and how it funded those essential works;
- winter fuel allowance was in place for residents earning under £35,000 a year or were born before 1959, which would also impact calculations;
- it was enquired whether data and the impact of retrofitting could be included in future reports as a positive element mitigating cost-of-living pressures;
- the proposed service charge increase was modest compared to private/leasehold management fees and reflected value for money in HRA services; and
- the relevance of the race and ethnicity section in the EQIA was raised and clarification was sought on how it related to the questions asked.

The Leader acknowledged that any rent increase would be unpopular but emphasised the context that Exeter's social rents remained lower than housing associations and was still significantly below private rental market rates. He further clarified that Winter Fuel Allowance was paid upfront and adjusted through income tax coding over the year.

In response to questions raised by Executive Members, the Head of Service Finance advised that:

- service charges complied with government guidelines and were limited to cost recovery only. They could not exceed the actual cost of providing the services and were regularly reviewed to ensure they reflect the true cost of delivery; and
- other questions raised by the Executive Members will need to be responded to outside of the meeting.

Opposition group leaders made the following points and questions:

- it would be positive for tenants that the rent increase this year was lower due to lower CPI;
- clarification was sought on the 15% increase in the use of Council bailiffs between 2022–23 and 2024–25 and whether it primarily related to Council housing arrears or general council debts;

- there was a need to monitor impacts of rent levels on tenants, including access to benefits support;
- council housing was the only affordable housing option in the city;
- following recent national discussions on housing issues, it was highlighted that Exeter City Council was ahead in this discussion;
- clarification was sought on the migration from housing benefit to Universal Credit and whether this migration posed any issues, and at what stage the council might need to intervene or implement a policy; and
- it was noted that Universal Credit payments went directly to recipients, unlike housing benefit, which would affect the council's ability to manage income directly.

The Leader acknowledged questions from opposition group leaders and advised that those issues did not affect the upcoming vote on the report and that detailed answers would be provided outside of the meeting.

The Leader moved the recommendations, which were seconded by Councillor Foale, voted upon, and CARRIED unanimously.

RESOLVED that the Executive approves:

- (1) the increase of Council dwellings rent by 4.8% from 1 April 2026;
- (2) the increase of Garage rents by 4.8% from 1 April 2026;
- (3) the increase of Service Charges by 4.8% from 1 April 2026; and
- (4) in principle, an additional increase in rents for non-convergent properties to bring them into line with convergent rents over a period of time, with the precise level of any such additional increase be delegated to the Strategic Director for Corporate Resources and the Strategic Director for People and Communities, in consultation with the Leader and the relevant Portfolio Holder.

95

RAMM COLLECTIONS DEVELOPMENT POLICY (2026-30)

The Executive received the report to approve a new Collections Development Policy for the Royal Albert Memorial Museum & Art Gallery (RAMM) to cover the years 2026 to 2030. Members noted that the Collections Development Policy required Council approval as a requirement of Museum Accreditation, which was a UK standard to enable museums to apply for major investment from Arts Council England and other funding bodies.

Particular reference was made to:

- the policy, together with the forward plan for the RAMM, formed key components of Arts Council accreditation;
- the policy was comprehensive and set out how the museum acquired and managed its collections as well as the circumstances under which individual items may be disposed of;
- the RAMM held over 1 million objects, but only 1% were on display at any time, highlighting extensive behind the scenes work;
- collections dated back to around the 1860s, with some items of outstanding historical and cultural importance; and
- the policy also highlighted the RAMM as a unique and valuable resource for the city and future generations.

During the discussion, Executive Members raised the following points and questions:

- the strong focus on acquiring materials and artefacts from Devon and the local area and emphasis on ethical standards in collection management was commended;
- it was enquired whether disposal processes involved both sales and gifting and if income from disposals were anticipated;
- the RAMM was a regionally significant museum and custodian of national and international history and culture and the responsible approach to collection care and acquisitions was praised;
- having clearly defined criteria for what the RAMM would not collect was also important;
- the inclusion of a formal repatriation policy was an important and sensitive area; and
- the intentions to acquire items reflecting Exeter's multi-faith society and LGBTQ+ community was commended.

The Portfolio Holder for Arts, Culture & Tourism endorsed the policy and commended the detailed work in identifying the rationale and disposal opportunities across 10 broad categories. He also highlighted the importance of legal and ethical frameworks.

In response to questions raised, the Collections & Content Manager advised that the first preference for disposal was to transfer to another public organisation and any selling of objects being a last resort. Any funds from sales were reinvested into the museum and disposal was not intended to generate financial benefit for the organisation.

The Leader moved the recommendations, which were seconded by Councillor Foale, voted upon, and CARRIED unanimously.

RECOMMENDED that Council approve the Royal Albert Memorial Museum Collections Development Policy 2026-30.

96

RAMM FORWARD PLAN (2026-29)

The Executive received the report which required Council approval for the Royal Albert Memorial Museum & Art Gallery (RAMM) Forward Plan to cover the years 2026 to 2029. An approved Forward Plan was also a requirement of Museum Accreditation, for museums and galleries.

Particular reference was made to:

- the forward plan set the future direction for the RAMM and highlighted its importance locally, regionally, and beyond;
- the plan had been developed collaboratively by the RAMM team and set out vision, objectives, outcomes, and delivery methods;
- the plan would be reviewed over a three year review cycle and updated as circumstances change;
- the RAMM had an average annual attendance of 200,000 visitors and contributed £6.8 million to the local economy, whilst it engaged with communities for education, learning, and well-being; and
- the forward plan captured both the strategic policy and the broader societal impact of the RAMM to the area.

The Portfolio Holder for Arts, Culture & Tourism highlighted that approval was required to secure Arts Council funding and that the plan was adaptable and expected to evolve over time. It highlighted five key areas and included strategies to

reduce RAMM's dependence on council funding. The Portfolio Holder for Arts, Culture & Tourism endorsed the recommendation for approval.

An opposition group leader raised concerns about the recent thefts at the RAMM and in Bristol and noted that the report did not identify security and theft as a risk. Analyses of security measures were requested for the collection, both on-site and in storage. The opposition group leader advised that she had submitted the question in advance of the meeting to the Portfolio Holder.

The Portfolio Holder for Arts, Culture & Tourism confirmed he had received a copy of the questions the day preceding the meeting and that he had responded to advise that a comprehensive answer would be provided.

The Leader acknowledged the response and highlighted that the questions did not impact the recommendations being voted on and requested the Portfolio Holder for Arts, Culture & Tourism to respond outside of the meeting.

The Leader moved the recommendations, which were seconded by Councillor Foale, voted upon, and CARRIED unanimously.

RECOMMENDED that Council approve the Forward Plan for the Royal Memorial Museum and Art Gallery for the period 2026 to 2029.

97

EXETER CITY COUNCIL HOUSING SERVICES HATE CRIME POLICY

The Executive received the report on the revised Housing Services Hate Crime Policy 2026-2031 for adoption and implementation. The policy would operate in conjunction with the Housing Anti-Social Behaviour Policy to address hate crimes and hate incidents within Council housing communities.

Particular reference was made to:

- the Hate Crime Policy was initially presented to Executive on 23 September 2025 for recommendation to Council, however, Members had expressed concerns about the quality of the Equality Impact Assessment and the decision was made to defer the item to enable a more thorough review;
- since the September meeting, the EQIA had been updated and had significant changes had been made;
- the policy provided guidance for managing hate crime reports within council homes and estates and focussed on a victim focused approach as well as the Council's zero tolerance stance on hate crimes;
- the policy defined hate crimes and hate incidents, staff responsibilities, reporting, and recording as well as the importance of supporting victims and witnesses; and
- the policy definitions also aligned with the Police and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) standards.

During the discussion, Executive Members raised the following points and questions:-

- the policy was commended both previously and currently and the clear definitions and updated EQIA were seen as important improvements;
- the policy was a valuable addition to the council's housing policies; and
- the updated EQIA was commended for its clarity and thoroughness and had been supported by the Council Housing and Development Advisory Board and Tenants groups.

The Leader moved the recommendations, which were seconded by Councillor Foale, voted upon, and CARRIED unanimously.

RECOMMENDED that Council approve the adoption of the new Hate Crime Policy for the period 2026-2031.

(The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 6.33 pm)

Chair

The decisions indicated will normally come into force 5 working days after publication of the Statement of Decisions unless called in by a Scrutiny Committee. Where the matter in question is urgent, the decision will come into force immediately. Decisions regarding the policy framework or corporate objectives or otherwise outside the remit of the Executive will be considered by Council on 13 January 2026.

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REPORT TO COUNCIL

Date of Meeting: Council 13 January 2026

Report of: Chief Executive

Title: Response to the Secretary of State's Letter regarding Local Elections in 2026

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Is this an Executive or Council Function?

The decision on holding elections lies with the government.

1. What is the report about?

- 1.1 The report asks Members to consider the invitation from Alison McGovern MP, Minister of State for Local Government and Homelessness, dated 18 December 2025, to the Leader of the Council, to make representations concerning the postponement of the 2026 local elections. The invitation letter can be found at Appendix A. A key excerpt is:

I am therefore inviting you, by midnight on Thursday 15 January, to set out your views on the postponement of your local election and if you consider this could release essential capacity to deliver local government reorganisation in your area and so allow reorganisation to progress effectively. For those who have already made their views known, we will be taking these into account.

2. Recommendations:

- 2.1 That Council notes the letter from the Secretary of State dated 18 December 2025 and considers its content.
- 2.2 That having heard the views of Members, the Leader responds to the Minister of State by 15 January 2026 on whether or not to request postponement of the local elections scheduled for May 2026.

3. Reasons for the recommendation:

- 3.1 Local councillors elected in May 2026 would serve for only two years before their role was abolished and the new authorities are established.
- 3.2 There is a risk that the Government consultation on LGR proposals may coincide with the pre-election period. This would potentially limit the council's ability to engage with communities about the LGR process.
- 3.3 Postponing the local election in 2026 would release staff diverted to run and support the elections process and, in particular, financial resources which could be applied to focus on the work required to prepare for the transition to new unitary councils. This includes, for example, work on governance, service design, budgets, workforce changes and data and technology as set out in Section 4.4 of this report.

4. What are the resource implications including non-financial resources:

4.1 The table below summarises the costs and resources required to deliver a local election. These costs do not account for the 5 FTE employees in the Elections Team. It should be noted that these costs are dependent on timescales and the laying of any Statutory Order in Parliament to postpone the elections.

Task	Target Date	Indicative saving if election is postponed
<u>Venues</u> The polling stations and count venue has been booked. 55 venues in total. The booking payments have not yet been made. Cancellation costs may be incurred.	Completed	£10,000 – not yet paid. Cancellation costs may be incurred.
<u>Staffing</u> There are approximately 450 roles needed to deliver a local election. This consists of polling staff, postal vote staff and count staff.	Recruitment process to start in mid-January 2026	£120,000
<u>Logistics</u> A logistics contractor is employed to assist with this and to work towards checking and repairing booths, placing orders for the hire of equipment, arranging schedules for delivery to polling stations and resourcing their additional staff. The cost of this is £30,000 and it is estimated that £10,000 would be payable if the elections were postponed.	Logistics arrangements agreed by mid-January	£20,000
<u>Publicity and Communications</u> Publicity and communications advising of forthcoming elections and the need to register to vote. This usually begins in late February 26.	Late February	Internal
<u>Printing</u> Poll cards, ballot papers and postal vote papers will need to be printed in advance. Arrangements will need to be made with the print providers. Proofs for poll cards and postal vote stationery will need to be finalised by early March 2026.	Proofs for poll cards finalised by early March 26	£15,000
<u>Postage</u> Poll cards and postal votes will need to be posted to electors.	Poll cards – w/c 23 March 26 Postal votes – 23 April 26	£100,000

4.2 The resources required to deliver an election equates to approximately 450 roles consisting of the polling station staff, count staff and postal vote staff. The cost of running the local election is approximately £265,000.

4.3 Based on what has happened in other areas, it is possible that the Statutory Order issued by the Government will also suspend by-elections. However, if there is a requirement to hold by-elections to replace any councillors that wish to stand down, the cost to hold a by-election will be approximately £20,000.

4.4 In preparation for the transition to the new unitary councils, guidance from the MHCLG, District Councils Network and learning from other unitary councils recommends that preparatory work starts immediately, ahead of any decision on the structure of local government in local areas in relation to the following:

- **Democracy and governance:** Developing the constitutions, establishing the leadership to steward the new organisations and running the elections for new councillors who will govern the new unitary councils. This also includes setting up shadow council arrangements as part of the transition.
- **Service design:** Developing the detailed future operating models that lay out how each service within each new authority will work.
- **Budgets and finance:** Apportioning the existing budgets to each new unitary in a fair and transparent way, as well as dealing with other key financial policies such as council tax harmonisation.
- **Workforce and organisational change:** Supporting the existing officer workforce with the changes and staff transfer to the new organisations. This will also entail other workforce considerations such as union engagement, staff consultation, redeployment issues, and culture and practice changes.
- **Data and technology:** Ensuring that all data we hold is accurate and complete, before it is safely transferred to the correct unitary. Managing the systems which hold this data and support service delivery falls within this element.
- **Procurement and contracts:** Identifying which contracts are novated to each unitary. This may involve contract variations and negotiations with suppliers, as well as preparation for decommissioning and re-procurement.
- **Partnerships:** Ensuring that the strong working relationships with partner organisations are maintained, as well as setting up new arrangements that align with both unitary aspirations and regional goals.
- **External delivery bodies:** Councils have set up a variety of delivery vehicles (arm's length companies and joint ventures) to support strategic objectives. We will need to work through decisions around the future of these vehicles and ownership of them.

4.5 This work will commence in January 2026; a meeting has been scheduled for Devon Chief Executives and MHCLG where expectations will be clarified.

4.6 Members should note that the work described in 4.4 makes no assumptions about the future structure of local government in Devon.

5. Section 151 Officer comments:

5.1 Postponing the 2026 local elections will avoid expenditure of approximately £265,000.

These funds would be available to be allocated to other projects (including LGR) or return to General Reserves.

6. What are the legal aspects?

- 6.1 Section 87 of the Local Government Act 2000 allows the Secretary of State to change the year of the electoral cycle when elections take place. In order to postpone or change the timing of a local election, the Secretary of State is required to make the change by way of secondary legislation.
- 6.2 In accordance with the letter issued by the Minister of State, the Secretary of State will evaluate any reasons put forward to postpone a local election and, if approved, a statutory instrument in the form of an Order will be made to reflect the Secretary of State's decision. There is precedent for this. Such an Order was made by the Secretary of State in 2025 in relation to a number of authorities where elections were suspended pending local government reorganisation and the transition to new unitary authorities. Similarly, elections were postponed between 2019 and 2022 under the previous Conservative government where councils were being abolished and new unitary authorities created.

7. Monitoring Officer's comments:

- 7.1 As Members will note, the Leader of the Council has received a request from the Minister of State inviting views on the postponement of the forthcoming local election and whether postponement '...could release essential capacity to deliver local government reorganisation...and so allow reorganisation to proceed effectively'. The letter goes on to state that where there are genuine concerns about capacity, then the Secretary of State will consider making an Order to postpone elections for one year.

8. Equality Act 2010 (The Act)

- 8.1 Under the Act's Public Sector Equalities Duty, decision makers are required to consider the need to:
 - eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct;
 - advance equality by encouraging participation, removing disadvantage, taking account of disabilities and meeting people's needs; and
 - foster good relations between people by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- 8.2 In order to comply with the general duty authorities must assess the impact on equality of decisions, policies and practices. These duties do not prevent the authority from reducing services where necessary, but they offer a way of developing proposals that consider the impacts on all members of the community.
- 8.3 In making decisions the authority must take into account the potential impact of that decision in relation to age, disability, race/ethnicity (includes Gypsies and Travellers), sex and gender, gender identity, religion and belief, sexual orientation, pregnant women and new and breastfeeding mothers, marriage and civil partnership status in coming to a decision.
- 8.4 In making the recommendations, no potential impact has been identified on people with protected characteristics as determined by the Act. The final decision will be made by the Secretary of State. Therefore, no equalities impact assessment is required. However, the

council acknowledges the potential for confusion if residents are not aware of or understand the reasons for a potential postponement and the mitigation for this will be to ensure clear communications with residents and voters.

9. Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

9.1 The way that an election is delivered is set out in statute. If it is decided to postpone the local elections there would not be a requirement for people to travel to and from polling stations, nor to print paper documents therefore there would be a lower carbon footprint.

10. Report details:

Background:

10.1 On the 26 November 2025, Exeter City Council Executive agreed the council's proposal for LGR Devon. Executive resolved to:

- i) agree the Draft Final Proposal for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Devon;
- ii) support the creation of four proposed new unitary councils (the geographic details of which were outlined in the report) as follows:
 - a Unitary council for Exeter and surrounding parishes;
 - a Unitary council for Plymouth and surrounding parishes;
 - a Unitary council for Torbay and surrounding parishes; and
 - a Unitary council for the Devon Coast and Countryside.
- iii) agree to a Joint Submission with Plymouth City Council to present a shared Executive Summary with the two individual proposals as appendices. Members noted that Plymouth City Council supported this approach and their Cabinet agreed a similar recommendation at their meeting on 24 November 2025.
- iv) grant delegated authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, to make any further minor amendments to the LGR proposal prior to its submission to Government by 28 November 2025.

10.2 The council's final proposal for LGR in Devon was submitted to Government on 28 November 2025. This was submitted as a joint proposal with Plymouth City Council.

10.3 The Minister of State for Local Government and Homelessness then wrote to all Leaders of councils with elections in May 2026 where proposals for reorganisation have been submitted and decisions not yet taken.

10.4 The letter acknowledges that some councils have expressed concerns about their capacity to deliver a smooth and safe transition to new unitary councils, alongside running resource-intensive elections to councils who may shortly be abolished. The letter also acknowledges concerns expressed about the cost to taxpayers of holding elections to councils that are proposed shortly to be abolished.

10.5 The letter then goes on to invite, by midnight on Thursday 15 January 2026, councils to set out their views on the postponement of the local election and whether this could

release essential capacity to deliver local government reorganisation in their area to allow local government reorganisation to progress effectively.

11. How does this contribute to the council's Corporate Plan?

11.1 Consideration of the recommendation contained in this report will contribute to the council's priority of leading a well-run council.

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

12.1 **Postponing elections could result in residents feeling disenfranchised by not being able to vote in May 2026.** This should be mitigated by clear communication to residents outlining if that is the view to be expressed to government, the reasons for the postponement and identified savings to be repurposed.

12.2 **Individual councillors may not wish to extend their current term beyond the usual four years and choose to resign.** By-elections will be held. If the Government decides to suspend by-elections, the council will seek advice on the procedure that will need to be followed.

12.3 **Senior officer capacity is overstretched because of critical LGR work in addition to business as usual.** Delaying elections would allow officers to focus on the next phase of LGR ensuring a smooth and successful transition to the new unitary authorities.

12.4 **Timing of the government consultation period on LGR may overlap with the beginning of the pre-election period which might impede the engagement process.** This should be mitigated by a clear communication strategy.

13. Are there any other options?

13.1 There is no recommendation for a decision in this report.

Bindu Arjoon, Chief Executive

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

Background papers used in compiling this report:

None

List of Appendices:

Appendix A: Letter dated 18 December 2025 from Alison McGovern MP, Minister of State for Local Government and Homelessness.



Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

To: Leaders of councils with elections in May 2026 where proposals for reorganisation have been submitted and decisions not yet taken

Alison McGovern MP
Minister of State for Local Government and Homelessness
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

18 December 2025

Dear Leader,

I am writing to you regarding the elections your council is scheduled to hold on 7 May 2026.

This Government is determined to streamline local government by replacing the current two-tier system with new single-tier unitary councils, ending the wasteful two-tier premium. We are progressing this landmark reform quickly, which will be vital in delivering our vision: stronger local councils equipped to drive economic growth, improve local public services, and empower their communities. I am fully committed to ensuring councils can deliver new, sustainable structures within this Parliament.

We have now received proposals from all 20 remaining invitation areas, demonstrating strong collaboration between local partners. A consultation is open on 17 of those proposals from six invitation areas. I expect to launch a consultation in early February on proposals from the remaining 14 areas that seek to meet the terms of the 5 February statutory invitation. That consultation would be for seven weeks.

I remain committed to the indicative timetable that was published in July, that sees elections to new councils in May 2027 and those councils going live in April 2028. This is a complex process, and we will take decisions based on the evidence provided.

We have listened to councils telling us about the constraints they are operating within, and the work that reorganisation introduces on top of existing challenges. Now that we have received all proposals, it is only right that we listen to councils who are expressing concerns about their capacity to deliver a smooth and safe transition to new councils, alongside running resource-intensive elections to councils who may be shortly abolished. We have also received representations from councils concerned about the cost to taxpayers of holding elections to councils that are proposed to shortly be abolished.

Previous governments have postponed local elections in areas contemplating and undergoing local government reorganisation to allow councils to focus their time and energy on the process. We have now received requests from multiple councils to postpone their local elections in May 2026.

The Secretary of State recognises that capacity will vary between councils and that is why he has reached the position that, in his view, councils are in the best position to

judge the impact of potential postponements on your area and in the spirit of devolution and trusting local leaders, this Government will listen to you.

I am therefore inviting you, by midnight on Thursday 15 January, to set out your views on the postponement of your local election and if you consider this could release essential capacity to deliver local government reorganisation in your area and so allow reorganisation to progress effectively. For those who have already made their views known, we will be taking these into account. Views should be sent by email to LGRElections@communities.gov.uk.

The Secretary of State has adopted a locally-led approach. He is clear that should a council say they have no reason for postponement, then we will listen. But if you voice genuine concerns about your capacity, then we will take these concerns seriously. To that end, the Secretary of State is only minded to make an Order to postpone elections for one year for those councils who raise capacity concerns. A list of the relevant elections is annexed.

For areas where there are also scheduled town or parish council elections, the Secretary of State is minded to make no provision in the Order so these elections continue as scheduled, given town and parish councils are outside of local government reorganisation.

I appreciate that preparations for elections may have started, and you will be keen to have certainty, which we will deliver as soon as possible.

I am copying this letter to your Chief Executives, the other Leaders and Chief Executives of councils in the local government reorganisation programme, and to local MPs, Combined/Combined County Authority Mayors, Police and Crime Commissioners and Best Value Commissioners in local government reorganisation areas.

Yours sincerely,



ALISON MCGOVERN MP

Minister of State for Local Government and Homelessness

**Annex – 63 councils with elections under consideration for postponement
(there are 64 elections including that for the Mayor of Watford)**

1. Adur District Council
2. Basildon Borough Council
3. Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council
4. Blackburn with Darwen Council
5. Brentwood Borough Council
6. Broxbourne Borough Council
7. Burnley Borough Council
8. Cambridge City Council
9. Cannock Chase District Council
10. Cheltenham Borough Council
11. Cherwell District Council
12. Chorley Borough Council
13. City of Lincoln Council
14. Colchester City Council
15. Crawley Borough Council
16. East Sussex County Council
17. Eastleigh Borough Council
18. Epping Forest District Council
19. Essex County Council
20. Exeter City Council
21. Fareham Borough Council
22. Gosport Borough Council
23. Hampshire County Council
24. Harlow District Council
25. Hart District Council
26. Hastings Borough Council
27. Havant Borough Council
28. Huntingdonshire District Council
29. Hyndburn Borough Council
30. Ipswich Borough Council
31. Isle of Wight Council
32. Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council
33. Norfolk County Council
34. North East Lincolnshire Council
35. Norwich City Council
36. Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council
37. Oxford City Council
38. Pendle Borough Council
39. Peterborough City Council
40. Plymouth City Council
41. Portsmouth City Council
42. Preston City Council
43. Redditch Borough Council
44. Rochford District Council

45. Rugby Borough Council
46. Rushmoor Borough Council
47. South Cambridgeshire District Council
48. Southampton City Council
49. Southend-on-Sea City Council
50. St Albans City and District Council
51. Stevenage Borough Council
52. Suffolk County Council
53. Tamworth Borough Council
54. Three Rivers District Council
55. Thurrock Council
56. Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
57. Watford Borough Council
58. Watford Borough Council Mayor
59. Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
60. West Lancashire Borough Council
61. West Oxfordshire District Council
62. West Sussex County Council
63. Winchester City Council
64. Worthing Borough Council

REPORT TO COUNCIL

Date of Meeting: 13 January 2026

Report of: Independent Remuneration Panel

Title: Members' Allowances 2026/27

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Council

1. What is the report about?

1.1 To consider the findings of the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel which had met to discuss the level of Members' Allowances for the period 2026/27.

2. Recommendations:

That Council approves:

2.1 retains the basic structure and principles of the current Members' Allowances scheme for 2026/27;

2.2 retain the principle that any Member qualifying for more than one Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) is paid the higher allowance only;

2.3 the Councillors' Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances, including the Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor's Expenses Allowances, should continue to be linked and updated in line with the national pay awards for the previous year. This was a rate of 3.2% for 25/26;

2.4 the principle that Special Responsibility Allowances be paid to no more than 50% of the overall number of Councillors would continue to be kept under review;

2.5 the current Dependents' Carers' Allowance scheme be maintained, with the continuation of the level of allowance matching the hourly Living Wage as applicable from April each year. In the case of Members who need specialist care for a child or adult dependent, a higher rate, of up to £25 per hour or part thereof, can be agreed by negotiation in advance with the Democratic Services Manager;

2.6 the sum of £50 be paid to the Independent Persons affiliated to the Audit and Governance Committee for up to four hours work, and £100 for four hours and over, payable to each of the two Independent Persons (up to a maximum of £500 per person in any one year) be retained;

2.7 Travel and Subsistence allowances available for staff continue to apply to Exeter City Councillors, where appropriate;

- 2.8 that the Deputy Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee receive a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) for their role;
- 2.9 that job descriptions be created for all Chair and Deputy Chair roles; and
- 2.10 that the Deputy Leader should receive a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) for their role, reflecting the higher level of duties undertaken.

3. Reasons for the recommendation:

3.1 The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2001 and 2003 require Councils to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel to review and provide advice to the local authority on its scheme of Members' Allowances and in particular to recommend the allowance to be paid to Members.

4. What are the resource implications including non-financial resources:

4.1 A budget increase of 3.2% for the scheme of allowances in 2026/27 period totals £14,754. The Scheme recommended by the Independent Remuneration Panel, is attached to this report, at Appendix A with the detail of the current and proposed allowances. If the suggested increase of 3.2% is approved, this equates to a £226 increase in the level of Basic Allowance for each Member for 2026/27. With additional SRAs for the Deputy Chair of Audit and Governance and the Deputy Leader. This would bring the budget total to £529,674.

5. Section 151 Officer comments:

5.1 The financial implications of the recommendation are noted and, if approved will be added to the Council's budget for next year.

6. What are the legal aspects?

6.1 The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 require local authorities to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel consisting of at least three members which is tasked with making recommendations regarding the level of basic allowance for all members, the levels of discretionary allowances, and the responsibilities and duties for which the special responsibility allowances should be available, amongst other allowances.

The recommendations made by the independent remuneration panel are not binding on the council. The council is responsible for considering the panel's recommendations and deciding upon the members' allowances scheme, including any amendments or revocations. Accordingly, council has the discretion to adopt or reject the panel's recommendations, but it must publicise the recommendations and any scheme that it adopts.

7. Monitoring Officer's comments:

7.1 This report raises no issues for the Monitoring Officer, as it follows the legal requirements.

8. Equality Act 2010 (The Act)

8.1 In recommending this proposal no potential impact has been identified on people with protected characteristics as determined by the Act however, mitigating factors are in place.

9. Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

9.1 No direct carbon/environmental impacts arising from the recommendations.

10. Report details:

10.1 The City Council has an established Independent Remuneration Panel and remuneration scheme which provides for a reasonable recompense for the time, commitment and duties involved in being a Councillor. It allows for an element of public service (recognised as being 33% of time spent on Council business) and also reflects the level of time which the average Councillor spends on constituency matters, casework, local community work, and other Council work. The panel is comprised of three representatives.

10.2 The Panel met on one occasion in November 2025 and once in December 2025 to discuss the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2026/27.

10.3 The Panel discussed the Basic Allowance and proposed that for the 2026/27 allowances, it continue to be updated in line with national pay negotiations for the previous year. They noted that the staff pay award had been given at a rate of a 3.2% increase.

10.4 The Dependent Carers' Allowance is aligned to the Living Wage and will be updated with any increase in the Living Wage from 1 April 2026.

10.5 The Subsistence or Travel Allowances would remain unchanged and continue to match those paid to staff.

10.6 The Panel were mindful that 25 of the 39 would be receiving some form of SRA, representing 64% of Members and felt it important that this was highlighted as it was substantially over the recommended 50%.

10.7 The Panel discussed the role of the Deputy Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee and felt it was reasonable to establish an SRA for this position. It was proposed that this would be remunerated at a rate of 25% of the Basic Allowance.

10.8 The Panel were asked to review an SRA for the Deputy Leader and following a detailed review of the post and responsibilities felt that that it would be appropriate to provide the role of Deputy Leader with an SRA to remunerate them for the work carried out in that role. This would be given at a rate of 200% of the Basic Allowance.

10.9 The Panel noted that the Dependents' Carers' Allowance had been utilised since they last met.

10.10 The Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor's allowances, which were governed by the Local Government Act 1972 s.3 (5) were noted.

10.11 The Panel considered that, given the current situation with Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), that a wholesale change to the allowances scheme would be inappropriate at this time.

10.12 The panel reiterated the need for job descriptions to ensure Members were aware of their roles and responsibilities and to aide future discussions on levels of allowances.

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

11.1 The need for an up-to-date Scheme of Members' Allowances ensures that the Council supports the democratic process, therefore, contributing to leading a well-run council.

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

12.1 There are no risks with what is being proposed.

13. Are there any other options?

13.1 The Council has the ability not to accept any recommendations put forward by the Panel and to propose those of its own.

Director: Strategic Director for Corporate Resources, Dave Hodgson.

Author: Josie McDonald – Democratic Services Officer for the Chair of Exeter's Independent Remuneration Panel, Derek Phillips.

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

Background papers used in compiling this report:

- South West Councils Survey Results 2025
- Member Allowances Survey Results 2025

List of Appendices:

- Appendix A: Member Allowances 2026/27
- Equality Impact Assessment.

For enquiries please contact: democratic.services@exeter.gov.uk

MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2026/27

Basic Allowance	2025/26 +4%	2026/27 +3.2%
All Members	7,070	7,296
*Special Responsibility Allowances:-		
Leader (basic x 325%)	22,979	23,714
Deputy Leader uplift (Portfolio Holder + Basic x 25%)	-	1,344
Leader of an Opposition Group **		
Other Executive Members with Portfolios (Basic x 175%) (x up to 8)	12,373	12,769
Executive Member without Portfolio (if appointed)	1,767	1,824
Chairs of Scrutiny Committees (basic x 100%) (x 2)	7,070	7,296
Deputy Chair of Scrutiny Committee(basic x 50%)(x 2)	3,535	3,648
Chair of Planning Committee (basic x 100%) (x 1)	7,070	7,296
Deputy Chair of Planning Committee (basic x 50%) (x1)	3,535	3,648
Chair of Licensing Committee (basic x 75%) (x 1)	5,302	5,472
Chair of Audit and Governance Committee (basic x 50%) (x 1)	3,535	3,648
Chair of Council Housing and Development Advisory Board (basic x 50%) (x1) from the HRA	3,535	3,648
Chair of Harbour Board (basic x 25%) (x 1)	1,767	1,824
Member Champions (basic x 25%) (x2)	1,767	1,824
Lord Mayor's Expenses Allowances	7,070	7,296
Deputy Lord Mayor Mayor's Allowances	1,767	1,824
Deputy Chair Audit and Governance (basic x 25%)	-	1,824

* Any Member qualifying for more than one Special Responsibility Allowance is paid the higher allowance only

** The Leader of an Opposition group will receive an allowance based on the size of the political group, ranging from 20 to 60% of the size of the Group.

- A Group of two to receive an allowance equivalent to 20% of the basic allowance.
- A Group of between three and five to receive an allowance equivalent to 50% of the basic allowance.
- A Group of six or more, to receive an allowance equivalent to 60% of the basic allowance

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Equality Impact Assessment: *Members Allowances 2026/27*

The Equality Act 2010 includes a general duty which requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- **Eliminate discrimination**, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
- **Advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- **Foster good relations** between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not

In order to comply with the general duty authorities must assess the impact on equality of decisions, policies and practices. These duties do not prevent the authority from reducing services where necessary, but they offer a way of developing proposals that consider the impacts on all members of the community.

Authorities which fail to carry out equality impact assessments risk making poor and unfair decisions which may discriminate against particular groups and worsen inequality.

Committee name and date:	Report Title	Decisions being recommended:	People with protected characteristics potentially impacted by the decisions to be made:
Council 13 January 2026	Member Allowances 2026/27	<p>That the following recommendations be made to Council in respect of the Exeter City Council Members' Allowances for the period 2026/27:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) the basic structure and principles of the current Members' Allowances scheme be retained for 2026/27; (2) the principle that any Member qualifying for more than one Special Responsibility 	<p>All Members, including those with protected characteristics as well as any dependents with protected characteristics. Specifically, recommendation 1 could have a positive impact in that the offer of an allowance could enable an individual to become a Councillor.</p>

Committee name and date:	Report Title	Decisions being recommended:	People with protected characteristics potentially impacted by the decisions to be made:
		<p>Allowance (SRA) is paid the higher allowance only, should be retained;</p> <p>(3) the Councillors Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances, including the Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor's Expenses Allowances, should continue to be linked and updated in line with the national pay award for the previous year. This was a rate of 3.2% for 25/26;</p> <p>(4) the principle that SRAs be paid to no more than 50% of the overall number of Councillors would continue to be kept under review and adhered to where possible;</p> <p>(5) the current Dependents' Carers' Allowance Scheme be maintained, with the continuation of the level of allowance matching the hourly Living Wage as applicable from April each year. In the case of Members who need specialist care for a child or adult dependent, a higher rate, of up to £25 per hour or part thereof, can be agreed by negotiation in advance with the Democratic Services Manager;</p> <p>(6) the sum of £50 to be paid to the Independent Persons affiliated to the Audit and Governance Committee for up to four hours work, and £100 for four hours and over, payable to each of the two Independent Persons (up to a maximum of £500 per person in anyone year) be retained; and</p>	<p>In recommendation ?? the offer of additional recompense for care during approved duty could impact children and those with care and support needs.</p>

Committee name and date:	Report Title	Decisions being recommended:	People with protected characteristics potentially impacted by the decisions to be made:
		(7) Travel and Subsistence allowances available for staff continue to apply for Exeter City Councillors, where appropriate.	

Factors to consider in the assessment: For each of the groups below, an assessment has been made on whether the proposed decision will have a **positive, negative or neutral impact**. This is must be noted in the table below alongside brief details of why this conclusion has been reached and notes of any mitigation proposed. Where the impact is negative, a **high, medium or low assessment** is given. The assessment rates the impact of the policy based on the current situation (i.e. disregarding any actions planned to be carried out in future).

High impact – a significant potential impact, risk of exposure, history of complaints, no mitigating measures in place etc.

Medium impact –some potential impact exists, some mitigating measures are in place, poor evidence

Low impact – almost no relevancy to the process, e.g. an area that is very much legislation led and where the Council has very little discretion

Protected characteristic/ area of interest	Positive or Negative Impact	High, Medium or Low Impact	Reason
Race and ethnicity (including Gypsies and Travellers; migrant workers; asylum seekers).	Positive	Low	The key recommendations comply with the Local Authorities (Members' allowances) England Regulations 2001 and 2003. There is no evidence that this will impact on any specific person based on this characteristic.
Disability: as defined by the Equality Act – a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse impact on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.	Positive	Medium	The key recommendations comply with the Local Authorities (Members' allowances) England Regulations 2001 and 2003. Low take-up of the Carers allowance may indicate a need to promote the scheme to ensure those impacted are supported to access in order to ensure that attendance at committees is not impacted.

Protected characteristic/ area of interest	Positive or Negative Impact	High, Medium or Low Impact	Reason
Sex	Positive	Low	<p>The key recommendations comply with the Local Authorities (Members' allowances) England Regulations 2001 and 2003.</p> <p>There is no evidence that this will impact on any specific person based on this characteristic.</p>
Gender reassignment	Positive	Low	<p>The key recommendations comply with the Local Authorities (Members' allowances) England Regulations 2001 and 2003.</p> <p>There is no evidence that this will impact on any specific person based on this characteristic.</p>
Religion and belief (includes no belief, some philosophical beliefs such as Buddhism and sects within religions).	Positive	Low	<p>The key recommendations comply with the Local Authorities (Members' allowances) England Regulations 2001 and 2003.</p> <p>There is no evidence that this will impact on any specific person based on this characteristic.</p>
Sexual orientation (including heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual).	Positive	Low	<p>The key recommendations comply with the Local Authorities (Members' allowances) England Regulations 2001 and 2003.</p> <p>There is no evidence that this will impact on any specific person based on this characteristic.</p>
Age (children and young people aged 0-24; adults aged 25-50; younger older people aged 51-75/80; older people 81+; frail older people; people living with age related conditions. The age categories are for illustration only as overriding consideration should be given to needs).	Positive	Medium	<p>The key recommendations comply with the Local Authorities (Members' allowances) England Regulations 2001 and 2003.</p> <p>Low take-up of the Carers allowance may indicate a need to promote the scheme to Members in order that needs are met and attendance at committees is not impacted negatively.</p>
Pregnancy and maternity including new and breast feeding mothers	Positive	Low	The key recommendations comply with the Local Authorities (Members' allowances) England Regulations 2001 and 2003.

Protected characteristic/ area of interest	Positive or Negative Impact	High, Medium or Low Impact	Reason
			There is no evidence that this will impact on any specific person based on this characteristic.
Marriage and civil partnership status	Positive	Low	The key recommendations comply with the Local Authorities (Members' allowances) England Regulations 2001 and 2003. There is no evidence that this will impact on any specific person based on this characteristic.

Actions identified that will mitigate any negative impacts and/or promote inclusion:

- The Council will consider Equalities and protected characteristics at all stages of any decision.
- All officers will ensure that all Members receive fair and equitable treatment irrespective of their background or protected characteristics, as defined by the Equality Act 2010.
- A plan to positively promote uptake of the Carers allowance scheme to ensure Members are aware and feel supported to take this up where appropriate could be beneficial.

Officer: Josie McDonald

Date: 12 December 2025.

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REPORT TO COUNCIL

Date of Meeting: 13 January 2026

Report of: Strategic Director for Corporate Resources

Title: Exeter City Living Ltd Business Plan Financial Year 2026-27

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Council

1. What is the report about?

This report provides Members with the following:

1.1 An update on financial performance of Exeter City Living in the current financial year and projection of the financial position of the business for the business plan period;

2. Recommendations:

2.1 That Council approves the Business Plan.

3. Reasons for the recommendation:

3.1 The Business Plan sets out a roadmap for managing the financial performance of the company.

4. What are the resource implications including non-financial resources:

4.1 There are none arising out of the report.

5. Section 151 Officer comments:

5.1 There are no significant financial implications for Council to consider in this report. The performance is in line with the expected position for the Company.

6. What are the legal aspects?

6.1 In accordance with ECL management agreement, the business plan requires the approval of Council.

7. Monitoring Officer's comments:

7.1 The Monitoring Officer has no additional comments.

8. Equality Act 2010 (The Act)

8.1 In recommending this proposal no potential impact has been identified on people with protected characteristics as determined by the Act because the report's recommendations address Companies not individuals.

9. Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

9.1 No direct carbon/environmental impacts arising from the recommendations.

10. Report details:

Exeter City Living Ltd Business Plan Financial Year 2026-27

The purpose of this year's Business Plan is to set out a projection of the financial position of the business continuing to manage six residential flats in the Guildhall Shopping Centre. Exeter City Living's (ECL) ambition through proactive asset management is to provide quality residential property for the private rental market in Exeter and a long-term revenue stream for Exeter City Council (ECC).

The Business Plan for 2026-27 is seeking shareholder approval to continue business as usual in managing the six flats. A financial projection of activity in 2025-26 and the three year Business Plan period to end 2028-29 can be found in Appendix A – Financial Statements. Accounts for the prior year 2024-25 can be found in Appendix B.

Financial Performance 2025-26

A Loss before Tax of £12 is forecast for 2025-26, based on reporting up to 4 December 2025 and anticipated activity for the remainder of the financial year. The net shareholder funds at the end of 2025-26 are forecast to be £117.2k (see Appendix A). Rental income for 2025-26 is projected to be c15% lower than the prior year due to void periods experienced with Flats 3, 4 and D during the year. The ECL Management Fee has reduced from 54.1% in 2024-25 to a forecast fee of 42.15% for 2025-26 due to reduced administrative costs following the transition from development activity to solely residential rental activity.

The required ECL Management Fee to be retained from net rental proceeds to be distributed to ECC has been calculated to cover the costs of the business and to leave a nominal loss, funded by existing reserves, to avoid the business incurring a Corporation Tax liability (a Corporation Tax charge of £48 in 2025-26 relates to the prior year 2024-25). The required Management Fee to be retained from net rental proceeds has been calculated at 42.15% to cover business running costs in 2025-26 which are higher than anticipated in future years due to the transition from development activity to solely residential rental activity being finalised in 2025-26. The Management Fee is forecast to reduce to 24.85% from the Budget year of 2026-27 when the costs of the business will be solely related to rental activity.

The ECL Management Fee retained from the net rental proceeds distributed to ECC is to be reviewed annually in line with the Business Plan projections so that this income stream is optimised to meet the costs of the business and to minimise any Corporation Tax liability. ECL is indemnified by ECC to meet the costs of managing the flats and its obligations under the lease should the Management Fee be insufficient to discharge these sums e.g. in the event of a significant reduction in rental income or significant repairs and maintenance costs incurred.

Budget 2026-27

For enquiries please contact: democratic.services@exeter.gov.uk

The Budget year of 2026-27 forecasts a Loss before Tax of £9 and net shareholder funds of £117.2k as outlined in the financial projections set out in Appendix A.

Financial projections for rental income and associated rental management and repairs and maintenance costs have been projected based on actual activity in the 3 years to date. Zero inflation on rental income in 2026-27 has been assumed due to a slowing in rental property market demand following exceptionally high demand in the years following the Covid 19 pandemic. A rental income inflation assumption of 2.0% has been applied in subsequent years to reflect income meeting general inflationary cost increases and that rental income rates increase periodically, generally due to a change in tenancy, rather than regularly on an annual basis.

The lettings management fee, a percentage of rental income, is assumed to remain at its current level throughout the Business Plan period. Overheads which cover external audit services and insurance costs have been projected to increase by 3.5% in the Budget year 2026-27 and by 2.5% in 2026-27 and 2028-29. Non-Executive Director costs are expected to reduce to £6,000 per annum in the Budget from 2026-27 after a reduction in the number of Directors in the year 2025-26.

The Strategic Director approved this Business Plan on 10 December 2025.

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

11.1 The recommendation in this report supports the Council's Corporate Priorities of Leading a Well-Run Council – Well Managed Assets: In reviewing the activities of the company the Council is taking a proactive approach to managing alternative business structures where it has an interest.

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

12.1 The risks relate to failing to control the financial performance of the company and are mitigated by regular reporting to the Shareholder Representative.

13. Are there any other options?

13.1 None

Strategic Director Corporate Resources, Dave Hodgson

Author: Finance Lead - Commercial

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

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

None

List of Appendices:

- Appendix A – Financial Statements
- Appendix B

For enquiries please contact: democratic.services@exeter.gov.uk

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Appendix A – Financial Statements

	2025-26 £	2026-27 (Budget) £	2027-28 £	2028-29 £
INCOME STATEMENT				
Turnover	17,927	13,170	13,379	13,619
Cost of Sales	0	0	0	0
Gross Profit/(Loss)	17,927	13,170	13,379	13,619
Administrative Expenses	(£21,359)	(£15,179)	(£15,408)	(£15,644)
Other Operating Income	0	0	0	0
Other Operating Expense	0	0	0	0
Operating Profit/(Loss)	(£21,359)	(£15,179)	(£15,408)	(£15,644)
Interest Receivable	3,421	2,000	2,000	2,000
Profit/(Loss) before Tax	(£12)	(£9)	(£29)	(£24)
Corporation Tax	(£48)	0	0	0
Profit/(Loss) after Tax	(£60)	(£9)	(£29)	(£24)
BALANCE SHEET				
WP	0	0	0	0
Debtors	3,583	0	0	0
Cash	170,416	185,366	186,626	187,918
Current Assets	173,998	185,366	186,626	187,918
Creditors	(£56,801)	(£68,177)	(£69,466)	(£70,783)
Long term liabilities	0	0	0	0
Total Assets less Liabilities	117,198	117,189	117,160	117,136
Capital & Reserves				
Share Capital	1	1	1	1
Capital Contribution	4,392,332	4,392,332	4,392,332	4,392,332
P&L Account	(£4,275,135)	(£4,275,144)	(£4,275,173)	(£4,275,197)
Shareholders Funds	117,198	117,189	117,160	117,136
CASHFLOW STATEMENT				
Cash flows from operating activities				
Loss for the year	(£12)	(£9)	(£29)	(£24)
Finance income	(£3,421)	(£2,000)	(£2,000)	(£2,000)
Finance costs	0	0	0	0
Corporation Tax	0	0	0	0
	(£3,433)	(£2,009)	(£2,028.95)	(£2,024)
Working capital adjustments				
Increase in stocks	0	0	0.00	0
(Increase)/decrease in trade debtors	149	3,583	0.00	0
Increase/(decrease) in trade creditors	34,889	11,376	1,289.43	1,316
Cash generated from operations	31,605	12,950	(£740.00)	(£708)
Corporation Tax paid	(£48)	0	0	0
Net cash flow from operating activities	31,558	12,950	(£740)	(£708)
Cash flows from investing activities				
Interest received	3,421	2,000	2,000	2,000
Net cash flows from investing activities	3,421	2,000	2,000	2,000
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	34,978	14,950	1,260	1,292
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 April	135,437	170,416	185,366	186,626
Cash and cash equivalents at 31 March	170,416	185,366	186,626	187,918

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Exeter City Living Limited

**Annual Report and Financial Statements
Year Ended 31 March 2025**

Registration number: 11410540

Exeter City Living Limited

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Statement of Income and Retained Earnings	8
Balance Sheet	9
Notes to the Financial Statements	10 to 13

Exeter City Living Limited

Company Information

Director S E Edwards

Registered office Exeter City Council
Civic Centre
Paris Street
Exeter
EX1 1JN

Auditors PKF Francis Clark
Statutory Auditor
Centenary House
Peninsula Park
Rydon Lane
Exeter
EX2 7XE

Exeter City Living Limited

Directors' Report for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

The director presents her report and the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025.

Directors of the company

The directors who held office during the year were as follows:

R M Connolly (ceased 9 June 2025)

C R A Kislingbury (ceased 10 June 2025)

S E Edwards

R J Hayman (ceased 3 June 2024)

Principal activity

The principal activity of the company is the management of properties.

Going concern

The director has obtained confirmation that the Shareholders will continue to provide financial and operational support to the company for the foreseeable future, being at least 12 months from approval of these financial statements. As such the director believes the going concern basis is appropriate.

Disclosure of information to the auditors

The director has taken steps that she ought to have taken as a director in order to make herself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the company's auditors are aware of that information. The director confirms that there is no relevant information that she knows of and of which she knows the auditors are unaware.

Small companies provision statement

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions relating to companies subject to the small companies regime within Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006.

Approved and authorised by the director on 1 December 2025



.....
S E Edwards
Director

Exeter City Living Limited

Statement of Directors' Responsibilities

The director acknowledges her responsibilities for preparing the Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the director to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the director has elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). Under company law the director must not approve the financial statements unless she is satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company and of the profit or loss of the company for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the director is required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business.

The director is responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the company and enable her to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. She is also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Exeter City Living Limited

Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Exeter City Living Limited

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Exeter City Living Limited (the 'company') for the year ended 31 March 2025, which comprise the Statement of Income and Retained Earnings, Balance Sheet, and Notes to the Financial Statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) incorporating the requirements of Section 1A.

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the company's affairs as at 31 March 2025 and of its profit for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the auditor responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the director's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the original financial statements were authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the director with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The director is responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Exeter City Living Limited

Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Exeter City Living Limited

Opinion on other matter prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Directors' Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Directors' Report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of our knowledge and understanding of the company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Directors' Report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of directors' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- the director was not entitled to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the small companies regime and take advantage of the small companies' exemptions in preparing the Directors' report and from the requirement to prepare a strategic report.

Responsibilities of the director

As explained more fully in the Statement of Directors' Responsibilities set out on page 3, the director is responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the director determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the director is responsible for assessing the company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the director either intends to liquidate the company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor Responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

Exeter City Living Limited

Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Exeter City Living Limited

During our audit planning, we gained an understanding of the company and the industry in which the company operates as part of this assessment to identify the key laws and regulations affecting the company. We identified the key regulations and principal risks of non-compliance with laws and regulations as relating to health and safety regulations, breaches of the General Data Protection Regulation ("GDPR") and the Construction, Design and Management Regulations. We also considered those laws and regulations that have a direct impact on the preparation of the financial statements such as the Companies Act 2006 and relevant tax legislation.

We discussed with management how the compliance with these laws and regulations is monitored and discussed policies and procedures in place. We also identified the individuals who have responsibility for ensuring that the company complies with laws and regulations and deals with reporting any issues if they arise. As part of our planning procedures, we assessed the risk of any non-compliance with laws and regulations on the company's ability to continue trading and the risk of material misstatement to the accounts.

Based on this understanding we designed our audit procedures to identify non-compliance with such laws and regulations. Our procedures involved the following:

- Enquiries of management regarding their knowledge of any non-compliance with laws and regulations that could affect the financial statements. As part of these enquiries we also discussed with management whether there have been any known instances of fraud.
- Reviewing of the GDPR policy and enquiries to management as to the occurrence and outcome of any reportable breaches.
- Reviewing the board meeting minutes to identify and potential breaches in laws and regulations, of which there were none identified.
- Reviewing legal and professional costs to identify any possible non-compliance or legal costs in respect of non-compliance.
- Auditing the risk of management override of controls, including through testing journal entries and other adjustments for appropriateness, and evaluating the business rationale of significant transactions outside the normal course of business.
- Reviewing estimates and judgements made in the accounts for any indication of bias and challenged assumptions used by management in making the estimates.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement due to fraud is higher than the risk of not detecting one resulting from error, as fraud may involve deliberate omissions, collusion, forgery, misrepresentations, or the override of internal controls. We are also less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations that are not closely related to events and transactions reflected in the financial statements.

A further description of our responsibilities is available on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Exeter City Living Limited

Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Exeter City Living Limited

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the company and the company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

PKF Francis Clark

Tom Beable (FCA) (Senior Statutory Auditor)
PKF Francis Clark, Statutory Auditor

Centenary House
Peninsula Park
Rydon Lane
Exeter
EX2 7XE

Date: 1 December 2025

Exeter City Living Limited

Statement of Income and Retained Earnings

Year Ended 31 March 2025

	Year ended 31 March 2025 £	Year ended 31 March 2024 £
Turnover	32,232	10,905,211
Cost of sales	<u>-</u>	<u>(10,249,987)</u>
Gross profit	32,232	655,224
Administrative expenses	(59,422)	(486,162)
Other operating income	18,252	66,524
Other operating expenses	<u>-</u>	<u>(65,366)</u>
Operating (loss)/profit	<u>(8,938)</u>	<u>170,220</u>
Other interest receivable and similar income	11,487	81,287
Interest payable and similar charges	<u>(2,299)</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>9,188</u>	<u>81,287</u>
Profit before tax	250	251,507
Taxation	<u>(228)</u>	<u>-</u>
Profit for the financial year	22	251,507
Retained earnings brought forward	<u>(4,275,100)</u>	<u>(4,526,607)</u>
Retained earnings carried forward	<u>(4,275,078)</u>	<u>(4,275,100)</u>

The notes on pages 10 to 13 form an integral part of these financial statements.
Page 8

Exeter City Living Limited

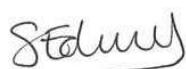
Balance Sheet

31 March 2025

	Note	2025 £	2024 £
Current assets			
Debtors	4	4,395	4,304
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>135,437</u>	<u>1,717,229</u>
		139,832	1,721,533
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	5	(22,577)	(1,604,300)
Net assets		<u>117,255</u>	<u>117,233</u>
Capital and reserves			
Called up share capital		1	1
Capital contribution reserves	6	4,392,332	4,392,332
Profit and loss account		(4,275,078)	(4,275,100)
Shareholders' funds		<u>117,255</u>	<u>117,233</u>

These financial statements have been prepared and delivered in accordance with the special provisions relating to companies subject to the small companies regime within Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006.

Approved and authorised by the director on 1 December 2025



.....
S E Edwards
Director

Company Registration Number: 11410540

The notes on pages 10 to 13 form an integral part of these financial statements.
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Exeter City Living Limited

Notes to the Financial Statements

Year Ended 31 March 2025

1 General information

The company is a private company limited by share capital, incorporated in England and Wales.

The address of its registered office is:

Exeter City Council
Civic Centre
Paris Street
Exeter
EX1 1JN

2 Accounting policies

Summary of significant accounting policies and key accounting estimates

The principal accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all the years presented, unless otherwise stated.

Statement of compliance

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard 102 Section 1A - 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Companies Act 2006. There are no material departures.

Basis of preparation

These financial statements have been prepared using the historical cost convention.

The functional currency of Exeter City Living Limited is considered to be pounds sterling because that is the currency of the economic environment in which the company operates.

Exeter City Living Limited

Notes to the Financial Statements

Year Ended 31 March 2025

Going concern

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis.

During the prior year ended 31 March 2024 a decision was made by the sole Shareholder (Exeter City Council), after an independent review, to wind down the company's operations significantly.

On the 26 March 2024 the Shareholder acquired all remaining work in progress of the company, settled via a reduction in the loan due to the Shareholder. A further payment was made from cash towards the Shareholder loan. The work in progress and cash transferred did not cover the total loan amount due to the Shareholder. The remaining amount due to the Shareholder was waived on 26 March 2024 by the Shareholder and treated as a capital contribution.

The company has continued in a much-reduced capacity for the purpose of managing six leasehold properties.

The Director has obtained confirmation that the Shareholder will continue to provide financial and operational support to the company for the foreseeable future, being at least 12 months from approval of these financial statements.

As such the director believes the going concern basis is appropriate.

Revenue recognition

Turnover comprises the fair value of the consideration received or receivable for the sale of goods and provision of services in the ordinary course of the company's activities. Turnover is shown net of returns, rebates and discounts.

Turnover and profit on the sale of residential property is recognised on the legal completion date. Turnover from development management services and management fees are recognised as the services are provided.

Tax

Tax is recognised in profit or loss, except that a change attributable to an item of income or expense recognised as other comprehensive income is also recognised directly in other comprehensive income.

The current corporation tax charge is calculated on the basis of tax rates and laws that have been enacted or substantively enacted by the reporting date.

Exeter City Living Limited

Notes to the Financial Statements

Year Ended 31 March 2025

Financial instruments

Classification

The company holds the following financial instruments:

- Short term trade and other debtors and creditors;
- Other loans; and
- Cash and bank balances.

All financial instruments are classified as basic.

Recognition and measurement

The company has chosen to apply the recognition and measurement principles in FRS102.

Financial instruments are recognised when the company becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument and derecognised when in the case of assets, the contractual rights to cash flows from the assets expire or substantially all the risks and rewards of ownership are transferred to another party, or in the case of liabilities, when the company's obligations are discharged, expire or are cancelled.

Except for other loans, such instruments are initially measured at transaction price, including transaction costs, and are subsequently carried at the undiscounted amount of the cash or other consideration expected to be paid or received, after taking account of impairment adjustments.

Other loans are initially measured at transaction price, including transaction costs, and are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

3 Staff numbers

The average number of persons employed by the company during the year was 2 (2024: 2).

4 Debtors

	2025	2024
	£	£
Trade debtors	3,584	1,193
Prepayments and accrued income	149	2,450
Other debtors	662	661
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	4,395	4,304

Exeter City Living Limited

Notes to the Financial Statements

Year Ended 31 March 2025

5 Creditors

	2025 £	2024 £
Due within one year		
Trade creditors	265	716,421
Taxation and social security	920	776,316
Accruals and deferred income	21,392	111,438
Other creditors	-	125
	<u>22,577</u>	<u>1,604,300</u>

6 Reserves

The capital contribution reserve represents loan balances waived by the ultimate parent.

7 Ultimate parent undertaking

The parent entity preparing consolidated accounts including the company is Exeter City Council.

The registered office of Exeter City Council is that of Exeter City Living Limited as disclosed in note 1.

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Equality Impact Assessment: Exeter City Living Ltd Business Plan Financial Year 2026-27

The Equality Act 2010 includes a general duty which requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- **Eliminate discrimination**, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
- **Advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- **Foster good relations** between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not

In order to comply with the general duty authorities must assess the impact on equality of decisions, policies and practices. These duties do not prevent the authority from reducing services where necessary, but they offer a way of developing proposals that consider the impacts on all members of the community.

Authorities which fail to carry out equality impact assessments risk making poor and unfair decisions which may discriminate against particular groups and worsen inequality.

Committee name and date:	Report Title	Decisions being recommended:	People with protected characteristics potentially impacted by the decisions to be made:
Council 13 January 2026	Exeter City Living Ltd Business Plan Financial Year 2026-27	That Council approves the Business Plan	There is no potential impact on people with protected characteristics because the report's recommendations address Companies not individuals

Factors to consider in the assessment: For each of the groups below, an assessment has been made on whether the proposed decision will have a **positive, negative or neutral impact**. This is must be noted in the table below alongside brief details of why this conclusion has been reached and notes of any mitigation proposed. Where the impact is negative, a **high, medium or low assessment** is given. The assessment rates the impact of the policy based on the current situation (i.e. disregarding any actions planned to be carried out in future).

High impact – a significant potential impact, risk of exposure, history of complaints, no mitigating measures in place etc.

Medium impact –some potential impact exists, some mitigating measures are in place, poor evidence

Low impact – almost no relevancy to the process, e.g. an area that is very much legislation led and where the Council has very little discretion

Protected characteristic/ area of interest	Positive or Negative Impact	High, Medium or Low Impact	Reason
Race and ethnicity (including Gypsies and Travellers; migrant workers; asylum seekers).	n/a	n/a	There is no anticipated impact on this characteristic.
Disability: as defined by the Equality Act – a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse impact on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.	n/a	n/a	There is no anticipated impact on this characteristic.
Sex	n/a	n/a	There is no anticipated impact on this characteristic.
Gender reassignment	n/a	n/a	There is no anticipated impact on this characteristic.
Religion and belief (includes no belief, some philosophical beliefs such as Buddhism and sects within religions).	n/a	n/a	There is no anticipated impact on this characteristic.
Sexual orientation (including heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual).	n/a	n/a	There is no anticipated impact on this characteristic.
Age (children and young people aged 0-24; adults aged 25-50; younger older people aged 51-75/80; older	n/a	n/a	There is no anticipated impact on this characteristic.

Protected characteristic/ area of interest	Positive or Negative Impact	High, Medium or Low Impact	Reason
people 81+; frail older people; people living with age related conditions. The age categories are for illustration only as overriding consideration should be given to needs).			
Pregnancy and maternity including new and breast feeding mothers	n/a	n/a	There is no anticipated impact on this characteristic.
Marriage and civil partnership status	n/a	n/a	There is no anticipated impact on this characteristic.

Actions identified that will mitigate any negative impacts and/or promote inclusion

- N/a

Officer: Suzanne Edwards

Date: 10 December 2025

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REPORT TO COUNCIL

Date of Meeting: 13 January 2026

Report of: Strategic Director Place

Title: Community Safety

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Council

1. What is the report about?

1.1 To establish several roles to lead on community safety across Exeter, including tackling Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in the City Centre and neighbourhoods.

2. Recommendations:

It is recommended that Council approves:

2.1 A budget of £335,390 to establish a permanent Community Safety Team (CST);

2.2 The provision of eight new roles in total within the Directorate for Place under the management of the Head of Service for City Centre & Net Zero.

3. Reasons for the recommendation:

3.1 In July 2024, the Council established a pilot CST to trial and test patrols within the City Centre, specifically the area covered by the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO). Four temporary posts were established, including two officers seconded from the Public Car Parking team and two agency workers. These posts were part funded by the Police and Crime Commissioner and In Exeter. In addressing crime and ASB, the CST has made a significant impact on the feeling of safety within the City Centre.

3.2 The CST will support the enforcement of the City Centre and St Thomas PSPO and will patrol public parks, open spaces and neighbourhood shopping precincts across the city that suffer from ASB. This is in response to suggestions made as part of the 2025 residents survey.

3.3 To support Safer Exeter, this report also recommends the introduction of a Community Safety Team Supervisor and a Community Safety Partnership Manager, to engage in a wider range of community safety activities.

4. What are the resource implications including non-financial resources:

4.1 External funding of £45,000 per annum has been committed by InExeter until 2029/30. It is understood that no further funding will be forthcoming from the Police and Crime Commissioner.

4.2 Within the City Centre & Net Zero budget (M303) there is a budget of £32,700, that previously covered the salary of the UK Shared Prosperity Funding Project Manager. This budget will be utilised to cover salaries of this new Team.

4.3 Considering existing budget and external funding, the cost to establish a new team of eight is £335,390 per annum, which covers salary, oncosts, training, accreditation, uniform and a small electric vehicle.

4.4 The table below highlights existing internal budget, external income and additional budget required from 2025/26.

INCOME					
	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
Exeter City Council (M303)	£32,700	£32,700	£32,700	£32,700	£32,700
InExeter	£45,000	£45,000	£45,000	£45,000	£0
TOTAL	£77,700	£77,700	£77,700	£77,700	£32,700
EXPENDITURE					
1 x Community Safety Partnership Manager (Grade M)	£67,808	£67,808	£67,808	£67,808	£67,808
1 x Community Safety Team Supervisor (Grade I)	£53,183	£53,183	£53,183	£53,183	£53,183
6x Community Safety Team Officer (Grade G)	£258,816	£258,816	£258,816	£258,816	£258,816
Training, accreditation & Uniform for 7 roles (£4k each)	£28,000	£28,000	£28,000	£28,000	£28,000
Electric Car to undertake city patrols	£5,283	£5,283	£5,283	£5,283	£5,283
TOTAL	£413,090	£413,090	£413,090	£413,090	£413,090
BUDGET REQUIRED	£335,390	£335,390	£335,390	£335,390	£380,390

4.5 There are currently four officers employed within the CST, their temporary contracts end on 31 March 2026. If the recommendations are supported, there will be an internal expression of interest to fill the Supervisor and Community Safety Officer roles. It is anticipated that not all positions will be filled via this route, so some may be advertised externally. The process will begin mid-January

5. Section 151 Officer comments:

5.1 The proposed £335,000 additional budget has been added as a pressure to the 2026/27 budget to be considered in February. Council is still in position to approve a balanced budget.

For enquiries please contact: democratic.services@exeter.gov.uk

6. What are the legal aspects?

6.1 The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 defines anti-social behaviour as 'behaviour by a person which causes, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to persons not of the same household as the person'.

6.2 The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 provides the power for local authorities to set up Public Spaces Protection Orders which includes gives authority to, for example, disperse people and to issue Fixed Penalty Notices.

6.3 Powers relating to preventing littering include prosecution and fixed penalties (Sections 87 and 88 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990). It is an offence to throw down, drop or otherwise deposit, and then to leave, litter under section 87 of the 1990 Act. The offence, as extended by section 18 of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005, applies to all places that are open to the air, including private land and land covered by water.

6.4 Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 grants a wide discretion to local authorities to take steps calculated to discharge its statutory functions. That includes the provision of budgets and staff in order to achieve its functions.

7. Monitoring Officer's comments:

7.1 The Monitoring Officer has no additional comments.

8. Equality Act 2010 (The Act)

8.1 In recommending this proposal potential impacts have been identified on people with protected characteristics as determined by the Act and an Equalities Impact Assessment has been included in the background papers for Member's attention.

9. Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

9.1 There are no direct carbon or environmental impacts arising from the recommendations. The CST will locate themselves within the City Centre, they have access to an electric van. The electric van carries equipment for emergencies, such as cones, tape and a first aid kit. Patrols within the City Centre are on foot.

10. Report details:

10.1 The pilot CST has been operating since July 2024 to undertake visible foot patrols across the city centre, Officer's actively engage with members of the public and the business community to address persistent ASB.

10.2 Two officers moved across from Car Parking to CST, on a secondment until 31 March 2026. Their substantive Civil Enforcement Officer roles in car parking, included addressing ASB within car parks, picking up stray dogs, issuing notices on encampments across the wider city; as well as undertaking patrols to check customers had paid for their parking. Two additional officers have been recruited through an agency, with a temporary contract until 31 March 2026.

10.3 The CST wear Body Worn Video Cameras to gather evidence for any ASB activity they encounter. The Body Worn Video Cameras act in an overt way, with individuals informed that they are being filmed. If the CST encounter ASB, this is called into the Control Room, so that CCTV cameras are focused on the location. Devon & Cornwall Police are called if ASB escalates and if illegal activity is encountered.

10.4 As part of their role, the CST has also been responding to encampments and collecting stray dogs from across the wider city.

10.5 Since October 2024, 496 dispersal notices have been issued within the PSPO area, ranging from 6-24hrs. Individuals can be dispersed for multiple reasons, as highlighted in the table below.

Reason	Reason for dispersal
ASB	214
Other	78
Drinking alcohol	42
Shoplifting/Theft	39
Swearing	26
Fighting	21
Drug taking	21
Drunk & Disorderly	19
Shouting	16
Breach of CPW	8
Possession of drugs	7
Begging	5
TOTAL	496

10.6 As part of funding requirements, CST has been recording roles and activity undertaken in the City Centre. This data forms part of the agreements held with InExeter and Devon & Cornwall Police & Crime Commissioner.

Community Safety Team Outputs	
01/07/2024 – 30/10/2025	
Foot patrol hours delivered	5,936
Interactions with members of the public	17,434
Business visits	9,300
ASB incidents attended	730
Items of Intelligence submitted to community intelligence systems	168
CSAS powers exercised	232
Safeguarding referrals made	30
Stray dogs collected	29

10.7 The total number of recorded crimes in the City Centre is shown below. Data is sourced from: <https://www.police.uk/pu/your-area/devon-and-cornwall-police/exeter-city-centre/?tab=crimemap> The CST is there to address low level activity and to support the Police in gathering evidence, with action against illegal activity taken by the Police. Comparing January through to September 2025 to 2024, all recorded crime in the city centre reduced by 9.7%. For ASB specifically, this reduced by 15.3% in the same period.



10.8 During the pilot, the Devon & Cornwall Police & Crime Commissioner, and InExeter have contributed to its running costs of CST. Funding agreements have been in place with each organisation. The table below highlights income sources:

Organisation Income	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
ECC existing budget	£0	£32,700	£32,700	£32,700	£32,700	£32,700
InExeter	£33,750	£45,000	£45,000	£45,000	£45,0000	£45,000
D&C Police & Crime Commissioner	£50,000	£46,153	£0	£0	£0	£0
TOTAL	£83,750	£123,853	£77,700	£77,700	£77,700	£77,700

10.9 As part of the funding from the Police & Crime Commissioner, the CST supports the Police in their City Centre HotSpot policing initiative in areas that have high levels of ASB and criminal activity. CST patrol hotspot areas for a total of 90 minutes each day. The areas that the Police and the CST patrol, is governed by data gathered by the Police and has evolved and changed over time. As part of the HotSpot policing initiative, the CST is required to wear police issue trackers to ensure they are patrolling in the targeted areas.

10.10 The Exeter Neighbourhood police team is focused on nine priorities, namely: Engagement, Shop theft, Counter Drugs, Serious and Organised Crime, Evening and Night Time Economy, Violence Against Women and Girls, Violence, Anti-Social Behaviour in the residential areas and Anti-Social Behaviour in the city centre.

10.11 The Strategy for the Exeter Neighbourhood Police team is:

- Places – reclaim contested spaces, this could be a bench or a street.

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- Partnerships – create local networks to involve statutory partners, business, residents, charities and initiatives.
- People – marginalise perpetrators behaviour, which seeks to understand individuals and address behaviours.

10.12 During 2025, the CST as well as Exeter City Council were accredited as part of the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS), overseen and managed by Devon & Cornwall Police. The geographical area in which the CSAS accredited officers are eligible to use their powers is within Exeter City Centre, as outlined within the CST role profile.

The main purposes of CSAS is to:

- Have access to and share information and intelligence with Devon & Cornwall Police.
- Power to require name and address for a relevant fixed penalty offence.
- Power to require name and address for anti-social behaviour.
- The power to require name and address for a relevant offence. Relevant offences are those outlined by the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) or byelaws.

10.13 As part of continuous improvement, there will be a review of these CSAS powers in May 2026, which will also consider the wider role of the CST.

10.14 The Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government recently awarded the City Council a Rough Sleeping Prevention and Recovery Grant (RSPARG). £100,000 of the grant funding has been allocated to the CST, which has a specific remit in working with street attached community to reduce associated ASB and working closely with Housing Outreach to respond swiftly to new encampments. Two additional roles have been recruited into to provide an additional shift that operates mid-afternoon until 22pm, 5 days a week for a minimum of 12 months. At the end of the 12-month period, the proposed outcomes will be evaluated:

- Reduce street based ASB;
- To swiftly act when new encampments appear;
- Link in with Outreach to ensure a joined-up process; and
- Respond to public complaints associated with the above

10.15 As a result of the Council's restructure in 2024, the Strategic Director for Place took on responsibility for Community Safety, which included the management and coordination of the Community Safety Partnership, Safer Exeter.

10.16 In addition, the Head of Service City Centre & Net Zero has taken on a greater operational role in managing the CST and the CCTV Control Room. It is proposed that one role is established to support the Strategic Director for Place and Head of Service City Centre & Net Zero to coordinate a wide range of activities to bring together local partners to formulate and implement strategies to tackle crime, disorder and ASB in communities, and linking to the Safer Exeter annual priorities and Action Plan.

11. Future of Community Safety

11.1 During 2025, an internal audit of the Council's 'Community Safety and Antisocial Behaviour' activities was undertaken. The audit identified several areas of good practice and some areas for improvement around process and policy, which have been drawn into this proposal of developing the CST.

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11.2 It is proposed to expand the Team to 6, as well as adding a new Community Safety Team Supervisor. The expansion of the CST will enable officers to patrol our parks and open spaces and neighbourhood shopping precincts to address ASB concerns and is a response to evidence from the 2025 residents survey.

11.3 The CST is there to support the Police, not to undertake their duties in addressing illegal and criminal activity across Exeter.

11.4 It is also proposed to introduce a Community Safety Partnership Manager. This role will be the main point of contact for Exeter's Community Safety Partnership, Safer Exeter. The role will be to support the Strategic Director for Place in managing and overseeing activity of Safer Exeter, in developing and delivering the annual Action Plan and in bringing together officers from within City Council, and from city stakeholders, addressing concerns from across Exeter.

11.5 The previous 18 months has been a learning process, to understand what does and doesn't work within CST and what needs to be changed and or improved.

11.6 After discussion with the CCTV Control Room, CST, InExeter and Devon & Cornwall Police, there will be the following changes to CST going forward:

- CST will be based within the City Centre, instead of Oakwood House.
- A new CST Supervisor will be introduced to cover sickness, holidays and training, so officers are not lone working. This role will support CST in business, stakeholder and partner engagement, as well as supporting the Community Safety Partnership Manager in delivering projects and initiatives to address ASB.

11.7 All of the CST roles were Job Evaluated summer 2025. The existing and proposed structure is included in Appendix Two, with supporting Job Descriptions.

11.8 Making CST permanent, adding a Supervisor and a Community Safety Partnership Manager role, supports the results of the 2025 residents survey, as safety continued to be an area of concern for residents. The results of the Safety and ASB section of the Residents Survey are included within Appendix One.

11.9 As part of the Government's Safer Streets Mission, the Prime Minister has recently announced details of the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee, aimed at restoring and strengthening local policing in every community by the end of this Parliament. A key component of the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee is restoring confidence in local communities and taking visible action tackling ASB and increasing the safety of town centres and high streets. The government has written to all Police and Crime Commissioners and Chief Constables about ensuring every area is maximising all opportunities, including taking forward immediate steps this summer, in partnership with councils, schools, health services, business, transport and community organisations. Making the Team permanent can be seen as one of those responses.

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

12.1 The CST contributes to two intended outcomes of the City Council Corporate Plan, under Local Economy - A safe and thriving night-time economy; and People - A safe and thriving city with great things to see and do for everyone.

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

13.1 If CST is not made permanent, there is a significant risk that the Council will not be able address ASB across the city. There is a risk that expectations will be raised by making CST permanent and expanding CST into our parks and open spaces and neighbourhoods. All communications need to be clear on the powers CST have in addressing ASB across the whole city.

14. Are there any other options?

14.1 There are a range of alternative options:

- Allow existing temporary contracts to run their course: This would result in no patrols across the City Centre addressing ASB.
- Extend secondments for a further period of time: Roles have been extended twice, if extended again, this would impact on their employment status.
- Not introduce a Team Supervisor: This would result in CST lone working when there is sickness, holidays and training; which poses a risk to the lone worker.
- Not introduce two roles covering public open spaces: This would result in no patrols within Exeter's parks, green spaces and neighbourhood shopping precincts, addressing ASB.
- Funding from InExeter is re-purposed on different activity: This would reduce the level of external funding received to support CST.
- Not introduce a Community Safety Partnership Manager role: This would result in a lack of resource to manage and deliver activity of Safer Exeter.

Strategic Director Place, Ian Collinson

Author: Head of Service City Centre & Net Zero

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

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

None

List of Appendices:

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For enquiries please contact: democratic.services@exeter.gov.uk

EXETER CITY COUNCIL

Job Description

JOB TITLE	: Community Safety Partnership Manager
GRADE	: M (TBC)
POST NO	: TBC
DIRECTORATE	: Place
UNIT	: City Centre & Net Zero
REPORTS TO	: Head of Service City Centre & Net Zero
RESPONSIBLE FOR	: Community Safety Team Supervisor
LIAISON WITH	: Relevant officers within the City Council and Devon County Council, Devon Community Safety Partnership, and Safer Exeter partners including Public Health Devon, Devon & Cornwall Police, InExeter, University of Exeter, Exeter College, Probation, HMP Exeter, CVS in Exeter. Exeter business community and the Devon Chamber of Commerce.

MAIN PURPOSE

The Community Safety Partnership Manager will manage and coordinate the work of Exeter's Community Safety Partnership, Safer Exeter. The role will lead, coordinate, facilitate and oversee a multi-agency activity and efforts to reduce Anti-Social Behaviour and crime across Exeter to improve community safety and to promote community cohesion across Exeter. The role involves working with key stakeholders across Exeter, including the police, health services, voluntary organisations, and the local community to develop and deliver strategic safety initiatives. The role will lead on developing strategies that intervene early to prevent and reduce crime in our City Centre, neighbourhoods and communities.

MAIN DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES (MDR)

1. Research, develop and facilitate the implementation of the annual Safer Exeter Action Plan to address ASB, criminal activity and themes in Exeter, providing quarterly updates to the Safer Exeter Executive and annual updates to the City Council.
2. Develop and implement a range of metrics and measurements to monitor the progress and effectiveness of the Safer Exeter Action Plan, as well as ASB and encampments across Exeter.
3. To manage and coordinate the City Council's response to the Safer Exeter Annual Action Plan:
 - Act as the central point of contact, coordinating meetings, communications, and joint initiatives
 - Ensure Safer Exeter subgroups work to and deliver to the priorities of the annual Action

Plan

- At all times, maintain confidentiality of information while undertaking duties on behalf of Safer Exeter
- Liaising with numerous statutory, non-statutory and voluntary agencies
- Provide a central point of co-ordination for addressing and reducing ASB

4. Foster effective and accountable working relationships between the City Council, with Devon & Cornwall Police, Devon & Somerset Fire Brigade, South Western Ambulance Service, HMP Exeter, Public Health Devon, Exeter College, the University of Exeter, InExeter, the Exeter business community, the Devon Chamber of Commerce and the voluntary/community sector to effectively implement the Safer Exeter Action Plan.
5. Co-ordinate and facilitate activity and responses from the City Council, which would include officers from Housing, Environmental Health, Cleansing and Legal, including other partner agencies and stakeholders when addressing ASB, littering and encampments and how individuals are supported.
6. Participate in Safer Devon meetings, responding to activity that relates to Exeter communities and residents.
7. Use crime data, incidents and results of the annual residents' survey to inform and influence decision-making and to target interventions addressing residents' concerns and emerging trends.
8. Produce briefings, committee reports and updates for Safer Exeter, the City Council's Senior Management Board, Organisational Management Board, relevant Portfolio Holder's and relevant Committee's, bringing together crime and safety issues, risks, legislative updates and programme achievements.
9. Build and lead on proactive and positive relationships with Community Builders, Community and Neighbourhood Groups, and the Neighbourhood Policing team, to address ASB, littering and encampments within our communities.
10. Source and apply for external funding to deliver the annual Safer Exeter Action Plan, as well as delivering other Council projects.
11. Work alongside the Control Centre Operations Manager, in the development of a safe City Centre for visitors, residents and our business community.
12. As the statutory convening body for Safer Exeter, always, adhere to national policies, regulations, legislation and procedures (e.g. Data Protection, Health and Safety) in relation to addressing ASB and crime in Exeter.
13. Provide information on Safer Exeter to the City Council's Communications Team as and when required, as well as keeping the Safer Exeter website updated on activity and progress.
14. Co-ordinate the City Council's and Safer Exeter response to relevant Government consultations and queries.
15. This post will be, on occasion, required to work evening and may be called upon in the case of an emergency.
16. To undertake such other duties, appropriate to the grade and nature of the post.

Person Specification

JOB TITLE : Community Safety Partnership Manager

GRADE : M (TBC)

POST NO : TBC

DIRECTORATE : Place

UNIT : City Centre & Net Zero

Qualifications & Knowledge

Criteria	Essential/ Desirable (E/D)	Method of Assessment
Relevant degree or equivalent and practical full time experience working within a complex multi-agency setting at a senior level	E	A, I, C
Demonstrate understanding of key government policies and legislation impacting upon the functions, leadership and organisational parameters of Safer Exeter, especially those related to community safety, GDPR and safeguarding	E	A, I,
Excellent knowledge of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime & Policing Act and its relevance and implementation for community safety and the delivery of the role	E	A, I, C
Knowledge and understanding of Community Safety Partnerships and their statutory responsibilities	E	A, I
Knowledge in the process of taking formal action - serving notices, dispersals, interviewing under caution, gathering evidence and prosecutions	E	A, I, R, C
Knowledge of how to interpret and analyse complex numerical information and data, developing plans from these to undertake structured problem solving	E	A, I,
Knowledge in funding opportunities to address community safety	D	A, I
Knowledge and experience in risk management and Health and Safety	E	A, I, C

Special Requirements & Skills

Criteria	Essential/ Desirable (E/D)	Method of Assessment
Experience of working with confidential, sensitive and personal information	E	A, I
Able to engage and understand where there are barriers to people or groups accessing services and respond appropriately	E	A, I
Significant experience of working with marginalised and/or disadvantaged communities and shown leadership in measures to improve quality of life	D	A, I
Creating strategies and action plans which meet the long-term needs of communities and maximise the use of resources to create beneficial outcomes and sustainable solutions for residents	E	A, I
Ability to operate with dignity and respect, treating everyone with respect and dignity. Maintaining impartiality/fairness with all people and is aware of the challenges people face.	E	A, I
You will work within corporate priorities and policies in a joined up way with others, internally and externally - working democratically, transparently and accountably	E	A, I
Ability to identify common threads and links across a wide range of data and information sources, and to address them	E	A, I
Political and legal awareness and the ability to manage issues without having to pass to senior managers	E	A, I, R
Be able to give clear and concise instructions	E	
Possess a high level of negotiating and influencing skills when dealing with a broad range of agencies and individuals to ensure the best outcome is achieved for our residents	E	A, I, R
Ability to project manage and lead individuals and partnership agencies	E	A, I, R
Excellent keyboard skills; use of office computer software and mobile communication devices	E	A, I, R
Ability to prioritise projects and activity in a timely manner	E	A, I, R, T
Experience of working with a wide range businesses and partner organisations	E	A, I, R
Calm, patient, professional and polite in all circumstances	E	A, I, R
Results driven and able to meet tight deadlines	E	A, I, R
Excellent communicator both written and oral and able to communicate highly complex matters at a senior and political level, as well as to residents and the business community	E	A, I, R

Other

Criteria	Essential/ Desirable (E/D)	Method of Assessment
The role may require weekend and evening work	E	A

Criteria	Essential/ Desirable (E/D)	Method of Assessment
Full Clean Driving license	D	A, C, I
Successful candidate require will police vetting	E	A, R
Committed to equality of opportunity and understanding of diversity issues	E	A, I

CATEGORY: **A:** Application, **C:** Certificates, **T:** Testing, **I:** Interview, **R:** References.

COMPLETED BY : Head of Service City Centre & Net Zero
DATE : 1 December 2025

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EXETER CITY COUNCIL

Job Description

JOB TITLE	: Community Safety Team Supervisor
GRADE	: I (TBC)
POST NO	: TBC
DIRECTORATE	: Place
UNIT	: City Centre & Net Zero
REPORTS TO	: Community Safety Partnership Manager
RESPONSIBLE FOR	: Community Safety Officers (team)
LIAISON WITH	: Devon & Cornwall Police, InExeter, Safer Exeter Community Safety Partnership, officers within the City Council, Devon County Council, Probation, Housing providers, HMP Exeter, Exeter business community, other relevant statutory partners and stakeholders

MAIN PURPOSE

To line manage the Community Safety Officers ensuring the team are fully trained and have the necessary powers and understanding to undertake their role. Implement and adhere to any Service Level Agreements with external funders of the service to address Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), environmental crime, stray dogs and encampments across Exeter. The role supports the development, delivery and monitoring of the annual Safer Exeter Action Plan.

MAIN DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES (MDR)

1. Manage the rotas, holidays and sickness of the team, as well as stepping in to cover the Community Safety Team's holiday, training days and sickness.
2. Engage with and respond to City Centre business, residents, elected members and visitor concerns in relation to Community Safety and ASB.
3. Develop and implement a multi-agency and corporate approach to community safety, ASB, environmental crime and encampments in the City Centre and across the wider city to reduce instances and levels. This will include liaison with the Police, InExeter, Youth Offending Teams, County Council Services, Health, Housing Associations, Housing Outreach, Probation, other relevant statutory partners and community/voluntary agencies.
4. To accurately record incidents reported by the public and other agencies and to evaluate the effectiveness of City Centre ASB interventions.

5. To record work undertaken in relation to the Community Safety Team in relevant monitoring systems so that evaluation can be undertaken to monitor the effectiveness of the team and of any enforcement activity.
6. Engage and work with Community Builders, Community and Neighbourhood Groups, and the Neighbourhood Policing team, to addressing ASB, enviro crime, stray dogs and encampments within our communities.
7. To provide robust evidence when required to enable formal action to be undertaken, including the taking of witness statements, interviewing under caution, compiling accurate case and prosecution files and where appropriate attend court to give evidence.
8. Issue Dispersal Notices and Fixed Penalty Notices to members of the public and businesses where an incident has been witnessed or evidence has been found to be in contravention of the relevant legislation and PSPO.
9. Develop mechanisms to ensure that perpetrators of ASB, enviro crime, stray dogs and encampments are signposted to appropriate support agencies.
10. Support in the research, writing and implementation of the annual Safer Exeter Action Plan (Exeter's Community Safety Partnership), addressing areas of concern and criminal activity across Exeter.
11. Attend relevant Safer Exeter and Safer Devon sub working groups, to support and co-ordinate City Council activity and to facilitate a multi-agency approach to concerns and criminal activity raised.
12. Represent the City Council at ASB meetings with internal and external partners.
13. To contribute to the development and implementation of projects, campaigns and events on behalf of the City Council or the Community Safety Partnership in relation to ASB, enviro crime and encampments across Exeter.
14. To comply with the Exeter City Council body worn camera policy, using the equipment supplied to ensure the safety of all persons involved.
15. To carry out any other duties commensurate with the role.

DATE LAST UPDATED: 3 December 2025

JOB TITLE : Community Safety Team Supervisor

GRADE : I

POST NO : TBC

DIRECTORATE : Place

UNIT : City Centre & Net Zero

Qualifications & Knowledge

Criteria	Essential/ Desirable (E/D)	Method of Assessment
2 x A Levels or equivalent qualifications (or workplace experience at similar level)	E	A, C, I, R
Able to demonstrate up to date training and knowledge through CPD certificates	E	A, C, I, R
Knowledge and understanding of the enforcement of legislation (Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime & Policing Act) and the issuing of fixed penalty tickets	E	A, I
Knowledge and understanding of Community Safety Partnerships	E	A, I

Special Requirements & Skills

Criteria	Essential/ Desirable (E/D)	Method of Assessment
Experience of investigating anti-social behaviour complaints	E	A, I, R
Analytical and the ability to solve problems	E	A, I, R, T
Excellent keyboard skills; use of office computer software and mobile communication devices	E	A, I, R
Ability to prioritise work and progress cases in a timely manner	E	A, I, R, T
Experience of managing and developing a team	D	A, I
Proven team working skills and willingness to undertake the full range of duties	E	A, I, R
Experience of working with businesses and partner organisations	E	A, I, R
Political and legal awareness and the ability to escalate issues to senior managers when appropriate	E	A, I, R
Demonstrate ability to make and implement decisions	E	A, I, R
Ability to undertake research and to develop projects and initiatives from findings sought	E	A, I
Experience of taking formal action (serving notices, interviewing under caution, gathering evidence, prosecutions)	E	A, I, R

Criteria	Essential/ Desirable (E/D)	Method of Assessment
Experience of report writing	D	A, I, R
Enthusiastic and self-motivated to carry out duties using initiative and with the minimum of supervision	E	A, I, R
Calm, patient, professional and polite in all circumstances	E	A, I, R
Excellent interpersonal and negotiation skills and able to deal with confrontational situations such as issuing notices, anti-social behaviour contracts and fixed penalty tickets	E	A, I, R
Results driven and able to meet tight deadlines	E	A, I, R
Positive, cooperative and flexible approach to work	E	A, I, R
Excellent communicator both written and oral	E	A, I, R
Experience of dealing with the public, this is very much a customer focused role	E	A, I, R

Other

Criteria	Essential/ Desirable (E/D)	Method of Assessment
Role requires ability to monitor and interpret visual and audio information and verbally communicate clearly and effectively with team members and external agencies	E	A, I
Smart appearance – uniform will be provided when on Community Safety Team duties	E	A, I, R
This role involves regular foot patrols, negotiating stairwells and some working at height. Post holder will also be required to stand for extended periods.	E	A, I
Able to assimilate important information and respond appropriately	E	A, I
Must be able to identify potential hazards using sensory cues.	E	A, I
Able to respond to visual and audio information including alarms, CCTV footage, and information passed through two-way audio/radio equipment.	E	A, I
Full Clean Driving license	E	A, C, I, R
Be prepared to work shift patterns	E	A, I, R
Be prepared to use Body Worn Video Cameras whilst on duty	E	A, I
Successful candidate requires police vetting	E	A, R

CATEGORY: **A:** Application, **C:** Certificates, **T:** Testing, **I:** Interview, **R:** References.

COMPLETED BY : Head of City Centre & Net Zero
DATE : 3 December 2025

EXETER CITY COUNCIL

Job Description

JOB TITLE	: Community Safety Officer
GRADE	: G
POST NO	: 0024
DIRECTORATE	: Place
UNIT	: City Centre & Net Zero
REPORTS TO	: Community Safety Team Supervisor
RESPONSIBLE FOR	: None
LIAISON WITH	: Police, InExeter, City Council officers, Youth Offending Teams, County Council Services, Health Partners, Housing Associations, Probation, other relevant statutory partners, community/voluntary partners, business community

MAIN PURPOSE

Be a regular visible presence in the city centre and within Exeter's parks and open spaces, cemeteries and neighbourhood shopping areas to investigate and address complaints of anti-social behaviour, enviro crime and encampments from the first point of referral through to resolution, including advising and supporting complainants, witnesses and perpetrators, investigating complaints and seeking informal resolution such as mediation, assertively challenging behaviour or taking legal action.

MAIN DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES (MDR)

1. Work alongside City Council officers within Housing, Environmental Health and Cleansing to foster a close working relationship addressing ASB, enviro crime and encampments occurring within the city centre and across the wider city.
2. Address ASB that takes place within the City Centre (PSPO boundary), including car parks, with sympathy to the perpetrator, with discussions and the issuing of Dispersal Notices and Fixed Penalty Notices.
3. Address and deal with encampments that appear in the City Centre (PSPO boundary), working with City Council officers and stakeholders to ensure the individual(s) within the encampment have alternative provision.
4. Engage with the business community to investigate complaints and incidents relating to

matters of ASB, enviro crime and encampments within the City Centre.

5. Adhere to and work towards the requirements of Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS), issued by Devon & Cornwall Police.
6. To accurately record incidents witnessed and reported by the public and other agencies and to evaluate the effectiveness of intervention and any enforcement action undertaken.
7. Work in partnership with the City Council's CCTV Control Room and Exeter Business Against Crime in recording and addressing crime and ASB across the city centre.
8. To provide robust evidence when required to enable formal action to be undertaken, including the taking of witness statements, interviewing under caution, compiling accurate case and prosecution files and where appropriate attend court to give evidence.
9. To co-ordinate multi-agency action in the resolution of ASB and develop corporate co-ordination in local areas. This will include liaison with the Police, InExeter, Youth Offending Teams, County Council Services, Health, Housing Associations, Probation, other relevant statutory partners and community/voluntary agencies.
10. Respond to and collect stray dogs within the boundary of Exeter, ensuring stray dogs are homed back with their families or rehomed as quickly as possible. Liaise with the Police on banned Dangerous Dogs.
11. Issuing Dispersal Notices and Fixed Penalty Notices to members of the public and businesses where an incident has been witnessed or evidence has been found to be in contravention of relevant legislation.
12. Ensure that individuals are signposted to appropriate support services and agencies when vulnerabilities are identified.
13. Promote good working relationships with partners such as the police, the business community, other council services, other local authorities, social landlords and the voluntary sector, ensuring community safety and social cohesion.
14. To comply with the Exeter City Council body worn camera policy, using the equipment supplied to ensure the safety of all persons involved.
15. Represent the City Council at meetings with internal and external partners addressing ASB within the City Centre.
16. To carry out any other duties commensurate with the role.

DATE LAST UPDATED: 3 December 2025

Person Specification

JOB TITLE : Community Safety Officer

GRADE : G

POST NO : 0024

DIRECTORATE : Place

UNIT : City Centre & Net Zero

Qualifications & Knowledge

Criteria	Essential/ Desirable (E/D)	Method of Assessment
2 x A Levels or equivalent qualifications (or workplace experience at similar level)	E	A, C, I, R
Able to demonstrate up to date training and knowledge through CPD certificates	E	A, C, I, R
Ability to understand the enforcement of legislation and the issuing of fixed penalty tickets	E	A, I
Knowledge of Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime & Policing Act	D	A, I

Special Requirements & Skills

Criteria	Essential/ Desirable (E/D)	Method of Assessment
Experience of investigating anti-social behaviour complaints	E	A, I, R
Analytical and problem solving approach	E	A, I, R, T
Excellent keyboard skills; use of office computer software and mobile communication devices	E	A, I, R
Ability to prioritise work and progress cases in a timely manner	E	A, I, R, T
Proven team working skills and willingness to undertake the full range of duties	E	A, I, R
Political and legal awareness and the ability to escalate issues to senior managers when appropriate	E	A, I, R
Demonstrate ability to make and implement decisions	E	A, I, R
Experience of taking formal action (serving notices, interviewing under caution, gathering evidence, prosecutions)	E	A, I, R
Experience of report writing	D	A, I, R
Enthusiastic and self-motivated to carry out duties using initiative and with the minimum of supervision	E	A, I, R
Calm, patient, professional and polite in all circumstances	E	A, I, R

Criteria	Essential/ Desirable (E/D)	Method of Assessment
Excellent interpersonal and negotiation skills and able to deal with confrontational situations such as issuing notices, anti-social behaviour contracts and fixed penalty tickets	E	A, I, R
Positive, cooperative and flexible approach to work	E	A, I, R
Excellent communicator both written and oral	E	A, I, R
Experience of dealing with the public, this is very much a customer focused role	E	A, I, R

Other

Criteria	Essential/ Desirable (E/D)	Method of Assessment
Role requires ability to monitor and interpret visual and audio information and verbally communicate clearly and effectively with team members and external agencies	E	A, I
Smart appearance – uniform will be provided when on Community Safety Team duties	E	A, I, R
This role involves regular foot patrols, negotiating stairwells and some working at height. Post holder will also be required to stand for extended periods.	E	A, I
Able to assimilate important information and respond appropriately.	E	A, I
Must be able to identify potential hazards using sensory cues.	E	A, I
Able to respond to visual and audio information including alarms, CCTV footage, and information passed through two-way audio/radio equipment.	E	A, I
Full Clean Driving license	E	A, C, I, R
Be prepared to work shift patterns	E	A, I, R
Be prepared to use Body Worn Video Cameras whilst on duty	E	A, I
Successful candidate requires police vetting	E	A, R

CATEGORY: **A:** Application, **C:** Certificates, **T:** Testing, **I:** Interview, **R:** References.

COMPLETED BY : Head of City Centre & Net Zero
DATE : 3 December 2025

Equality Impact Assessment: Community Safety

The Equality Act 2010 includes a general duty which requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- **Eliminate discrimination**, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
- **Advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- **Foster good relations** between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not

In order to comply with the general duty authorities must assess the impact on equality of decisions, policies and practices. These duties do not prevent the authority from reducing services where necessary, but they offer a way of developing proposals that consider the impacts on all members of the community.

Authorities which fail to carry out equality impact assessments risk making poor and unfair decisions which may discriminate against particular groups and worsen inequality.

Committee name and date:	Report Title	Decisions being recommended:	People with protected characteristics potentially impacted by the decisions to be made:
Council 13 January 2026	Community Safety	<p>Council approves a budget of £335,390 to establish a permanent Community Safety Team (CST).</p> <p>That Council approves 8 roles in total to be managed by the Head of Service for City Centre & Net</p>	<p>Race and Ethnicity</p> <p>Disability</p> <p>Sex</p> <p>Gender Reassignment</p>

Committee name and date:	Report Title	Decisions being recommended:	People with protected characteristics potentially impacted by the decisions to be made:
		Zero, within the Place Directorate, to address crime and ASB within the City Centre and in public and open spaces across the wider city, as well as supporting the Community Safety Partnership, Safer Exeter.	Religion and belief Sexual orientation Age

Factors to consider in the assessment: For each of the groups below, an assessment has been made on whether the proposed decision will have a **positive, negative or neutral impact**. This must be noted in the table below alongside brief details of why this conclusion has been reached and notes of any mitigation proposed. Where the impact is negative, a **high, medium or low assessment** is given. The assessment rates the impact of the policy based on the current situation (i.e. disregarding any actions planned to be carried out in future).

High impact – a significant potential impact, risk of exposure, history of complaints, no mitigating measures in place etc.

Medium impact – some potential impact exists, some mitigating measures are in place, poor evidence

Low impact – almost no relevancy to the process, e.g. an area that is very much legislation led and where the Council has very little discretion

Protected characteristic/ area of interest	Positive or Negative Impact	High, Medium or Low Impact	Reason
Race and ethnicity (including Gypsies and Travellers; migrant workers; asylum seekers).	Potentially negative	Medium	<p>There is a risk that a number of people the CST come into contact with may be asylum seekers, as they may not have secured accommodation.</p> <p>The CST works closely with Housing and support services to enable individuals to secure temporary accommodation. Rather than enforcement first, the CST sign-post individuals into services offered.</p>

Protected characteristic/ area of interest	Positive or Negative Impact	High, Medium or Low Impact	Reason
Disability: as defined by the Equality Act – a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse impact on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.	Positive	Medium	The CST regularly patrol the City Centre and support individuals when called upon or they witness when they are being harassed. This will now cover public parks, open spaces and neighbourhood shopping precincts across the wider city.
Sex	Positive	High	If data from Devon & Cornwall Police, as well as statutory and support services indicate that the safety of women and girls is of concern, the CST will address this through their work, projects managed, as well as priorities and Action Plan of the Community Safety Partnership.
Gender reassignment	Positive	High	This group may be more vulnerable to hate crime. There are therefore potential implications in relation to safety. If data from Devon & Cornwall Police, as well as statutory and support services indicate that Hate Crime against this protected characteristic is of concern, the CST will address this through their work, projects managed, as well as priorities and Action Plan of the Community Safety Partnership.
Religion and belief (includes no belief, some philosophical beliefs such as Buddhism and sects within religions).	Positive	High	If data from Devon & Cornwall Police, as well as statutory and support services indicate that Hate Crime to this protected characteristic is of concern (protests, as an example), the CST will address this through their work, projects managed, as well as priorities and Action Plan of the Community Safety Partnership.
Sexual orientation (including heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual).			This group may be more vulnerable to hate crime. There are therefore potential implications in relation to safety. If data from Devon & Cornwall Police, as well as statutory and support services indicate that Hate Crime against this protected characteristic is of concern, the CST will address this through their work, projects managed, as well as priorities and Action Plan of the Community Safety Partnership.

Protected characteristic/ area of interest	Positive or Negative Impact	High, Medium or Low Impact	Reason
Age (children and young people aged 0-24; adults aged 25-50; younger older people aged 51-75/80; older people 81+; frail older people; people living with age related conditions. The age categories are for illustration only as overriding consideration should be given to needs).			<p>Young people and those aged 65+ are more likely to feel unsafe in the city.</p> <p>It is proposed that the CST is expanded to cover public parks, open spaces and neighbourhood shopping precincts across the wider city, where youth ASB occurs.</p> <p>If data from Devon & Cornwall Police, as well as statutory and support services indicate that this protected characteristic is of concern, the CST will address this through their work, projects managed, as well as priorities and Action Plan of the Community Safety Partnership.</p>
Pregnancy and maternity including new and breast feeding mothers	N/A	N/A	There is no evidence that this will impact on any specific person based on pregnancy and maternity status.
Marriage and civil partnership status	N/A	N/A	There is no evidence that this will impact on any specific person based on marriage and civil partnership status.

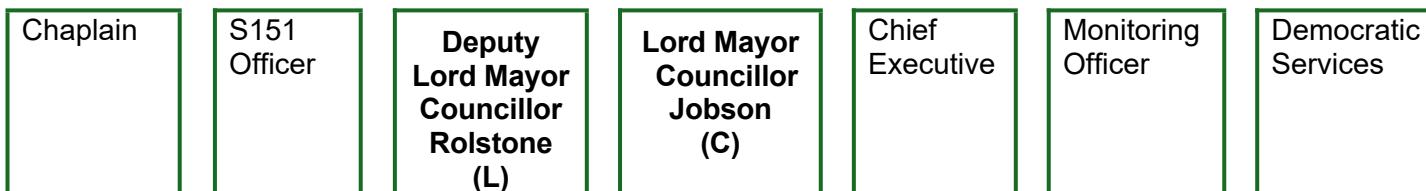
Actions identified that will mitigate any negative impacts and/or promote inclusion

- CST are well versed on support services available to individuals they encounter
- Training is provided to the CST on support services available
- Work with Devon & Cornwall Police, as well as statutory and support services to understand areas of concern for Exeter. Address these through the Community Safety Partnership Action Plan and priorities

Officer: Head of Service City Centre & Net Zero

Date: 12 December 2025

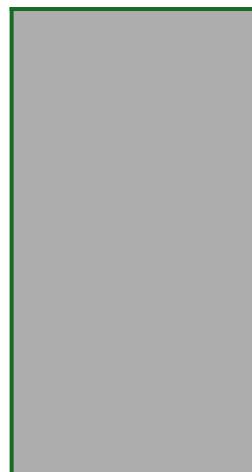
SEATING IN THE GUILDHALL



Democratic Services

Strategic Directors

<u>Councillors</u>		
Darling (L)	Miller-Boam (L)	Bialyk (L)
Atkinson (L)	Snow (L)	Wright (L)
Begley (L)	Hussain (L)	Wood (L)
Harding (L)	Parkhouse (L)	Williams, R (L)
Cookson (L)	Pole (L)	Vizard (L)
Williams, M (L)	Knott (L)	Foale (L)



<u>Councillors</u>	
Moore (G)	Holland (C)
Banyard (G)	Mitchell, M (LD)
Read (G)	Palmer (LD)
Rees (G)	Fullam (LD)
Wetenhall (G)	
Bennett (G)	Ketchin (G)

Cllr Patrick (L)	Cllr Wardle (L)	Cllr Asvachin (L)		Sheridan (R)	Cllr Payne (R)	Cllr Mitchell, K (LD)	Cllr Haigh (I) **	Cllr Hughes (I) **
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			<u>Portfolio Holders</u>	<u>Portfolio Holder for</u>
L:	Labour:	22	Bialyk:	Leader
G:	Green:	7	Wright	Deputy Leader and Corporate Services, Community & City Centre
LD:	Liberal Democrat	4	Vizard	Climate, Ecological Change and Communities
C:	Conservative:	2	Williams, R	City Management
I:	Independent	2 **	Asvachin	Housing, Homelessness Prevention and Customer Services
R:	Reform	2	Wood	Leisure Services & Healthy Living
			Foale	Arts, Culture & Tourism
			Patrick	City Development

** Known as the Equity Independent Group

	<u>Member Champions</u>	<u>Member Champion for</u>
	Miller-Boam	Community Safety & Engagement
	Darling	Culture & City Centre