



A meeting of **EXETER CITY COUNCIL** will be held at the **GUILDHALL, HIGH STREET, EXETER** on **TUESDAY 3 MARCH 2026**, at 6.10 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](mailto:democratic.services@exeter.gov.uk)

The following business is proposed to be transacted:

## **Agenda**

### **1 Minutes**

To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2026.

(Pages 5 -  
18)

### **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**

### **5 Public Questions**

To receive questions from members of the public and responses thereto.

Details of questions should be notified to the Democratic Services by 10am at

least three working days prior to the meeting. For this meeting, by 10am on Thursday 26 February 2026.

Further information about speaking at a committee can be found here: [Speaking at a Committee](#) or by making contact with Democratic Service via email or 01392 265425.

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

6	<b>Audit and Governance Committee - 27 November 2025</b>	(Pages 19 - 24)
7	<b>Customer Focus Scrutiny - 13 November 2025</b>	(Pages 25 - 68)
8	<b>Customer Focus Scrutiny - 22 January 2026</b>	(Pages 69 - 74)
9	<b>Strategic Scrutiny Committee - 15 January 2026</b>	(Pages 75 - 90)
10	<b>Licensing Committee - 27 January 2026</b>	
	Link to: <a href="#">Appendix B Fees and Charges</a>	(Pages 91 - 92)
11	<b>Planning Committee - 19 January 2026</b>	(Pages 93 - 108)
12	<b>Strata - Joint Executive Committee - 28 January 2026</b>	(Pages 109 - 112)
13	<b>Executive Committee - 3 February 2026</b>	(Pages 113 - 136)

#### **REPORTS TO COUNCIL**

14	<b>Overview of the General Fund Budget Quarter 3</b>	
	To consider the report of the Strategic Director for Corporate Resources.	(Pages 137 - 158)
15	<b>General Fund Capital Monitoring Quarter 3</b>	
	To consider the report of the Strategic Director for Corporate Resources.	(Pages 159 - 174)
16	<b>HRA Budget Monitoring Report Q3</b>	
	To consider the report of the Strategic Director for Corporate Resources.	(Pages 175 - 190)
17	<b>Annual Pay Policy Statement 2026/27</b>	
	To consider the report of the Chief Executive.	(Pages 191 - 202)

**18 Cathedral & Quay Multi Storey Car Park Refurbishment**

To consider the report of the Strategic Director for Corporate Resources.

(Pages  
203 - 234)

**NOTICES OF MOTION**

**19 Notice of Motion by Councillor Darling under Standing Order No. 6**

**Motion: Reductions to Library Opening Hours**

(Pages  
235 - 236)

**Mover:** Cllr Deborah Darling

**Seconder:** Cllr James Cookson

**QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS**

**20 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: 23 February 2026

**Bindu Arjoon  
Chief Executive**

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## COUNCIL

Tuesday 13 January 2026

### Present:-

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

### Also Present

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

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### MINUTES

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

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

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### DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made by Members.

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### OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS

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

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

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

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

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### **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

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

#### **Question from Mr Timothy Coyle:**

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

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

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

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

#### **Question from Ms Lucy Findlay MBE:**

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

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

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### **STRATEGIC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 20 NOVEMBER 2025**

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

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

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

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### **MINUTES OF MEETING 1 DECEMBER 2025 OF PLANNING COMMITTEE**

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

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

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**MINUTES OF MEETING 8 DECEMBER 2025 OF PLANNING COMMITTEE**

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

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

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

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**MINUTES OF THE MEETING 11 DECEMBER 2025 OF EXETER HARBOUR BOARD**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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**MINUTES OF THE MEETING 16 DECEMBER 2025 OF EXECUTIVE**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Voting For:

Councillors Asvachin, Atkinson, Begley, Bialyk, Cookson, Darling, Harding, Hussain, Knott, Miller-Boam, Parkhouse, Patrick, Pole, Rolstone, Snow, Vizard, Wardle, Williams M, Williams R, Wood, and Wright. (21 Members).

Voting Against:

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

Abstentions:

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

Absent:

Councillor Foale. (1 Member).

Following a vote the recommendations were CARRIED.

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### **MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES 2026/27**

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

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

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

Councillor Read asked if food and drink allowances would be introduced. The Strategic Director for Corporate Resources advised that food and drink was being looked into.

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

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

Following a vote the recommendations were CARRIED.

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### **EXETER CITY LIVING LTD BUSINESS PLAN FINANCIAL YEAR 2026-27**

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

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

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

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

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

Following a unanimous vote the recommendations were CARRIED.

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### **COMMUNITY SAFETY**

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

The Strategic Director for Place made the following points:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

During debate Members made the following points:

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

Following a unanimous vote the recommendations were CARRIED.

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

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

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

The Leader responded stating:

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

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

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

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

The Leader responded stating:

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

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

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

The Leader responded stating:

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

In a supplementary question, Councillor Moore asked the Leader:

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

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

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

Chair

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## **AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

Thursday 27 November 2025

### Present:-

Councillor Wardle (Chair)

Councillors Moore, Holland, Knott, Miller-Boam, Palmer and Williams, M

### Apologies

Councillors Atkinson, Banyard and Mitchell, M

### Also Present

Strategic Director for Corporate Resources, Head of Legal and Democratic Services & Monitoring Officer, Head of Service - Finance, Service Lead – Commercial & Procurement, Democratic Services Manager and Democratic Services Officer

84

### **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillors Mitchell, Banyard and Atkinson.

Apologies were also received from the Chief Executive.

85

### **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held 4 September 2025 were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair as correct.

86

### **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests were made.

87

### **REVIEW OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE RISK REGISTER**

The Chair advised that this item would be heard first.

The Strategic Director for Corporate Services introduced the report advising Members that work had been carried out with Zurich to strengthen the Council's approach to risk and the Risk Register, and to ensure the updated Corporate Risk Register was inline with the new Corporate Plan.

The Principal Risk Consultant from Zurich Risk Engineering UK gave a presentation to the committee, making the following points:

- he had been working with Exeter City Council for 2 years;
- training had been delivered to officers and senior officers;
- risks were not just a list of bad things, but should be meaningful and targeted;
- risk management supported objectives and decision making;
- it helped to protect reputation, finances, and confidence;
- risk was negative by nature, but when done well it could encourage innovation;
- risk identification was the most important part and when done correctly it could make the rest easier;
- management of risk should sit with officers;
- officers should maintain the Risk Register, and Members should make sure

- it linked to priorities;
- it was important to report emerging risks and keep accountability;
- information about risks needed detail to enable proper scrutiny;
- risks should be owned by an individual, and they should be able to provide necessary information about the risks;
- there were some elements of risk that must be accepted and some higher-level risks needed to be tolerated;
- risks that never changed were business as usual and were therefore not really risks and could lead to missing genuine risks;
- the Risk Register was necessary, but the conversation surrounding it was important; and
- it was vital to ensure openness and transparency within risk reporting;

The Strategic Director for Corporate Resources and the Principal Risk Consultant responded to Members' questions in the following terms:

- the different functions of the Executive and Councillors was dependent on the organisation;
- directorate leads and Heads of Service take ownership of the Risk Register for their own services;
- the Risk Register would be brought to the Audit and Governance Committee in March 2026;
- 6 of the 13 Heads of Service had had their management team doing risk training on specific to service risks; and
- finance was always on the risk register and now the risks were being looked at to establish options for mitigation.

It was agreed that the presentation would be shared with the minutes.

The Audit and Governance Committee noted the Review of Corporate Governance Risk Register report.

88

### **EXTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT**

The Audit Manager, Grant Thornton presented the progress report making the following points:

- the findings report would not come until February;
- they were working closely with the Strategic Director for Corporate Resources, the Head of Service – Finance, and the Accountancy Services Manager;
- the ultimate timeline was the backstop date, but a buffer would be built into the process;
- the Value for Money work was completed and would be reported in the next item; and
- they were on track to deliver the Audit Findings Report and the Auditors Report on time.

The Strategic Director for Corporate Resources responded to Councillor Palmer by advising that there had been a delay due to a new asset valuation contract that had begun there was now a dedicated officer liaising and there was a much clearer agreement.

The Audit and Governance Committee noted the External Audit Progress Report

89

### **EXTERNAL AUDITOR'S ANNUAL REPORT**

The Audit Manager, Grant Thornton presented the progress report making the following points:

- there was a new requirement to bring the report before the end of November;
- they had identified three key recommendations, but these were continuations from prior findings;
- there had been no evidence of any further training on the counter-fraud arrangements;
- recommendations regarding performance reporting had been responded to by the Council, but were yet to be embedded; and
- progress was being made regarding the recommendations for procurement, however there was no contract management training in place.

The Audit Manager, Grant Thornton, the Strategic Director for Corporate Resources, Head of Service – Finance, and the Procurement Manager responded to Members' questions in the following terms:

- recommendations and responses from the Strategic Management Board could be found on page 65;
- counter-fraud used to be run by internal audit, however, following our management restructure this took time to put in place;
- there had been a series of counter-fraud procedures put in place across key risk areas;
- the forward arrangements remained robust but there would be a meeting with the internal auditor soon; and
- there would be an updated counter-fraud strategy coming to the Audit and Governance Committee next march.
- training staff had been a priority for procurement and 145 members of staff had had procurement training to date;
- the procurement team had adopted a strategy, but this would be reviewed later on;
- free Cabinet Office contract management training would be implemented in the future;
- there was no risk of statutory recommendations due to the great work of the procurement team; and
- the External Auditor's Annual Report was backdated work to March 2025 rather than the 25/26 financial year.

The Audit and Governance Committee noted the External Auditor's Annual Report.

90

### **INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT**

The Assistant Director, SWAP presented the report for the second quarter of 2025/26 making the following points:

- 36% of the plan had been completed or was currently in progress;
- there had been one limited assurance report, which would be discussed in further detail in the next item;
- 96 active green actions had been identified, and 30 were overdue. In the September meeting there were 106 active green actions with 4 overdue; and
- social housing decarbonisation had been brought back into plan.

The Assistant Director, SWAP and the Strategic Director for Corporate Resources responded to Members' questions in the following terms:

- SWAP were extremely experienced, and were confident that the plan would be completed by the end of the year;
- it was up to management to implement the actions, SWAP were able to follow up when completed;

- work was close to agreement regarding the CIL review;
- the concern of Members regarding the response to St James Community Trust had been noted, and a timeframe would be sought.

The Audit and Governance Committee noted the Internal Audit Progress Report.

91

### **LIMITED ASSURANCE REPORT**

The Head of Service – Finance presented the Limited Assurance Report and advised the Committee that there had been one Limited Assurance audit report on Community Safety and Antisocial Behaviour.

The Head of Service – Finance, Head of Service – City Centre and Net Zero, and the Strategic Director for Corporate Resources responded to Members' questions in the following terms:

- the audit had been carried out over the summer; and
- there would be a review of the Community Safety Partnership and this was on track to be completed by January 2026.

The Committee were advised that the actions would be fed back to the Committee, and would also be included in the SWAP quarterly update.

The Audit and Governance Committee noted the Limited Assurance Report.

92

### **STRATA DAP INTERNAL AUDIT ICT ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25**

The Head of Devon Assurance Partnership (DAP) and Chief Internal Auditor presented the report making the following points:

- the overall assurance opinion was reasonable assurance;
- views had been fed in from East Devon District Councils, Teignbridge District Council, and Exeter City Council;
- there was good trajectory around the work that Strata were doing and they had had a new Director of IT and Digital Transformation for the last 2 years;
- it would be beneficial to draw attention to the aspects of delivery that were still within the Council's remit; and
- this was a positive report and the recommendations had been taken on board.

The Audit and Governance Committee noted the Strata DAP Internal Audit ICT Annual Report 2024/25.

93

### **QUARTERLY WAIVERS REPORT**

The Procurement Manager presented the Quarterly Waivers Report, making the following points:

- this had been a recommendation from both the external and internal audit;
- it was typical for this to be reported quarterly or every six months within Local Authority;
- since staff training had begun there had been a reduction in the number of waivers;
- a number of breaches were due to grants from central government;
- there had been no deliberate breaches; and
- it was normal for there to be a lot of breaches.

The Strategic Director for Corporate Resources provided context for a breach regarding CCTV and advised that it had been necessary for the function of

CCTV in the City Centre to use the same supplier.

The Procurement Manager, and the Strategic Director for Corporate Resources answered Members' questions in the following terms:

- tenders in excess of £100,000 had to be signed off by the Procurement Team, which involved a rigorous process;
- some direct awards were through framework with another organisation, such as a contract for Trews Weir with the Environment Agency;
- a grant had been given by MCHLG, which required a short-term waiver;
- Portfolio Holders were involved in approving and signing off waivers over £215,000.

The Audit and Governance Committee noted the Quarterly Waivers Report.

(The meeting commenced at 5.32 pm and closed at 7.30 pm)

Chair

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## CUSTOMER FOCUS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

13 November 2025

### Present:

Councillor Catherine Rees (Chair)  
Councillors Cookson, Begley, Fullam, Holland, Hussain, Payne, Pole, Snow and Wardle

### Apologies:

Councillor Read

### Also present:

Strategic Director for People and Communities, Head of Service - HR, Workforce Planning and Organisational Development, Democratic Services Manager and Democratic Services Officer(JM)

### In attendance as Portfolio Holder:

The Leader, Councillor Bialyk, Councillors Vizard and Wright

#### 84 **Apologies**

Apologies had been received from Councillor Read, who had sent Councillor Palmer as her substitute.

#### 85 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee held on 25 September 2025 were taken as read and approved as correct, subject minor amendments as requested by the Chair.

#### 86 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

#### 87 **Questions from the Public under Standing Order No. 19**

There were no questions from members of the public.

#### 88 **Questions from Members of the Council under Standing Order No. 20**

There were no questions submitted in advance by Members.

#### 89 **Medium Term Financial Plan & Budget Timetable 2026/27**

The Chair explained to Members that the Strategic Director for Corporate Resources was unable to attend this meeting and that this item would be deferred to the meeting in January.

#### 90 **Key People Activity Across the Council**

The Chair advised Members that the report had not been published and allowed 10 minutes to read the report.

Councillor Palmer, under Standing Order 45, presented her Scrutiny Proforma and in doing so, made the following points:

- this was not a challenge and she hoped it would support the work being carried out;
- it would provide Members with a better understanding of the role of Human Resources(HR);
- she hoped that this would support Portfolio Holders and HR officers with their work; and
- she hoped this discussion would be supportive, and it could be agreed what might be useful to see in the future.

The Strategic Director for People and Community gave a presentation making the following points:

- there had been an independent HR review in 2024 to identify necessary structural, procedural and cultural changes;
- resources were focused on supporting the delivery of the Council's objectives;
- HR had previously been a reactive service;
- there had previously been little data on council employees and uncertainty around overall people function;
- HR had seen a transformational change of their service, and she was proud of the team and what had been delivered;
- a huge amount of work had been carried out on iTrent and it was still improving;
- there had been a culture shift for leadership and organisation;
- Power BI was an easy way to view staff insights and would be very useful for Freedom of Information (FOI) requests;
- an Employee Hub containing policies and information about staff benefits, as well as an interactive communication portal would be made available to staff soon;
- the Council's apprenticeship scheme had been reviewed, and apprenticeships in areas that would benefit the city were being prioritised;
- the Council were currently in a procurement process for a new occupational health provider,
- a new modernised approach to industrial relations had been agreed with unions and a reset JCNC was now in operation ;
- in areas where sickness absence was quite high HR was working with managers on specific areas;
- the vacancy rate was in line with comparators and the 'time to hire' was good and was likely to improve more following updates to iTrent; and
- the future priorities were to continue evolving work that had already started.

The Strategic Director for People and Community and the Head of Service – HR, Workforce Planning and Organisational Development responded to Members' questions in the following terms:

- there was a higher rate of long-term sickness in some service areas and the data allowed for a more in-depth view in these areas.;
- HR Business Partners were having discussions with managers regarding support for people off sick;
- the sickness and absence policy had been rewritten to be more proactive;
- HR had been meeting with managers to help manage sickness absence better and there had already been a decline in the level of sickness absence;
- the staff survey was 62 questions long, which may have contributed to the low level of participation for some worker groups;
- there was a framework for using agency staff that set out approved providers, standardised rates of pay, and terms and conditions;

- payment for agency staff outside of the framework needed to be agreed by Directors;
- the Council's biggest opportunity was its staff, and it was important to maintain morale through Local Government Reorganisation (LGR);
- AI was a complex issue: and was already making it more difficult to tackle employee relations cases;
- degree apprenticeships were changing at the end of the year; and
- job descriptions and equal pay for jobs would be covered as part of TUPE.

The Chair thanked the Strategic Director for People and Community for her work on this, and Councillor Palmer for bringing this proposal to the committee.

The Strategic Director for People and Community with permission of the Chair, left the meeting.

The Head of Service – HR, Workforce Planning & Organisational Development gave a presentation on the Staff Survey responses, making the following points:

- 51% of staff participated, which was an increase on 25% in 2023;
- it is possible that the staff that felt like nothing had been done as a result of previous surveys and therefore did not complete the survey this year;
- the strengths highlighted were:
  - health and safety;
  - managerial trust;
  - fair treatment; and
  - knowledge sharing
- areas for improvement were:
  - workplace progress;
  - follow up actions from the survey;
  - career development; and
  - cross-team collaboration
- these results had been shared with Heads of Service who would be meeting with HR Business Partners to develop action plans for their teams.

The Head of Service – HR, Workforce Planning & Organisational Development responded to a question from Councillor Holland, confirming that staff were able to complete the survey during work time.

Councillor Fullam felt it was positive that the survey enabled year on year changes to be seen, and that it was very refreshing and the council were making good progress.

In moving the recommendation to note the report, the Chair proposed, and Councillor Holland seconded that the committee appreciate the openness and transparency in order to meaningfully scrutinise now and in the future and note the transformation within the service. Following a vote, this was CARRIED.

## 91 **Scrutiny Work Plan and Proposals Received**

The Chair proposed, to the approval of the committee, that:

- the Medium Term Financial Plan would be moved to January;
- Councillor Moore's budget proforma would be moved to January; and
- the Leader's Portfolio Holder Update report would also be moved to January.

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

(The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 7.23 pm)

Chair

## **REPORT: Human Resources Operations at Exeter City Council**

### **Pre and Post HR Review Assessment**

#### **Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee**

**Date:** 13<sup>th</sup> November 2025

**Report of:** Jo Yelland, Strategic Director, People and Communities

**Report prepared by:** Lydia Wilson – Head of Service – Human Resources (HR), Workforce & Organisational Development (OD)

### **1. Executive Summary**

1.1 This report presents a comparative overview of HR operations and delivery at Exeter City Council before and after the independent HR review conducted in March 2024. It evaluates the structural, procedural, and cultural changes implemented to improve HR effectiveness, workforce planning, employee relations and service delivery. The report also identifies ongoing challenges and opportunities for continued development.

### **2. Background and Context**

2.1 The independent review focused on defining the requirements of an HR/OD function that would be fit for purpose as the Council continues its transformation programme, to meet its strategic aims and objectives. The review aimed to identify what would be needed to better align HR operations with the council's strategic goals, enhance workforce capabilities, and modernise people management functions.

2.2 The findings of the independent review highlighted that HR within ECC continued to be a reactive service, resources were focused on transactional activity, and it was not providing the necessary level of expertise required within a consistently changing and evolving environment.

### **3. HR Review – Issues**

3.1 The reviewer used a HR maturity model matrix to assess current position of the service and the report concluded that it was in a 'managed state' (**Table1**).

3.2 Key issues identified:

- Focus was to meet the critical needs of operational demand
- Fragmented ownership, unclear accountability, joint working relationships not evident
- Risk managed on a case-by-case basis
- Inaccessible data for managers and employees to self-service
- HR not aligned to business needs and priorities



- **Values & Leadership:** Values review to ensure they meet with the strategic direction of ECC, and development of values framework and identification of Leadership Development Programme.
- **Operating Model:** Transition to a new HR operating model with an emphasis and focus on People & Culture.

## 5. Independent HR Review – Progress Update

- 5.1 Following the independent HR review, a comprehensive HR Improvement Plan was set out with clear objectives, actions and timeframes established to address the issues and proceed with the recommendations identified within the report (section 4).
- 5.2 The plan was designed so that all actions are fully implemented by March 2026. Appendix A shows the detailed project plan and status of each activity. Below is a summary of the actions that have been completed or are in progress.

### 5.3 IT Systems

- 5.4 A full review of the **iTrent HR System** has been undertaken, leading to the formation of a dedicated project group and improvement plan. The aim is to optimise system usage by automating processes, enhancing self-service functionality, and reducing the transactional and administrative workload currently undertaken by the HR team.

This includes:

- Implementation of the onboarding module, significantly reducing administrative tasks and streamlining the new starter process
  - Automated workflows and email notifications for new starters, leavers, and internal movers
  - Employee self-service offboarding, enabling smoother transitions and clearer responsibilities
  - Right to Work checks reporting and workflow alerts, including breach notifications to ensure compliance
  - Digital checklists to support consistent and timely completion of onboarding, offboarding, and internal movement tasks
- 5.6 A new **Corporate HR Business Intelligence Dashboard** has been developed to track key metrics and drive strategic decision-making processes. Metrics currently tracked include:
- Absence rates and trends
  - Turnover and retention figures
  - Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) indicators
  - Vacancies
- 5.7 A new **HR SharePoint site** is currently being developed, including a dedicated People Hub designed to streamline access to HR information, empower employees and managers, and enhance the overall employee experience at Exeter City Council.

This site will replace the existing staff intranet and will serve as a central, user-friendly platform for:

- HR policies and procedures
- Guidance documents and toolkits
- Templates for common HR processes
- FAQs and self-service resources
- Links to key systems such as iTrent and the HR BI Dashboard

The People Hub will support a more agile and informed workforce by making essential HR resources easily accessible and aligned with organisational priorities.

5.8 A new **door access system at the Civic Centre** has been implemented to enhance the safety, security and operational efficiency with controlled and auditable access.

### **5.9 Talent Acquisition**

5.10 Proposal to maximise the utilisation of **ECC apprenticeship levy** has been agreed with the aim of implementing a council-wide apprenticeship scheme to address critical skills shortages, provide career pathways for frontline staff and support vulnerable community members such as young people leaving care and people with lived experience of homelessness.

5.11 **Recruitment and Onboarding Process Improvement.** A project group and improvement plan have been established to streamline and enhance the recruitment and onboarding experience. The focus is on ensuring processes are inclusive, efficient, candidate-focused, and aligned with the Council's strategic workforce goals: attracting, selecting, and integrating the best talent to deliver on corporate objectives.

5.12 **Key initiatives being developed include:**

- **Creation of a new web site landing page** for job applications, designed to improve accessibility, showcase the Council's employer brand, and provide a more engaging candidate experience
- **Analysis of hard-to-fill roles**, with adaptations to recruitment strategies and processes to better address these challenges
- **Implementation of the iTrent onboarding module**, reducing administrative burden and improving the consistency and efficiency of the new starter journey
- **Automation of emails and workflows** for new starters, leavers, and internal movers, ensuring timely communication and task completion
- **Introduction of digital checklists** to support managers and HR in delivering a smooth and compliant onboarding and offboarding experience

### **5.13 Learning & Development**

5.14 A **strategic leadership development programme** has been commissioned and is currently being delivered, with the aim of creating a cohesive, high performance Extended Leadership Team that is aligned to the Council's strategic priorities and values.

**5.15** A range of **people management skills** workshops have been designed and are currently being delivered across the council to upskill managers in areas of absence management, investigations and difficult conversations.

#### **5.16 Employee Experience**

**5.17** A thorough **review of 24 HR policies** has been undertaken to ensure they are current, legally compliant and aligned with organisational values and best practice, to support effective people management and positive employee experience. Also 3 new policies have been introduced; Hybrid Working, Secondments and Neonatal Leave. A robust system for review has also been established.

**5.18** A comprehensive review of the **Occupational Health Service** has been conducted and project plan and group established to improve the services effectiveness, accessibility, and alignment with organisational priorities, with the aim of enhancing employee wellbeing, reducing absence rates and supporting a healthy, productive workforce. As part of this improvement programme, a full tender exercise is being undertaken to procure a new Occupational Health provider. The aim is to secure a supplier that offers a modern, responsive, and evidence-based service aligned with the Council's strategic workforce priorities and commitment to employee wellbeing

**5.19** **An enhanced staff survey** has been created and successfully rolled out to employees, designed to capture meaningful insights into employee engagement, satisfaction, and feedback. The results have been analysed through a newly developed Business Intelligence dashboard, enabling senior leadership and management to make data-informed decisions and shape targeted action plans that support workforce wellbeing and organisational improvement. (overview of results in Appendix D)

**5.20** An improved **Industrial Relations (IR) framework has been** designed, in consultation with Trade Unions, and launched to provide an integrated and modernised approach to IR ensuring ECC offer a robust, transparent and inclusive approach to engaging staff and their Union representatives in policy and organisational changes.

#### **5.21 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)**

**5.22** **An invited EDI Local Government Association Mini Peer Review** has taken place which identified improvements to the councils EDI framework and provisions to ensure the council is effective, inclusive and aligned with current legislation, best practice and the council's strategic objective to tackle social exclusion in all its work. EDI task force established with EDI objectives and EDI policy agreed and published, development of an EDI training framework for employees and members and improved EDI data (Appendix B).

#### **5.23 Structural Changes**

- Appointment of a Strategic Director People and Communities in July 2024
- Appointment of a new Head of HR Workforce Planning and OD: commenced in post February 2025.
- A new HR model aligning HRBPs to service areas implemented providing strategic support to the Extended Leadership Team.

- Independent review of Corporate Health & Safety commissioned resulting in transfer of Health and Safety and work function to HR (September 2025) . Recruitment of 2 new senior leadership health and safety roles is underway

## 6. Measurements and KPIs

6.1 Being able to produce meaningful data, to measure against KPIs are essential because they enable the transformation of the function from reactive and administrative to proactive and strategic. An overarching aim of the HR Improvement Plan is to be able to produce data to support HR decisions aligned to the organisational strategy. The following KPIs can now be measured and used as benchmarks by serving as a reference point overtime, across departments and against local government/public sector standards. These have been incorporated in the HR, Workforce and OD business plan.

Description	Baseline Information		Targets		
	2024/25	Comparator*	2025/6	2026/7	2027/8
Sickness absence rate (%)	5.40%*	2.9%	4%	3%	2.5%
Absence Cost	£892,260* (approx. £1140/per person)	£800-£1000 / employee/yr in local gov	>£800/employee	>£800/employee	>£800/employee
% Turnover rate	13.70%*	25%	<10%	<10%	<10%
% Staff Survey Response rate	52%*	50-60%	60%	65%	70%
% Vacancy rate	9.56%	9.6%	7.5%	6.5%	5%
Time to hire (days)	30 days	42 days	<30 days	<30 days	<30 days
% apprenticeship levy spend	19%	44.5%	45%	60%	80%
% workforce over age 55	56.67% 41+ 34.74% 51+ (30% under the age of 30)*	66.9% 40-64 34.9% 55+	Increase under 30 workforce by 5%	+5%	+5%

\*Comparator figures obtained from ONS, CIPD, Infinistats, LGA

\*\*ECCs BI Dashboard Data can be found in Appendix C

## 7. Future Challenges and Next Steps

7.1 The workplace and workforce are constantly changing and for local government in particular, HR faces a unique and complex set of challenges including Local Government Review (LGR), budget constraints, evolving technology and workforce expectations. As such, ECC HR will continually evolve its approach and plans to meet the demands of a rapidly changing landscape. This includes:

- **Building leadership capacity to manage-reform** driven organisational change
- **Integrating AI tools into HR functions** such as, Chatbot on HR SharePoint for instant answers and resource guidance, Automated transcription of formal

hearing notes, AI-supported job evaluations for consistency and efficiency, Recruitment shortlisting automation for faster, objective screening,

- **Conducting skills audits and targeted training initiatives to create a future-ready workforce** through the development of a strategic learning and development programme.
- **Strengthening the PDR (in full) and Supervision process** that focuses on accountability and continuous development
- **Strengthening and Prioritising Corporate Health and Safety at work leadership**
- **Prioritise diversity, equity and inclusion** addressing systemic gaps and supporting underrepresented groups
- **Focus on employee reward and recognition, wellbeing, engagement and mental health support**
- **Continue to drive digital transformation** and improve HR systems, such as the Learning Management System (My Compliance and Nexus) and Electronic Staff files (EDRM) and Assessment (Corporate Health and Safety Reporting).
- **To further review, streamline and digitalise HR processes** including sickness absence, leavers and movers
- **Foster a proactive health and safety culture** by implementing robust risk management strategies and systems, ensuring compliance with relevant legislation and through digital innovation improve safety performance and data driven decision making.

## 8. Recommendations

The committee is asked to note the contents of this report and the considerable progress in delivering the HR Improvement Plan

## 9. Appendices

- **Appendix A:** HR Improvement Plan
- **Appendix B:** EDI Project Plan
- **Appendix C:** ECC BI Dashboard Data
- **Appendix D:** Staff Survey results

# Appendix A – HR Improvement Plan

Work Area	Category	Overall Objective	Activity	RAG Status	Time Frame															
					Mar-25	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26			
Page 38	1.1 iTrent Organisation Structure Aligned	iTrent to be fully reflective of Council Structure to enable correct reporting at all levels, and data extract for People Dashboard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* New org structures created with Head of Srv</li> <li>* All new structures updated on iTrent</li> <li>* Reports run and checked with Head Of via BP</li> <li>* Test with BI Dashboard</li> <li>* Ownership of Org Charts BP process agreed</li> </ul>	Complete																
	1.2 Door Access	Implement new door access system for Civic Centre - ensure reporting functionality is in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Run reports following providers system update (Car Access)</li> </ul>	Complete																
	1.3 Emergency Contact /EDI Data	Ensure iTrent is up to date with Emergency Contacts, and that this is reviewed regularly and owned by Ensure employees have had the opportunity to update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Run report following completion of Org Structure reporting on iTrent</li> <li>* EDI Report produced/linked with BI Dashboard - shared with EDI</li> <li>* Decision on whether further comms is required/annual reminder</li> </ul>	Complete																
	1.4 iTrent short term fixes and health	Optimisation of 'back end' iTrent to support user experience, reduce system failures, manual work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Agree on iTrent fixes to support user experience and with no visible 'knock' on for end user</li> </ul>	Complete																
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Decide on whether to commission MHR to complete Health Check</li> </ul>	Complete																
	1.5 Sharepoint Development & Launch	Create People HUB on Sharepoint for all to use - to replace Intranet in order to streamline access to HR information, empower employees and managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Kick off meeting scheduled 18/3 scheduled with DB</li> </ul>	Complete																
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Assign Project Mgr/Business Analyst to support project</li> </ul>	Complete																
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Create/shape 'tiles' categories required</li> </ul>	Complete																
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Upskill, knowledge build and assign HR Owners</li> </ul>	In progress																
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Develop detailed plan/ownership of 'tiles'</li> </ul>	In progress																
1.6 EDRM Review	Review Personnel Records storing/classification in line with regulation/working practices <a href="#">Employment information   ICO</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Develop/deliver/engage end user</li> </ul>	In progress																	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Execute and review</li> </ul>	In progress																	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Review Guidance/undertake review of EDRM</li> </ul>	Not yet started																	
1.7 My Compliance/Nexus Review	Review both systems - ownership of My Compliance by H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Identify areas of improvement/strengths/actions required</li> </ul>	Not yet started																	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Implement changes and process improvements</li> </ul>	Not yet started																	
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Full review of utilisation/reporting/link to iTrent</li> </ul>	In progress																
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Any suggested changes reviewed, agreed and actioned</li> </ul>	In progress																

Work Area	Category	Overall Objective	Activity	RAG Status	Mar-25	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26			
2. Talent Acquisition	2.1 Apprenticeship Approach/Levy	Understand how levy is received, ownership, spend and Levy utilised for harder to fill roles, succession planning, supporting care leavers and homelessness back into work	*Develop Strategic Paper for JY review *Develop detailed plan for delivery, considering partnerships/grants	Complete																
				In progress																
	2.2 Recruitment End to End Process	Review full end to end process, and develop new Reduce 'touch points' define process and improve/promote ECC Brand/attraction strategy Review user experience for both Managers and Applicants Clear ownership of roles across full process, drafting placing adverts through to offer process	* Assign Project Mgr/Business Analyst to support project * Map out end to end process 'as is' then 'to be'  * Build in automation functionalities/opportunities - See MHR Output Report * Develop and deliver detailed project plan and assign owners/time frame * Develop and deliver communication/engagement/trg plan for end users * Execute and review	Complete																
				Complete																
				Complete																
				Complete																
				In progress																
				Not yet started																
	2.3 Onboarding End to End Process	Review full end to end process from Offer Letter, Develop new streamlined approach replacing manual Reduce administration/manual tasks/touchpoints for Advisory Team	* Assign Project Mgr/Business Analyst to support project * Map out end to end process 'as is' then 'to be' (several * Build in automation functionalities/opportunities - See MHR Output Report * Develop and deliver detailed project plan and assign owners/time frame * Develop and deliver communication/engagement/trg plan for end users * Execute and review	Complete																
				Complete																
				Complete																
				Complete																
In progress																				
In progress																				

Work Area	Category	Overall Objective	Activity	RAG Status	Mar-25	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26			
3. Learning & Development	3.1 Leadership Development	Ensure effective delivery of Leadership Development	* Point of contact/oversee effective delivery of with Red * Monitor Progress * Evaluation and further actions	Complete																
				Complete																
				In progress																
	3.2 Management Development	Upskill Managers in operational people practices Dev opportunities for those unsuccessful for DCN	* Range of short people-management courses rollout during 2025 * Bespoke prog leaders identified as potential 'talent pipeline' * Evaluation of interventions	Complete																
				On hold																
	3.3 PDR and supervision Process	Review effectiveness of current process and automation Reporting functionality via iTrent	* Evaluation of current PDR Process * Build in automation functionalities - See MHR Output Report * Communicate process changes to end users and timeframe for uploading	In progress																
				Not yet started																
				Not yet started																
				Not yet started																

Category	Overall Objective	Activity	RAG Status	Mar-25	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26	
4.1 Policies & Procedures	All People Policies introduced by 31/3/25 Policy ownership handed over to Lead for annual review cycle and ownership Ownership of Whistleblowing Policy to incorporate into People Policies	* Ensure all Policies are launched and rolled out via My Compl	Complete														
		* Identify clear HR ownership of Policies in line with framework	Complete														
		* Determine review process and enact	Complete														
4.2 Occupational Health - Contract Management	Ensure effective contract management of OH provider	* Review OH Audit Report - Final Report Feb 2025	Complete														
		* Engage OH Provider to address issues raised	Complete														
		* Develop joint delivery plan to address issues linked with 4.3	Complete														
		* Introduce regular contract reviews	Complete														
4.3 Occupational Health - Referral Process/Systems	Introduce effective OH Referral process, invoicing and gateway to ensure OH provision is cost effective and meets demands	* Review OH Audit Report - Final Report Feb 2025	Complete														
		* Identify key processes and changes (including Mgt referral and	Complete														
		* Communicate/upskill Managers as required	Complete														
4.4 Sickness Absence Process	Review full end to end process Develop new streamlined user friendly approach to reporting/tracking abs Include effective system functionality and processes to support effective management	* Assign Project Mgr/Business Analyst to support project	Complete														
		* Map out end to end process 'as is' then 'to be' (several workshops)	In progress														
		* Build in automation functionalities/opportunities - See MHR Output Report	In progress														
		* Develop and deliver detailed project plan and assign owners/time frame	In progress														
		* Develop and deliver communication/engagement/trg plan for end users	In progress														
		* Execute and review	In progress														
4.5 Movers Process	Review end to end process and automate to reduce error and duplication of effort	* Assign Project Mgr/Business Analyst to support project	Complete														
		* Map out end to end process 'as is' then 'to be' (several workshops)	In progress														
		* Build in automation functionalities/opportunities - See MHR Output Report	In progress														

Work Area																			
	Category	Overall Objective	Activity	RAG Status	Mar-25	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26		
4. Employee Experience	4.6 Leavers Process	Review end to end process and automate to reduce error and duplication of effort	* Assign Project Mgr/Business Analyst to support project	Complete															
			* Map out end to end process ' as is' then' to be' (several workshops)	In progress															
			* Build in automation functionalities/opportunities - See MHR Output Report	In progress															
			* Upskill (as needed) and communicate changes	In progress															
	4.7 Employee Survey	Review and Implement ECC Employee Survey for 2025	* Review previous employee surveys at ECC and results	Complete															
			* Design survey questions and format for 2025 and get feedback from JY, LB and HR Team	Complete															
			* Paper for SMB inc draft survey for approval	Complete															
			* Develop Comms plan and launch	Complete															
			* Execute and Review	Complete															
			* Analysis of results and next steps	Complete															
5.1 EDI Task Force Plan	Implementaion of the EDI Action plan developed from the EDI review in 2024	* Review the provision of EDI Training for staff and members	Complete																
		* Review the governance of EQIAs	Complete																
		* Consider the introduction of staff networks	Complete																
		* Publish an offer for care leavers	In progress																

## Appendix B – EDI Project Plan

LGA Mini Peer Review Recommendation	Action Plan	Lead	By When	RAG
All staff in person marketplace event for chief executive to share EDI vision	EDI review findings and high-level action plan to be included in CEO all Staff briefings during Oct/Nov 2024	Executive Office Manager	May-25	Green
Develop a longer-term EDI Strategy supported by action plan	Consider developing a strategy which builds on the actions in this plan and proposes further activity for the medium and long term. A review of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy to be done at the same time to ensure it reflects the organisation restructure, learning from the LGA review and complements any strategy and action plan.	Policy Officer – Equality, Diversity & Inclusion and Safeguarding	Mar-25	
Review the provision of EDI training for officers	A revised suite of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Training will be identified and piloted. The training will be a mixture of generic self-assessment sessions focussed on raising awareness of the legal context and minimum requirements of behaviour and values followed by in person behavioural change focussed workshops exploring themes such as unconscious bias, neurodiversity and gender identity.	Policy Officer – Equality, Diversity & Inclusion and Safeguarding	Mar-25	Green
Review the provision of EDI training for Members	A revised suite of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Training specifically for members will be identified and piloted	Policy Officer – Equality, Diversity & Inclusion and Safeguarding  Committee Services Manager	Mar-25	

<p>EDI dashboard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use Power BI to create workforce representation dashboard</li> <li>- Consider communications to staff highlighting who will have access to their data and create a specific plan to engage staff in manual roles</li> <li>- Publish workforce data to be PSED compliant</li> </ul>	<p>As part of the HR Improvement Plan a campaign to encourage staff to provide EDI data either directly into ITrent or via a form completed in conversation with a line manager</p>	<p>Head of Service HR &amp; OD</p>	<p>31/3/25</p>	
	<p>The new Corporate Performance Framework will include a suite of “People” dashboard</p>	<p>Head of Service Digital and Data</p>	<p>Jan-25</p>	
<p>The governance of EqIAs is limited and the quality and understanding of how to complete them effectively varies</p>	<p>Review the governance of EQIAs and make proposals which include addressing the quality of assessments, that actions are followed up and assessments are published in a way that means they are easily accessible to residents</p>	<p>Policy Officer – Equality, Diversity &amp; Inclusion and Safeguarding</p>	<p>Mar-25</p>	
<p>Establish specific, achievable and measurable equality objectives in consultation with stakeholders and staff</p>	<p>In 2024 the Council undertook the LGA residents survey which highlighted some important differences by way of experiencing the city and of contact with the Council from our more diverse and priority communities. During 2025 the Council will engage residents in these communities through focus groups to get a better understanding of what residents feel the council could do better.</p>	<p>Consultation and Engagement Manager (under recruitment)</p>	<p>Mar-25</p>	
<p>Increase collaboration with established community groups to benefit service design and delivery</p>	<p>We will build on the links established by Wellbeing Exeter to a range of community groups representing people with protected characteristics and work with them to establish service redesign panels to input into service changes as we roll out the Digital</p>	<p>Head of Service Customers and Communities</p>	<p>Mar-25</p>	

Publish service user data to be PSED compliant	As we roll out customer accounts during 2024/25 we will be systematically collecting basic customer data which we will be able to analyse and share	Head of Service Customers and Communities	Ongoing	
Introduce a page of EDI information in the regular staff newsletter  All staff briefing once a quarter to update on EDI related activity e.g. menopause policy, EDI champions	As part of the HR Improvement Plan launched in October 2024, we will be reviewing all our internal staff communications and creating a new Share Point site for all people issues. We will ensure that EDI information and themes are incorporated fully into this work	Head of HR& OD	Mar-25	
	Include an action within the Communications Plan that sets out how the council will engage with colleagues across the organisation about EDI priorities and initiatives	Executive Office Manager	Mar-25	
Develop terms of reference for the Equality Champions group with a clear scope, objectives, outcomes and training	Terms of reference to be reviewed and updated	Policy Officer - Equality, Diversity & Inclusion and Safeguarding	Feb-25	
Develop a strategy for increasing the representation of employees with protected characteristics  Implement Positive Action by focussing on talent, progression and succession  Explore graduate programme and apprenticeships to address workforce shortages and underrepresentation	As we implement the HR Improvement Programme we will be reviewing our approach to succession planning, workforce development and recruitment and will ensure EDI issues are embedded in all the actions we take and the changes we make	Head of Service HR &OD	Sep-25	
Consider introduction of staff networks	Through the staff survey we will ask staff which networks they would like to see developed and we will use the Menopause network as a model to develop others as requested.	Head of Service HR & OD	May-25	
Publish and implement offer for care experienced young people	Work with Leisure and Live and Move to develop a wellbeing offer	Policy Officer - Equality, Diversity & Inclusion and Safeguarding	Mar-25	

## Appendix B – ECC BI Dashboard Data

### Sickness Absence Rate



**5.402%**  
Sickness rate (%) in period

### Sickness Absence Cost

Sickness cost by directorate and team

Directorate	Cost
⊕ Chief Executive	£5,534.80
⊕ Corporate Resources	£79,253.59
⊕ Operational Services	£463,184.24
⊕ People & Community	£167,090.30
⊕ Place	£177,198.01
<b>Total</b>	<b>£892,260.93</b>

Avg duration of sickness (days)	Avg days off per employee	Avg FTE over period
<b>6.97</b>	<b>13.72</b>	<b>706</b>

## Age Profile

All staff age brackets		
Age Bracket	Headcount	As %
a) < 18	18	1.59%
b) 18 - 30	335	29.62%
c) 31 - 40	137	12.11%
d) 41 - 50	248	21.93%
e) 51 - 60	257	22.72%
f) > 60	136	12.02%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1131</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

## Turnover Rate

Turnover for financial year and quarter			
xFY	Average headcount	Leavers	Turnover
⊕ 2022/2023	801.67	-118	14.71%
⊕ 2023/2024	779.08	-114	14.61%
⊕ 2024/2025	781.50	-107	13.70%
⊕ 2025/2026	775.17	-46	5.93%
<b>Total</b>	<b>785.67</b>	<b>-385</b>	<b>48.95%</b>

## Staff Survey Completion Rate

### Home | Staff Survey Responses

Filter by Directorate

All

#### Key Indicator of % Completed

From	To	
	0.00%	39.99%
	40.00%	59.99%
	60.00%	100.00%

By Directorate			
Directorate	Surveys Completed	% Completed Survey	# of Employees
Corporate Resources	65	 63.1%	103
Operational Services	90	 32.3%	279
People & Communities	112	 77.8%	144
Place	132	 54.5%	242
<b>Total</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>768</b>

By Service Area (Exc. SMB and Executive Office)			
Service Area	Surveys Completed	% Completed Survey	# of Employees
Asset Maintenance	27	 58.7%	46
City Centre, Community Safety and Net Zero	15	 60%	25
City Development	26	 70.3%	37
Commercial Assets (incl. Matford Centre & Car Parks)	13	 52%	25
Culture, Communications & Tourism (incl. RAMM)	57	 70.4%	81
Customers & Communities	36	 128.6%	28
Digital & Data	4	 100%	4
Engineering, Harbour & Tree Management	14	 63.6%	22
Environmental Health	17	 73.9%	23
Finance, Revenues & Benefits	32	 58.2%	55
Housing	60	 60%	100
HR, Workforce Planning & OD	12	 100%	12
Legal, Procurement, Elections & Democratic Services	20	 87%	23
Leisure	34	 34.3%	99
Public & Green Space	28	 32.6%	86
Waste Management & Fleet	4	 3.9%	102
<b>Total</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>768</b>

Staff Survey 2025



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# Transforming HR Operations at Exeter City Council

A comprehensive review and improvement journey from reactive operations to strategic partnership

# Executive Summary

In March 2024, an independent HR review was conducted at Exeter City Council to identify the structural, procedural and cultural changes needed to enhance HR effectiveness, workforce planning and employee relations.

The transformation program that followed, aimed to shift HR from a reactive, transactional service to a proactive, strategic partner supporting the Council's evolving objectives.



# The Challenge: A Reactive Service

## Reactive Operations

Resources focused on transactional activity rather than strategic support

## Fragmented Ownership

Unclear accountability and limited joint working relationships

## Inaccessible Data

Managers and employees unable to self-service information

## Misalignment

HR not aligned to business needs and strategic priorities



# HR Maturity Assessment

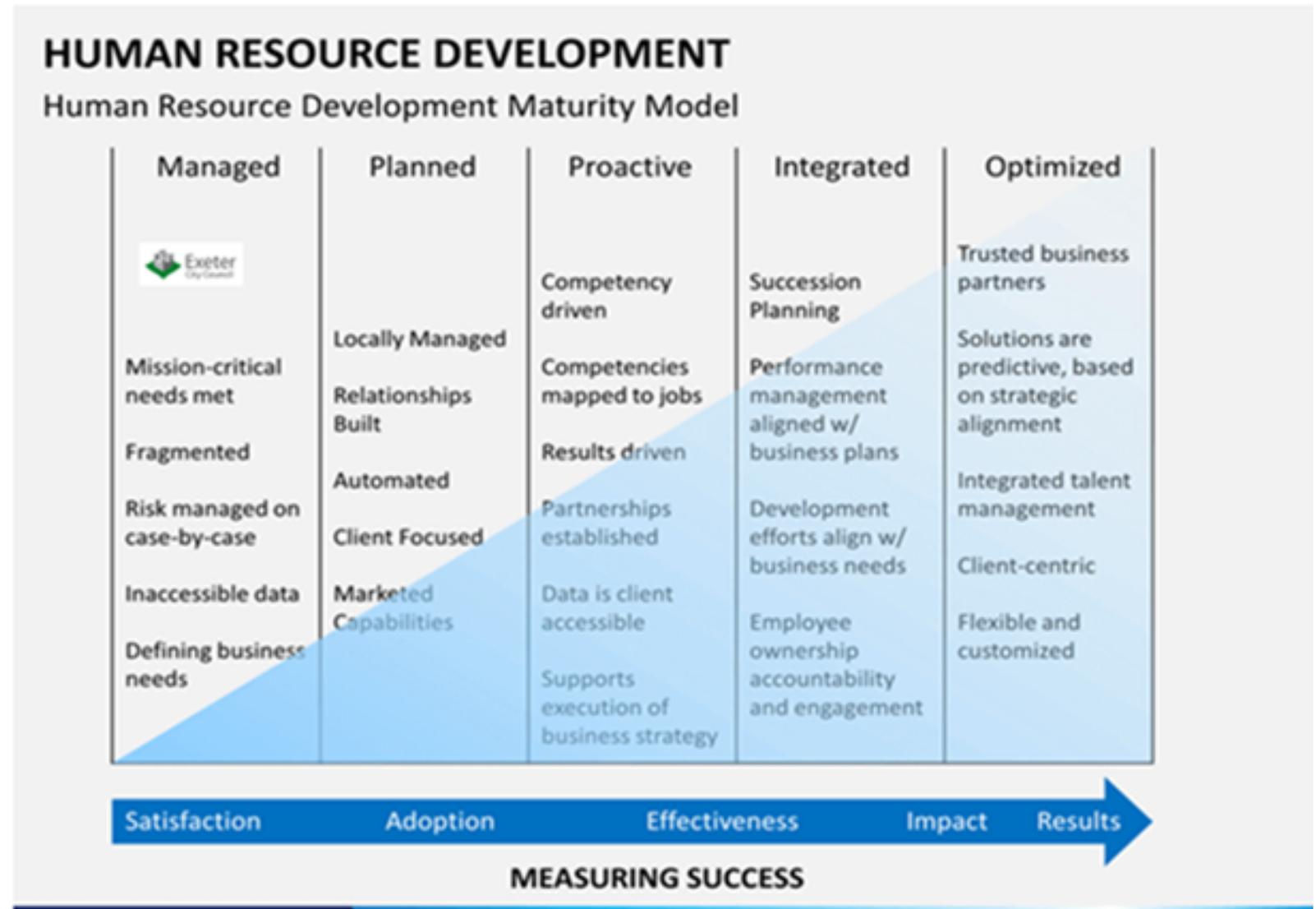
## Current State: Managed

- Meeting critical operational demands
- Case-by-case risk management
- Limited strategic contribution

## Target State: Proactive

- Competency and results driven
- Strategic partnerships established
- Client-accessible data
- Supporting business strategy execution

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HR Transactional support is an ongoing requirement, however volume reduces as technology becomes the enabler for self-service. HR resources refocused on strategic HR delivery which drives business impact, delivery and return on investment.

# Six Strategic Recommendations

1

## Automation

Implement fit-for-purpose HR Information System driving self-service and management insights

2

## Process Improvement

Review and streamline HR administration for sustained efficiency gains

3

## Accessibility

Create user-friendly platforms for managers and employees to access guidance

4

## Policies & Practices

Implement revised policies with effective delivery and knowledge building

5

## Values & Leadership

Review values and develop leadership framework aligned to strategic direction

6

## Operating Model

Transition to new HR model emphasising People & Culture

# Digital Transformation in Action

## iTrent System Optimisation

Dedicated project group formed to automate processes, enhance self-service and reduce administrative workload

## BI Dashboard

New [Corporate HR Business Intelligence Dashboard](#) tracking key metrics for strategic decision-making

## HR SharePoint Site

[People Hub](#) developed to streamline access, empower employees and enhance experience

## Access Control

New door access system at Civic Centre enhancing safety, security and operational efficiency





# Building Capability and Culture



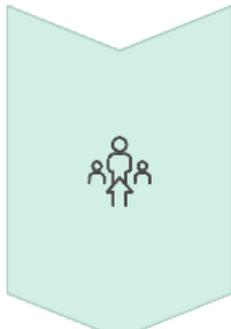
## Apprenticeship Scheme

Maximising levy to address skills shortages and provide career pathways for frontline staff and vulnerable community members



## Recruitment & Onboarding

Streamlined processes ensuring inclusive, efficient, candidate-focused experience aligned to strategic workforce goals



## Leadership & Management Development

Strategic programme creating cohesive, high-performance  
Extended Leadership Team aligned to priorities and values and  
people management skills workshops upskilling managers

# Employee Experience



## Policy Modernisation

24 HR policies reviewed, 3 new policies introduced (Hybrid Working, Secondments, Neonatal Leave)



## Occupational Health

Comprehensive service review and tender exercise for new provider aligned to wellbeing priorities



## Staff Survey

Enhanced survey with [BI dashboard](#) enabling data-informed decisions and targeted action plans



## Industrial Relations

Improved framework designed with Trade Unions providing robust, transparent engagement approach



# Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Progress



## LGA Mini Peer Review

Independent assessment identifying improvements to EDI framework and provisions



## EDI Task Force

Established with clear objectives and published EDI policy aligned to tackling social exclusion



## Training Framework

EDI training developed for employees and members ensuring inclusive practices



## Improved Data

Enhanced EDI data collection supporting evidence-based decision-making

 **Strategic Objective:** Ensure the Council is effective, inclusive and aligned with current legislation and best practice

# Key Performance Indicators Overview

Producing meaningful data to support HR decisions aligned with organisational strategy.

Description	2024/25 Baseline	Comparator	2025/6	2026/7	2027/8
<b>Sickness absence rate (%)</b>	5.40%	2.9%	4%	3%	2.5%
<b>Absence Cost</b>	£892,260	£800-£1000/employee	>£800/employee	>£800/employee	>£800/employee
<b>Turnover rate (%)</b>	13.70%	25%	<10%	<10%	<10%
<b>Staff Survey Response rate (%)</b>	52%	50-60%	60%	65%	70%
<b>Vacancy rate (%)</b>	9.56%	9.6%	7.5%	6.5%	5%
<b>Time to hire (days)</b>	30 days	42 days	<30 days	<30 days	<30 days
<b>Apprenticeship levy spend (%)</b>	19%	44.5%	45%	60%	80%
<b>Workforce over age 55 (%)</b>	56.67% (41+) 34.74% (51+)	66.9% (40-64) 34.9% (55+)	+5% under 30	+5% under 30	–

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Comparator figures obtained from ONS, CIPD, Infinistats, LGA

# Looking Ahead: Future Priorities

The transformation journey continues as HR evolves to meet the demands of Local Government Review, budget constraints and changing workforce expectations.



## AI Integration

Chatbots, automated transcription, job evaluations and recruitment screening for efficiency



## Health & Safety

Strengthening corporate health and safety through robust risk management and digital innovation



## Wellbeing Focus

Employee reward, recognition, engagement and mental health support prioritised



## Strategic Learning

Skills audits and targeted training creating future-ready workforce through development programme



## EDI Priority

Addressing systemic gaps and supporting underrepresented groups across the organisation



## Digital Evolution

Continued system improvements including Learning Management and Electronic Staff Files



# Employee Survey Results

**June 2025**

Understanding our workforce: insights from across the council to drive meaningful change and improvement.



# Survey Participation

# 51%

**Overall Participation Rate**

Employees across the council  
shared their views

**Corporate Resources**  
**63%**

**Operational Services**  
**32%**

**People & Communities**  
**75%**

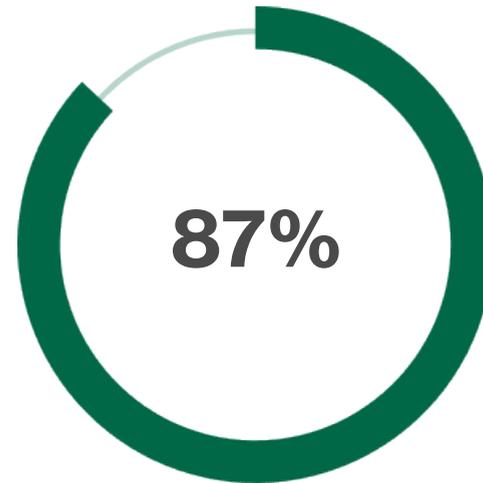
**Place**  
**54%**

# Strengths – What's Going Well?



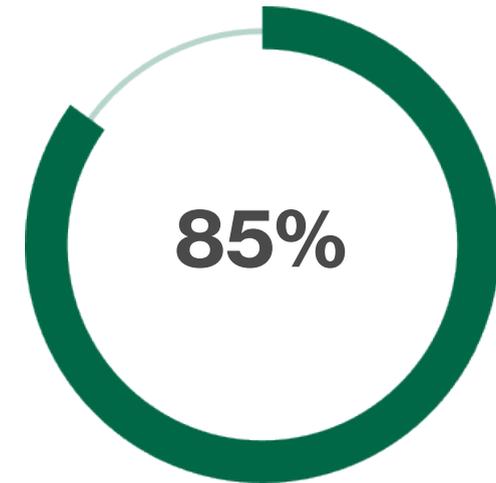
## Health & Safety Awareness

Employees understand their responsibilities



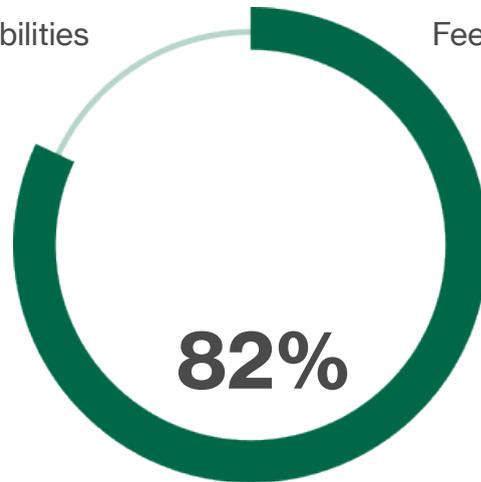
## Managerial Trust

Feel trusted by their manager to do their job



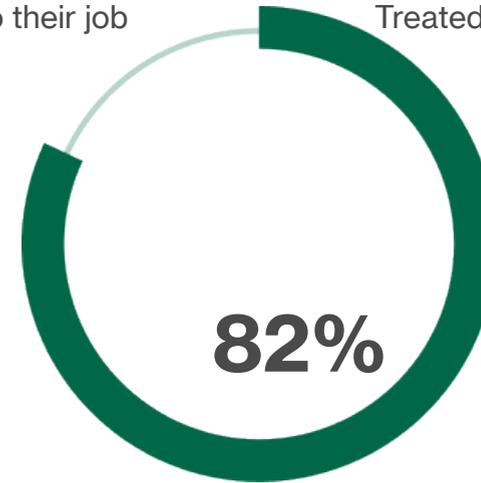
## Fair Treatment

Treated with fairness, respect, and without discrimination



## Knowledge Sharing

Team members actively share their knowledge and experience



## Job Purpose

Understand their team contribution to achieving council priorities

# Opportunities for Improvement

## Workplace Progress

Only **21%** believe the council is a better place to work than 12 months ago.

## Survey Follow-Up Actions

Just **27%** feel meaningful action will be taken following this survey.

## Career Development

Only **32%** believe there are opportunities to progress their career at the council.

## Cross-Team Collaboration

Only **34%** think communication between services/directorates is good.



# Corporate Resources

**63%**

**Participation**

**0.69**

**Satisfaction Score**

## Top 5 Areas for Improvement

1. Council is a better place to work than 12 months ago
2. PDR completed within last 12 months
3. Meaningful action will be taken following survey
4. Senior leadership provides clear vision
5. Opportunities to progress career at council

# Operational Services

**32%**

**Participation**

**0.61**

**Satisfaction Score**

## Top 5 Areas for Improvement

1. Opportunities to progress career at council
2. Meaningful action following survey
3. PDR completed within last 12 months
4. Communication between services/directorates
5. Council is a better place to work than 12 months ago

# People & Communities

**75%**

**Participation**

**0.94**

**Satisfaction Score**

Highest across directorates

## Top 5 Areas for Improvement

1. Council is a better place to work than 12 months ago
2. Communication between services/directorates
3. Opportunities to progress career at council
4. Meaningful action following survey
5. PDR completed within last 12 months

# Place

**55%**

**Participation**

**0.92**

**Satisfaction Score**

## Top 5 Areas for Improvement

1. Opportunities to progress career at council
2. Council is a better place to work than 12 months ago
3. Meaningful action following survey
4. Communication between services/directorates
5. PDR completed within last 12 months





# Next Steps.....

**Next Steps:** HOS to work with HRBPs to develop -specific action plans for their Teams and submit to SMB by December 2025.

**WORK PLAN FOR CUSTOMER FOCUS SCRUTINY ITEMS 2025/26**

*Working Draft for January 2026*

<b>Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Director</b>	<b>Portfolio Holder</b>	<b>Origin of Business</b>	<b>Status</b>
22 January 2026	Portfolio Holder Update – The Leader of the Council, Cllr Bialyk	Chief Executive	Leader, Cllr Bialyk		
22 January 2026	Medium Term Financial Plan	Strategic Director for Corporate Resources	Corporate Services & City Centre (Deputy Leader, Cllr Wright)		
22 January 2026	Quarter 2 Budget Scrutiny	Strategic Director for Corporate Resources (DH)	Leader (Cllr Bialyk)	Scrutiny proposal – Cllr Parkhouse	
5 February 2026	Portfolio Holder’s Report (Cllr Asvachin)	Strategic Director for People and Communities	Portfolio Holder for Housing, Homelessness Prevention & Support Services		
5 February 2026	Tenants Energy Review of our Passivhaus Council Homes	Strategic Director – People and Communities (JY)	Housing, Homelessness Prevention and Support Services (Cllr Asvachin)	Scrutiny proposal Cllr Atkinson	

5 February 2026	Six-monthly update on Homelessness Strategy	Strategic Director – People and Communities (JY)	Housing, Homelessness Prevention and Support Services (Cllr Asvachin)	Proposed by Councillor Denning – half yearly report	
19 March 2026	Portfolio Holder’s Report (Cllr R Williams)	Strategic Director for Operations (AP)	Portfolio Holder for City Management		
13 November 2025	Portfolio Holder’s Report (Cllr Foale)	Strategic Director for Place (IC)	Portfolio Holder for Arts, Culture & Tourism		
19 March 2026	Update on Street Cleansing and Bin Collection – Recycling and Food Waste Collection	Head of Operations (CC)	City Management (Cllr R Williams)	Yearly report	
19 March 2026	Eton Walk Refuse bin – Petition	Strategic Director for Operations (AP)	City Management (Cllr R Williams)	Petition	Deferred from September 2025

To be scoped on 22 January 2026 subject to Scrutiny Programme Board allocation:

- **Budget proposal from Cllr Moore (Commercial Strategy)**
- **Empty Homes from Cllrs Moore & Read**

## CUSTOMER FOCUS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

22 January 2026

Present:

Councillor Catherine Rees (Chair)  
Councillors Cookson, Fullam, Holland, Hussain, Payne, Pole, Read and Snow

Apologies:

Councillors Begley and Wardle

Also present:

Strategic Director for Corporate Resources, Head of Service - Finance and Democratic Services Manager

In attendance as Portfolio Holder:

Councillors Bialyk, Vizard, Williams and Wright.

92 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2025 were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair as correct.

93 **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made by Members.

94 **Questions from the Public under Standing Order No. 19**

There were no questions submitted by the public.

95 **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.

96 **Portfolio Holder Report from the Leader of the Council, Councillor Bialyk.**

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Bialyk presented his Portfolio Holder update report drawing attention to the following points:

- a) the provisional financial settlement which he welcomed along with the briefing from the Strategic Director of Corporate Resources and Head of Service – Finance and he thanked officers for their advice;
- b) strategic partnerships, there would be bid to become a City of Culture coming forward. An expression of interest would be submitted, resources would be required but there would be some funding available, especially for initial feasibility and therefore no drain on council finances;
- c) Exeter Civic University Agreement, there were minutes produced rather than actions and he would like minutes to be available to Members;
- d) Exeter Partnership information was contained within the report;
- e) the new Corporate Plan;
- f) Materials Reclamation Facility (MRF), discussions were taking place and a report would be brought to Council in February addressing Senate Court as well;

- g) Rennes House still had ariels on top and having those removed had created a delay;
- h) Whipton Gardens was an excellent facility and the next phase would come forward when finances were in place;
- i) he had visits planned, with Directors, to Mallinson Bridge and the City Wall;
- j) a meeting had been set up with group leaders to discuss the way forward for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), to brief members and to look at what would be involved;
- k) the Secretary of State had made a decision today therefore there would be focus on shadow elections for 2027;
- l) Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority were discussing transport and putting a budget in place. A concern in the residents' survey was buses and transport despite not being the responsible authority.

The Leader responded to Members' questions in the following terms:

- a) he and Directors understood that those in the vicinity of the Laings properties had not had a good experience. There had been contractor issues but the work would be done and contractors were in place and would be on site. Phase B at Vaughn Road had been delayed in order to commit to the Laings properties;
- b) a Cultural Strategy was being developed and a principle of involving community stakeholders would be important in the City of Culture bid;
- c) there was no feedback at present on the use of AI in the planning initiative;
- d) Exeter City Council had no formal role in the Mallinson Bridge replacement but he would be making contact with the relevant Cabinet Member of Devon County Council and he was not aware of the terms of the bid to Active Travel England but would ask;
- e) he would discuss Toronto House in Prince Charles Road with Directors to determine whether it was embedded in the retrofit programme but he pointed out that some properties were now privately owned;
- f) he was pleased that Widgery Road residents were happy with the reactive repairs service and he would discuss nature accreditation with Councillor Vizard to see if there was anything Members could do to help;
- g) the legal team were working hard on the issue of having telecoms equipment removed from Rennes House and he would ask the relevant Strategic Director if there was a timeline for this;
- h) there were some funds allocated to undertaking work associated with LGR but it was likely that this issue would come before council in due course; and
- i) assets were being looked at with an ambition to ensure that a good council was handed over to a new authority.

The Strategic Director for Corporate Resources stated that food waste roll out was not impacted by the MRF. He confirmed that 4000 homes had been added this week and the project was on track to be delivered in its entirety by the end of March.

Councillor Ruth Williams, Portfolio Holder for City Management, was invited to the table by the Chair and stated that she had written to the relevant Member of Devon County Council and had followed up requesting a response but had not yet received one and would write again in another week's time.

The Chair invited Councillor Vizard to speak, who stated that nature towns and cities work was underway and there were monthly meetings of the partnership and an action plan would follow which would be consulted upon before an application being made later in the year. He would ensure that members were updated. Councillor Pole asked that he feedback to the group that councillors and residents could support.

## Quarter 2 Budget Scrutiny

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

- a) the Strategy came before the funding settlement was known;
- b) scrutiny had an important role and this was an opportunity to understand under and over-spends in year and look at proposals going forward;
- c) the issues were set out and some there may be concerns about and officers would take these away to work with the relevant Strategic Directors and Heads of Service;
- d) in terms of the list of work in preparation for LGR, it was not exhaustive but property was front and centre to ensure a good position to go to a new unitary authority; and
- e) dependent upon the outcome of LGR there would be discussions with other authorities.

The Strategic Director for Corporate Resources and Head of Service – Finance responded to Members' questions in the following terms:

- a) a very high success rate remained within the Waste Service despite sickness and recruitment challenges;
- b) Environmental Health and Licensing services continued to be provided despite recruitment challenges and a statutory report would be brought to the Executive in the autumn;
- c) the report showed projections at the end of the year and anticipated change was shown within the budget which was determined in consultation with budget managers and Heads of Service;
- d) there was an apprenticeship programme which it was being looked to extend as there were many specialist areas in local authority which didn't exist in other businesses. The Council Tax Team were taking on apprentices where there was government funding. The Legal Team had also had success with apprentices. He would get an update on the number of apprentices the council currently had;
- e) capital projects were financed in a number of ways - from revenue, grants from central government or other organisations, section 106 agreements, CIL, borrowing (usually from the public works loans board but not always and usually for longer term assets), or the sale of other capital assets which would generate capital receipts which could only be used for two purposes, building more capital assets or repayment of debt);
- f) spend on the capital programme was weak due to challenges with resources and the ambition being larger than it being possible to deliver in one year therefore improvement was needed in planning across multiple years. A Capital Programme Board was now in place, led by the Chief Executive which should support improvement. Another issue had been that a number of projects had gone out to tender and bids had been received which were significantly higher than the budget set. This had been an issue in the construction sector across the South West;
- g) CIL was statutory and a Planning matter therefore a specific debt collection process had to be followed and this would not lie with the new collections team. CIL was managed by the Strategic Management Board who received a monthly report. CIL was often large sums of money therefore one debt could be a significant amount which would skew data. This was not a concern to him but there was a need to keep a focus on CIL given the size and statutory nature;
- h) there was a rental income of £8.5million for commercial assets and whilst there had been challenges in retail over a number of years, ensuring clean data was the responsibility of the new team as was ensuring that other teams

chased debts due to them. The team were currently focusing on debt over 5 years old. As the financial regulations had changed it would take time for observable reductions to filter through. Debt write-off was carried out on a six-monthly basis;

- i) a rise of £1.3million of outstanding debt could be one invoice and there were some challenges being negotiated with developers which had been a successful approach and the majority had now been paid. Invoices could be one day old and not in fact due yet but would show as a debt;
- j) CIL had previously been incorrectly shown against Commercial Assets but had now moved to the correct service area;
- k) he would ask the relevant Strategic Director about the capital programme for Fire Risk Assessment Works and the City Wall but it maybe that timing of the report was at play as he believed that the City Wall works had been undertaken;
- l) Guildhall Shopping Centre enhancements was an ongoing budget with uncertain timing. Part of roof required replacement and works were dependent on new leaseholders coming into the centre and the requirement to fit out;
- m) the Guildhall Shopping Centre was purchased in the knowledge that there was a gap between rent delivered and debt required to service the centre. Debt each year of £1.33million and net rental was over £2million which had dropped slightly reducing what went the into ear-marked reserve but a comfortable amount could still be placed there which funded staff in the organisation to deal with Guildhall work;
- n) invoices were auto-generated when a new lease was entered into. An audit report into sundry debt had highlighted a slowness which ha been taken up with the relevant service areas.
- o) the biggest challenge with voids in the HRA was the significant increase in the cost of repairs. Housing maintenance were very much aware of this and keen to address it. Income was coming down as voids were longer and repairs and maintenance had more to do. He was not aware additional staff being taken on to address this at the moment but this would remain under review; and
- p) Strata moving out of the Civic Centre would not have any impact on the budget as when they were set up across the three district councils part of the agreement was that accommodation would be provided.

The Chair invited the Portfolio Holder for City Management, Councillor Ruth Williams to assist with a question regarding Heavitree Park. Councillor Williams stated that there was no delay and procurement had been undertaken. Changes in the procurement of play parks had caused a delay and therefore a few parks were put together as a cluster. Work would begin in new financial year and Heavitree was top priority. The paddling pool had already been consulted upon and there would be additional public consultation on the type of play equipment for the play park, and the utmost would be done to have the paddling pool open in time for the school summer holidays.

## 98 **Medium Term Financial Plan**

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

- a) the report was written in December 2025 before the settlement had been announced but a Briefing had been held the previous week therefore the position was slightly different to set that out in the report;
- b) for context the MTFP in February 2025 required a saving of £3.5m due to the business rate reset and change to the funding formula;

- c) in setting a proposed budget, assumptions were set out in the report and there was nothing different in services to the public just spending less or generating an income which wasn't recognised in the budget which was comfortable from an officer position;
- d) Parks income showed additional £10,000. This was already being generated but not reflected in budget;
- e) the key message was that there was a balanced budget across the life of the Plan. There were pressures in the budget but the it remained balanced;
- f) based on known information there would be no requirement to find additional savings in the next financial year;
- g) a three-year settlement had been received and the third year provided funding for the whole of the county to be shared across whatever authorities were in place; and
- h) the Budget consultation had taken place, the raw data had been received and the team were analysing this in order to attach to the budget papers. There had been 58 responses to the consultation.

The Chair gave some context about the Parks and Green Spaces Team which she had visited along with other councillors and asked if it was possible to divert funds to this team.

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

- a) the budget would be proposed and other individuals or groups could put forward an alternative budget or recommendations from this committee could be made to the Executive which would meet on 3 February;
- b) the Communities team were in discussion with Citizens Advice Exeter with regards to their needs for the next year;
- c) advised that with regard to a climate adaptation and resilience plan it was not known what this would cost but the committee could ask the Executive to consider what the impact of introducing this would be;
- d) officers now had a system to separate the property and community elements of assets. The community element would be led by the Communities Team and more defined process was now in place in terms of what a community would need to demonstrate and consider, and the property side would be managed by the Commercial Assets Team. A community asset transfer would not always be required. There could be a small lease or a peppercorn rent agreed; and
- e) the Extended Responsibility Grant was used to fund the waste and recycling services as that was the expectation of DEFRA who managed the process.

The Chair set out the 4 recommendations of areas which could potentially be supported should funds be available:

1. A peppercorn rent continues for Citizens Advice Exeter
2. More resource is directed to the Parks and Green Spaces Team
3. The Climate Action Plan is strengthened by adding an Adaptation and Resilience plan
4. Support is strengthened for community asset transfer.

During discussion some Members' felt that they would like to see the residents survey results before making recommendations.

The Strategic Director for Corporate Resources clarified the timing of budget scrutiny stating that at a June meeting officers could set the budget scene and the committee could look at the budget in light of the residents survey results, in November scrutiny

could look at potential areas to make recommendations to the Executive and in February the budget, as set, could be scrutinised.

The Chair proposed, seconded by Councillor Payne, the recommendations set out above, which following a vote was **CARRIED**.

**Recommended to the Executive Committee that:**

1. A peppercorn rent continues for Citizens Advice Exeter
2. More resource is directed to the Parks and Green Spaces Team
3. The Climate Action Plan is strengthened by adding an adaptation and resilience plan
4. Support is strengthened for community asset transfer.

99 **Scrutiny Work Plan and Proposals Received**

The Chair informed the committee that the recommendation to Licensing would be heard at the Licensing Committee on 27 January 2026 but that a response had been received from the Principal Licensing Officer explaining that it was not possible to have a policy which stated times in which alcohol could not be sold but that if there was evidence of concerns related to a particular premise then the review procedure should be utilised.

As a member of the Licensing Committee, Councillor Holland encouraged Members to look at applications which were live, which could be found on the council website or to look at previous reviews via Licensing Sub-Committee agenda papers.

The Chair proposed that Commercialisation Strategy item be allocated to the June meeting and the Empty Homes item be allocated to the September meeting. The Chair also stated that following advice taken from officers an item should be placed in the work plan regarding the Community Safety Partnership for the September meeting and the Medium-Term Financial Plan for the November meeting.

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

The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 8.15 pm

Chair

## STRATEGIC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

15 January 2026

### Present:

Councillor Liz Pole (Chair)

Councillors Mitchell, K, Atkinson, Haigh, Harding, Miller-Boam, Moore, Wetenhall and Knott  
(In place of Rolstone)

### Apologies:

Councillor Rolstone

### Also present:

Strategic Director for Corporate Resources, Head of Legal and Democratic Services & Monitoring Officer, Head of Service - Commercial Assets, Assistant Service Lead – Local Plan, Danny Damarell, Estates Surveyor and Democratic Services Manager

### In attendance as Portfolio Holder:

Councillors Bialyk, Vizard, Williams, R., Wood and Wright

## 27 Minutes

The minutes of the special meeting held on 3 November 2025 were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair as correct, subject to an amendment to insert the word 'have' on minute no. 18 – “Section 151 officers must sign off a financial model and therefore couldn't have put this forward ethically if it was not believed to work”

The minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 20 November 2025 were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair as correct, subject to the following amendments, with additions in italics:

- Minute No. 23 - 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 *on request but would not be made public*;
- Minute No. 24 - views of those in the current area at East Wonford Hill that had *in previous years* not been below the government objective were important to the action plan;
- Minute No. 24 spelling corrected – butadiene;
- Minute No. 25 addition of - The Chair brought Members' attention to the fact a wrong version of the Motion referred by Council had been included in the Agenda Reports Pack. The correct version was tabled and is appended to the minutes; and
- Minute No. 25 amended to read - the draft Devon and Torbay Local Transport Plan, LTP4, transport plan had no reference to Air Quality until Exeter City Council's feedback had been responded to.

Councillor Wetenhall asked that Democratic Services consider numbering rather than bullet points to aide situations such as amending minutes.

The Chair updated the committee with regard to Air Quality stating that the Strategic Director for Operations anticipated that following the likely appointment of a consultant in early February a timeline would be designed and shared.

28 **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made by Members.

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

There were no questions submitted by the public.

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

In accordance with Standing Order No. 20, the following question was submitted by Councillor Moore in relation to the Portfolio of Councillor Bialyk who attended the meeting. The question was circulated at the meeting to Members of the Committee. The question and response are set out below:

**Question: Please provide an update on the Bus Station Wider Options project including the works that have been undertaken and why it went over budget.**

**Response:** The Council has engaged Avison Young to undertake a market and deliverability assessment across the former bus station and the civic centre site. This assessment has also examined high level architectural layout and massing options together with scheme viability and associated deliverability constraints. In order to ensure that a comprehensive regeneration approach had been undertaken, the Council re-engaged Avison Young to undertake a further linked phase 2 assessment which included the Sidwell St retail frontage properties (Eastside row opposite John Lewis). This additional work generated a further fee commitment resulting in an overspend, which will be covered by a virement from the wider Liveable Exeter budget.

Once this assessment has been fully reviewed a report will be brought to the Executive.

**Supplementary Question and Response**

**Does the feasibility only cover housing and retail of feasibility for open spaces and other things such as a market square?**

**Response:** The Leader responded that he would take this back to Directors and supply a written answer.

The Chair invited questions for other Portfolio Holders present.

Councillor Moore asked the Portfolio Holder for Climate, Ecological Change and Communities, Councillor Vizard how the Adaptation Strategy would be incorporated into city council work? Councillor Vizard responded that he would request an update from officers as he had not been directly involved.

The Chair gave an update on Item 10 stating that she had met with Councillor Read as author of the motion and that South West Water had declined to attend and declined to use the proposed template. They had however provided links to where information was held which would be included in the minutes. With support of Councillor Read the Chair proposed that this item be put on the work plan to be timetabled at a later date as scrutiny was unable to satisfy the intentions of the motion. The Chair suggested that external agencies be invited to give wider evidence and also informed the committee that the Portfolio Holder had met with South West

Water who had agreed to attend Harbour Board, of which Councillor Read was a member and that they would welcome an invitation to scrutiny at another time.

The Chair proposed the moving of this item, seconded by Councillor Atkinson and following a unanimous vote was CARRIED.

### 31 **Portfolio Holder report - Councillor Bialyk, Leader of the Council**

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Bialyk presented his report drawing attention to the following points:

- a) a provisional finance presentation last evening had been provided by the Strategic Director for Corporate Resources and Head of Service - Finance and the council looked to be in a good position for the next two to three years;
- b) strategic partnerships continued with the Exeter Partnership being collegiate and areas being discussed were set out in the report. He would speak to officers about sharing notes from the meetings with members;
- c) members would hear more in due course about the City of Culture bid;
- d) the council was a partner in the Exeter Civic University Agreement and there was a link to a video in the report. He would speak to the university with regard to circulating the minutes to members;
- e) the matter of moving the site of the Materials Reclamation Facility would come before the Executive in due course;
- f) Senate Court would be the subject of an item at a special council meeting in February;
- g) there were a number of commercial and social asset issues but Laings had progressed. Finance must be considered. The accommodation at Whipton Gardens was first class and the residents he had met were pleased and it was hoped that phase B could be brought forward soon;
- h) Trews Weir was being dealt with;
- i) he would visit the city wall at the City Gate the following day with a team and inspect that and a number of other sites;
- j) contractors had been engaged at Clifton Hill which would bring forward affordable housing for over 55s which was at a cost but was the most appropriate way forward;
- k) Mary Arches would come to planning committee in due course;
- l) office relocation would be coming to council at a special meeting in February;
- m) as a non-constituent and non-voting member of the Combined Authority he represented the districts along with the Leader of Torridge Council. A peer review had been completed which had looked at governance and making it relevant to people. A Strategic Mayoral Authority was being considered as this was the direction of travel from government and where investment would come into the county;
- n) with regard to Local Government Reorganisation he believed that this would happen and a strong bid had been put forward with support from all parties in the room as well as Plymouth. A letter in response to the Minister had been sent and the minutes of the council meeting would be sent when prepared and he had directed those who had asked to make representations to the Minister.

The Leader responded to Members' questions in the following terms:

- a) he was not unhappy to meet with St David's ward councillors about Mallinson Bridge but wanted to speak to Directors first so as not to raise false hope. He was convening a meeting with the Leader of Devon County Council about a number of issues and would discuss Mallinson Bridge or how those funds could be redirected within the city;

- b) procurement was complete for the remainder of the Laings work and a process was in place for the project to be completed and he wished to formally apologise to residents in the areas for having to live in the environment as it was;
- c) Whipton Gardens Phase B would be in line with what had previously been stated, social and affordable housing;
- d) with regard to local government reorganisation the Chief Executive would be convening a meeting with all group leaders to give an opportunity to discuss the way forward;
- e) he had responded to the Leader of Devon County Council who had offered democratic services support in order that elections could go ahead and he did not want to put the Council's proposal at risk;
- f) there weren't as many second homes in Exeter as in South Hams and he had asked Devon County Council new administration whether funds could be identified and ring-fenced and the response he received was that the budget had been set before they took control. He had asked whether this would be in the budget for the coming year and was awaiting a response;
- g) properties owned by the city council would not be used for PBSA; and
- h) that he welcomed any questions not asked to be emailed to him and responses would be circulated to the committee.

Councillor Pole moved from the Chair, seconded by Councillor Kevin Mitchell, that the Strategic Scrutiny Committee notes the Leaders Portfolio Holder Report and the feedback received and following a unanimous vote was CARRIED.

A break was taken at 6:22pm and the meeting reconvened at 6:26pm

The Chair explained that Councillor Ruth Williams, as Portfolio Holder had attended meetings where the Mallinson Bridge had been discussed, Harbour Board and ECQT, which Councillor Read had also attended.

**32 Petition - To extend Article 4 direction to include all of Hillcrest Park & Doriam Close**

The Chair invited the petition organiser to present the petition.

The petition organiser presented the petition making the following points:

- a) he had seen the report and looked at the supplementary planning documents, policy and National Planning Policy Framework(NPPF), paragraph 54;
- b) he wished to paint a picture of who the petitioners were, a community right on the edge of the university and welcoming of students who were part of the community;
- c) this was a walking route and the entrance to the Belvedere estate;
- d) they welcomed the pedestrian linkage being added when East Park was developed;
- e) the roads in question had housing which was suitable for families and in an affordable price bracket but sadly a target for student landlords;
- f) there was a high proportion of bungalows which were suitable for the elderly or those with limited mobility;
- g) Hillcrest Park was very narrow, private and single track which presented issues such as restricted width and 40% of residents had to park on the street which made access difficult for emergency vehicles;
- h) Doriam Close had more issues with turning for vehicles;
- i) the NPPF focused on local amenity and well-being and there had been issues with refuse facilities, access and parking;
- j) more students would mean more parking issues and likely more refuse; and

- k) last year refuse had not been collected for 6 weeks due to access.

The Chair invited Councillor Palmer to the table to speak as she had registered under Standing Order No. 44.

Councillor Palmer spoke on the item making the following points:

- a) she thanked residents for raising the matter;
- b) she was surprised by the report which she believed showed little understanding or empathy for the impact on the St James ward;
- c) entire streets were depleted of permanent residents and other streets spent half the year in isolation and the other half suffering from noise and anti-social behaviour(ASB);
- d) there was no evidence that PBSA returned properties to residential use in article 4 areas;
- e) outside Article 4 areas there was creep and residents were selling their homes after decades due to volume of cars and noise,
- f) Cowley bridge Road had suffered the same as half the road given Article 4 status and half was not;
- g) older residents had lost their community and gained a huge PBSA;
- h) the method for calculating the number of HMOs was flawed;
- i) she had campaigned for HMO licensing;
- j) there was a HMO in Hillcrest, 6 further in Patricia Close which were not highlighted here. The Office for National Statistics says council tax records should not be used for this purpose;
- k) Article 4 was often too late and reactive;
- l) 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year students wanted to live out of the university so this demand would not end. Landlords would continue to buy properties in non-restricted areas;
- m) the community welcomed students but wanted a preventative long term solution with community balance; and
- n) she urged reflection on the report, clearer data on student housing which existed but wasn't accounted for.

The Assistant Service Lead (Local Plan) presented the report making the following points:

- a) comments were noted from the petition organiser and Councillor Palmer;
- b) he had personal and professional experience of the area in question;
- c) the report had been written in the context of the requirements of the NPPF;
- d) Article 4 worked as a planning tool which removed permitted development rights within a designated area. Planning permission for development and changes of use would be required which wasn't outside of Article 4 areas;
- e) he had reviewed the NPPF to consider how best to recommend to respond to this petition and there was insufficient evidence therefore the recommendation was as stated in the report;
- f) Article 4 had been in place since 2010 and updated in 2014 and 2023. Revision was a labour-intensive consultative process;
- g) report comments on amenity and well-being as stated in the petition;
- h) paragraph 54 had sub-clauses as to when Article 4 maybe considered reasonable and section B referred to local amenity and wellbeing whilst section C referred to robust evidence and the smallest geographical area possible. This had been considered. Evidence to consider the presence of HMOs in the area came from two sources of data, HMO licenses and council tax exemptions data, for properties occupied by students. There were no records of either in the streets concerned. The most reliable datasets available did not provide evidence of HMOs.

- i) he had spoken to Devon County Council (DCC) colleagues who weren't aware of any specific issues related to parking or accessing the two roads in question;
- j) NPPF paragraph 54, C stated that Article 4 should relate to the smallest geographical area possible which had been established and reviewed three times, most recently 2 years ago suggesting that another extension wouldn't justify a revision; and
- k) a lack of quantitative data and clear restrictions therefore recommendation.

The petition organiser responded to Members' questions in the following terms:

- a) it was known that there are a number of students living at one property alongside the family who live there;
- b) DCC wouldn't be aware of parking issues as the road is private and managed by the residents; and
- c) he believed the interpretation of the NPPF was incorrect as there was high student occupancy at East Park which had been constructed and opened in 2023, since the previous review and this had caused material change and impact on amenity.

The Assistant Service Lead (Local Plan) responded to Members' questions in the following terms:

- a) he could not assume why an HMO did not show as the data belonged to other teams;
- b) the report was specific to the two roads in question as it was in response to the petition;
- c) the review in 2023 chose to use a measure of percentage of HMOs in a postcode area as the previous method had caused confusion;
- d) a threshold of 20% had been applied;
- e) the most recent review had been only been implemented for one year therefore it would be difficult to draw conclusions on the impact at this stage;
- f) he would note the point about considering what other evidence could be looked at, including the number of times refuse vehicles were unable to access a road;
- g) explained the different classes of use of properties including HMOs, Class C4, a dwelling house with 3-6 unrelated people living there;
- h) there was no specific trigger point for review of Article 4 areas and this was not within the Supplementary Planning Document;
- i) an area could be extended slightly further than data suggested due to the presence of HMOs but this had not been done in a preventative way and this area didn't previously meet the requirements of the NPPF.
- j) Article 4 must have a boundary and there would always be areas which fell just outside and a balance must be struck in minimising travel distances for students against the needs of permanent residents;
- k) there was no current timetable for review;
- l) he would clarify whether PBSA or co-living blocks required their own postcode and therefore would not impact current postcode areas; and
- m) PBSA and co-living was not included in the criteria for Article 4, only HMOs.

The Chair invited the Leader as Portfolio Holder to speak on the matter.

The Leader stated that he would be asking questions of the Director with regard to this topic as he appreciated that it was a sensitive area and that the local community were affected. He also stated that he would like to discuss this with the Portfolio Holder for City Development as he was not aware if a petition was a trigger point for a review of Article 4 and that he would circulate a response. The Leader accepted

that PBSA had not reduced HMOs although these had not expanded at the same rate as previously.

The Chair clarified that there were 25 homes in Hillcrest and 27 in Doriam Close.

Councillor Harding proposed, seconded by Councillor Knott, that the following be added to the recommendation:

“that the petition be held to inform any future Article 4 review”

During debate on the amendment Members’ made the following points:

- a) there was no timeframe for review and he believed that there was a need to look into this in greater detail now;
- b) there was no evidence on a technical basis that a review was required;
- c) this was important as all councillors were concerned about the in which HMOs encroached and changed an area not just a street; and
- d) the amendment firmed up what has been agreed with the Leader.

Following a vote the amendment was carried and became the substantive.

During debate on the substantive a Member raised concern that there was no timeframe for review which would not help the residents who had petitioned but he was reassured by the Leader regarding a selective licensing scheme and he would send information about other council who had implemented such a scheme.

The Assistant Service Lead (Local Plan) clarified technical planning policy stating that there was a lot of national change expected this year and one would be in relation to SPDs. This would involve a different type of document being put together and it may not be possible to amend current SPDs.

Councillor Kevin Mitchell proposed seconded by Councillor Moore an amendment, which following a vote was NOT CARRIED, “that a review of the council's policy with regard to updating the Article 4 directions be undertaken”.

The Assistant Service Lead (Local Plan) explained that this would be a substantial piece of work and the Local Plan examination was the team’s current focus and the hearing related to this would be held between March and May. A review of Council policy and procedure relating to how a new/amended Article 4 Direction could be considered would be a quicker process than an actual review of the Article 4 Direction itself.

Following a vote the substantive motion, as amended, was CARRIED.

The meeting adjourned at 1940 and reconvened at 1945.

### 33 **Unauthorised Encampments**

The Chair invited the representative from Isca Bowling Club to present their evidence, which they did making the following points:

- a) the club had an elderly demographic who were quite concerned when they could not get through between caravans, dogs were running look or when there were greater numbers of travellers in the car park;
- b) there had been 7 or 8 caravans in the smaller car park beside the bowls centre and sometimes it had not been possible to get through due to excrement;
- c) there had been a lot of rubbish and some abuse;

- d) one member of the bowling club had been bitten by a dog and children had thrown eggs;
- e) during the Ladies World Cup there had been an order in place preventing parking there as the gym had been used by rugby players and he asked why that order could not remain and why a special order was required each time;
- f) his priority was the welfare of club members;
- g) he was aware that height restriction barriers were coming but they were not in place as yet but he wondered if travellers would then park on the road leading to the arena;
- h) it would be good to have better communication with the council to know what was happening as they were only aware of the current issues from discussion with the travellers on site; and
- i) he didn't wish to put club members through these issues and believed that it was the Council's responsibility to tell them they were able to park there.

The Bowling Club representative answered Members' questions in the following terms:

- a) he didn't think that welcoming travellers and discussing their needs would work as there was currently the option to park in the large arena car park yet the small one was used;
- b) the club would like the council to contact their secretary who liaised with the council over other matters;

The Strategic Director for Corporate Resources commented that the Council's position was not to tolerate and that this was the first time. He stated that in every other instance an immediate decision had been made not to tolerate but time was often taken to go through the process which had caused delays.

The Chair stated that she was aware that the height restriction barriers had been ordered and would likely be installed in the first half of this year. There would be four barriers, two at the entrances to the car park and the other two perhaps at Exhibition Way.

The Chair invited TravellerSpace to the table to present their evidence.

TravellerSpace presented making the following points:

- a) that the organisation had twenty years of experience supporting gypsies and travellers;
- b) the issues heard had been around for decades and different approaches had not worked therefore everyone must work together;
- c) it was understood that everyone found it difficult people appeared on their doorstep;
- d) there was a list of reasons why unauthorised encampments were negative and across the country more effort was needed to create recognised safe stopping places, especially for those with significant welfare issues and those who were vulnerable;
- e) it was known that gypsies and travellers had a lower life expectancy than settled residents, as well as other low health indicators showing that these communities were not thriving but they had a right to live and travel in this country; and
- f) TravellerSpace would act in the interests of gypsies and travellers and would not share information without consent.

TravellerSpace responded to Members' questions making the following points:

- a) it was important to consult with gypsies and travellers over safe areas as there were differing needs dependent on the community and their needs;

- b) TravellerSpace were able to facilitate conversations about appropriate stopping places and there were other authorities such as Leeds and Bristol who had experimented with different approaches;
- c) nationally there were less places to park therefore travellers ended up parking in places which were unpopular with residents;
- d) examples of good practice would include agreement for people to stop for approximately three months and arrangements for waste, litter, foul drainage as well as agreement to leave the area tidy. A welfare assessment would be carried out upon arrival with signposting as a result. This would allow their lifestyle to be pursued without constant conflict;
- e) another option would be a permanent authorised site with eight to ten pitches meeting appropriate planning regulations;
- f) Bristol had meanwhile sites which had varying success as some communities like them whereas others find them more difficult especially if they want their children to be in school as they would like to stay longer than the rules allow;
- g) it would be helpful to plot communities as they moved through different districts, especially to map seasonal movements;
- h) if people knew that there was somewhere safe to park they would be interested unless there were too many barriers;
- i) people would feel safer if there was a recognised place they could be for a period of time; and
- j) Cornwall had transit sites.

The Chair stated that there was some provision for sites within the local plan.

The Chair invited officers to update on the status of renewing the injunction at the Arena.

The Estates Surveyor explained that she was the point of contact for traveller encampments and there had been an increase in unauthorised encampments but these were not all gypsy or travellers, some were people experiencing homelessness with nowhere safe to go. She stated that in 2022/23 there had been 10 unauthorised encampments, in 2023/24 15 and 2024/25 33 with 11 instances at the Arena. She also explained that Teignbridge and Devon County Council had permanent sites with the County one having 11 pitches which had all been full for thirty years.

The Team Leader – Housing and Litigation made the following points:

- a) the Council had a duty under the Equality Act and used agents to determine the needs of an encampment which was fed back to Heads of Service who would decide whether to tolerate or not;
- b) one issue was a lack of space in Exeter so often operational land was targeted and due process must be followed;
- c) travellers usually left of their own volition and proceedings were withdrawn;
- d) the women's rugby world cup was a specific instance where it was known that groups often stopped at the Arena and the importance of the world cup and would cause disruption to the city and there was legal precedent in the Midlands which led to the council seeking an injunction with powers of arrest for a short period of time;
- e) there was trespass in other areas but not all conditions for an injunction would be met;
- f) extending the injunction at the Arena was being investigated but this would not be possible across the whole city;
- g) injunctions could not go on forever but if an injunction was successful in reducing ASB an injunction could still be renewed but a balanced approach must be taken; and

- h) relevant stakeholders had been contact with regards to the potential of renewing the current injunction, Devon County Council, Teignbridge District Council and Plymouth City Council as well as the barrister who had assisted previously.

The Chair stated that Basingstoke had two or three sites on a rolling programme. She also pointed out that the section on the Council website pertaining to homelessness and reporting, had a drop-down list which didn't appear to have a relevant choice for encampments. The officer explained that she was not aware of encampments being reported through homelessness logs.

During discussion Members' made the following points:

- a) there were a number of threads within discussions, which were: protected characteristics, a growing number of homeless van-dwellers, and residents making contact who were unhappy;
- b) it would be good to identify a temporary or seasonal site with appropriate consultation but in the context of LGR officers may have a different focus and it may be useful to convene a meeting of relevant stakeholders;
- c) it was source of great shame not to have a transit site in Exeter especially as a Welsh consultation showed that the ideal size for a site was that of a football pitch and the Council should be investigating the means to provide such a space;
- d) height barriers were all very well but these had been cut in the past and it would be better to have a feasibility study looking at how and where a site to offer sanctuary could be provided;
- e) there was not EQIA included and there could be targeting of those with protected characteristics but it was difficult to find alternatives when there was no safe stopping place;
- f) negotiated stopping could be more effective than reviewing the policy;

The Team Leader – Housing and Litigation and Apprentice Solicitor set out the costs:

- a) £47,000 spent internally over the last 3 years;
- b) £404 per application in court fees;
- c) £150 process service fees;
- d) 532 hours spent over the last 3 years at a rate of £35 per hours; and
- e) Estates costs and cleanup were difficult to determine as these were included in service budgets but this had been separated out since September 2025 therefore greater detail would be available in future.

The Monitoring Officer clarified for the committee that police also had powers to deal with travellers or trespassers on land should there be any damage, disruption or distress caused. The police could direct people to leave the land. In addition, section 62a of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act have additional power to police if there was no evidence of ASB but only where there were alternative transit sites.

Following discussion and consensus being sought, Councillor Miller-Boam proposed, seconded by Councillor Moore, the following recommendations:

- a) the definition of an unauthorised encampment in the protocol be reviewed;
- b) officers are asked to note the evidence given today both written, verbal, from the community and organisations and members, to inform work on the protocol going forward; and
- c) that the Executive explore the viability and impact of a negotiated stopping policy.

Following a vote the recommendations were unanimously CARRIED.

34 **Motion Referred by Council - Rivers 2 and transparency template**

As explained by the Chair at the beginning of the meeting, this item was deferred.

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

Members commented on the work plan.

It was agreed that a Portfolio Holder update on City Development would be taken in the new municipal year, that the bike parking item would be scoped at the meeting in April and that the Rivers item would be added back onto the work plan for timetabling.

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

The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 9.09 pm

Chair

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## Corrections to Motion to Council, October 14<sup>th</sup> 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 (NO<sub>2</sub>), a potent pollutant affecting human health, should not exceed 10 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. The UK has set a legal limit at 40 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. This means that ~~whilst one NO<sub>2</sub> monitoring site in Exeter continues to breach UK law,~~ **92% of Exeter's monitoring sites don't meet the WHO guidelines<sup>1</sup>.**
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 conditions<sup>2</sup>. As the Director points out it is now accepted that there is no safe level of NO<sub>2</sub>.
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 health<sup>3</sup>. **Several roads which are used regularly by pedestrians, cyclists and motorists, have very high levels of NO<sub>2</sub><sup>4</sup>.** Many of these are also residential roads. For example, in 2023 ECC monitoring data recorded: Honiton Road 35.4 µg/m<sup>3</sup>,, Alphington St 34.3µg/m<sup>3</sup>, Red Cow Village 31.7; Fore St, Heavitree 30.6 µg/m<sup>3</sup>;York Road 26.9 Cowley Bridge Road 25.9; Longbrook Street 20 µg/m<sup>3</sup>
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 NO<sub>2</sub>**

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<sup>1</sup> Based on Air Quality Status Report 2024 figures,

<sup>2</sup> **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/m<sup>3</sup> increase in NO<sub>2</sub> 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 NO<sub>2</sub> is a good proxy is open to debate, particularly when the proportion of PM is increasing due to heavier electric vehicles."*

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

<sup>4</sup> **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 Law<sup>5</sup> is a new law that comes into force on 27<sup>th</sup> 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

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

## Data and Information

Please find below weblinks to data and information freely available on the internet which covers most data requested via the Transparency Template.

### South West Water Business Plan – 2025 to 2030

Sets out our plans for investment for the next five years. [Business plan 2025-30 | South West Water](#) .

### You can find out about our Water Industry National Environment Programme (WINEP)

here: [Water Industry National Environment Programme \(WINEP\) | Engage Environment Agency](#) This programme is statutory i.e. a legal requirement for us to deliver. The link provides a useful video on how to use the data base and what information is contained with it. This programme is monitored by the Environment Agency. Any changes to the programme must be agreed with the Environment Agency before any dates are changed. Delivery of this programme forms part of the overall Environment Performance Assessment undertaken by the Environment Agency which is published c. July each year.

### National Storm Overflow Action Plan (SOAP)

You can see details of the longer term programme i.e. from 2025 to 2050 (along with other water companies) on [National Storm Overflows Plan | Water UK](#) As mentioned, South West Water will deliver the storm overflow reduction requirements by 2040, ten years ahead of the Government target of 2050.

### Storm overflow operational data

Please find a link below to the data also referred to as the Annual Event Duration Monitoring return which is posted on DEFRA's website. [Event Duration Monitoring - Storm Overflows - Annual Returns](#). This provides information on duration and number of spills on a calendar year basis. This is audited by the Environment agency and published c. March each year i.e. 2025 data will be available from March 2026.

### Real time storm overflow activation information

This shows if our storm overflows are currently operating and/ or provides information on the last time they had operated. Link here: [Storm overflow map | WaterFit Live | South West Water](#)

### Sewage treatment works permits

All permits are issued by the Environment Agency and the details of these permits are held on their Public Register. A link to this information is here: [Public Registers Online](#)

### Water quality

The Environment Agency provide the 'one voice' on the state of the environment for water, land and air in England. This data is used to build the Water Industry National Environment Programme as described above. This data is the responsibility of the Environment Agency. A link to this can be found here: [England | Catchment Data Explorer](#) and here: [Water Data Explorer | Engage Environment Agency](#).

## Additional Useful Links

### Leaks and Reporting

Information and current status about leaks: [Leaks | Report a problem | South West Water](#)

### Pollution Incidents and Reporting

Report a suspected pollution incident or find more information: [Pollutions | Report a problem | South West Water](#)

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## LICENSING COMMITTEE

27 January 2026

### Present:

Councillor Martyn Snow (Chair)  
Councillors Begley, Banyard, Bennett, Darling, Haigh, Harding, Holland, Mitchell, K,  
Parkhouse and Williams, R

### Also present:

Head of Service - Environment and Waste, Legal Advisor and Democratic Services Officer

### 8 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2025 were taken as read, approved, and signed by the Chair as correct.

### 9 **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made by Members.

### 10 **Recommendation from Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee**

The Chair advised the Committee that a recommendation had been made to them by the Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee. This recommendation was for the Licensing Committee to review the policies relating to the sale of alcohol and the hours within which this could take place. The recommendation came within the wider context of exploring ways to reduce anti-social behaviour in the City Centre.

The Principal Licensing Officer was unable to attend the meeting but a written response to the recommendation from the Principal Licensing Officer was ready out by the Chair to the Committee, making the following points:

- hours for alcohol sales were not able to be set following the Licensing Act 2003;
- this was to remove rigidity whilst maintaining sufficient safeguards;
- blanked conditions on hours could not be imposed;
- every application had to be heard on its own merits; and
- the proper mechanism would be to review a premises when there was evidence of problems.

The Head of Service – Environment and Waste further clarified for the Committee that there was an opportunity to review a business' licence when it was necessary and that representations could be made at the application stage.

The Head of Service – Environment and Waste responded to questions from Members, making the following points:

- there was a Cumulative Impact Area (CIA) in some parts of the City Centre, which required licence applicants to prove they would not be creating issues as set out under the licensing objectives;
- Devon and Cornwall Police were a statutory consultee for every application received;
- the Council had no power to require consultees to raise an objection, but there were regular liaisons with the Police;

- the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) did not apply to licenced premises; and
- anyone could call for a review of licenced premises if it was related to the licensing objectives.

## 11 **Licensing Fees and Charges for 2026/27**

The Head of Service – Environment and Waste presented the report, making the following points:

- the Licensing Committee were responsible for setting a number of fees;
- some fees were set by the government, or had a statutory range that could not be touched; and
- the fees set had to reflect the cost of delivering the licensing regime.

The Head of Service – Environment and Waste made an amendment to the recommendation that the “Licensing Committee recommends for the Council to approve for the period from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027 that the fees shall be set as specified in Appendix B”.

The Head of Service – Environment and Waste responded to questions from Members making the following points:

- there was a minimum and maximum limit for gambling fees, and Exeter was already at the maximum rate;
- each fee had to be considered in isolation with the cost of delivery;
- inflation was used as a guide, but other factors were also considered when setting fees such as software licences, printing costs, materials for taxi plates, badges and bus lane stickers, and vets fees;
- for licences that were Part A and Part B, both parts had to be paid for the licence to be fully granted; and
- Part A and Part B licences varied depending on the nature of the licence, for animal licencing it covered multiple years, but sex entertainment venues and street traders had to pay yearly.

**RESOLVED** unanimously that the Licensing Committee recommends the following:

That Council approves for the period from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027 that the fees shall be set as specified in Appendix B.

## 12 **Any Other Business**

The Chair advised the Committee on three items of AOB:

- a sex entertainment venue would be coming to Committee;
- there was an upcoming training refresher session; and
- he was seeking Members for working groups.

The meeting commenced at 5.31 pm and closed at 6.11 pm

Chair

## PLANNING COMMITTEE

Monday 19 January 2026

### Present:-

Councillor Knott (Chair)

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

### Apologies

Councillors Hughes and Ketchin

Councillors in attendance under Standing Order No. 44

Councillor Moore speaking on items 5 and 6 (Minute No. 56 and 57 below)

### Also Present

Strategic Director for Place, Planning Solicitor, Principal Project Manager (Development) (HS), Principal Project Manager – Development Management, Principal Project Manager (Heritage) and Democratic Services Officer

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### APOLOGIES

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

Apologies were also received from Councillor Hughes.

52

### MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 December 2025 was taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair as correct.

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2025 was taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair as correct.

53

### DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made by Members.

54

### LIST OF DECISIONS MADE AND WITHDRAWN APPLICATIONS

The report of the Strategic Director for Place was noted.

55

### APPEALS REPORT

A Member thanked officers for their work and engagement for the appeal 24/0714 for Greencroft, Streatham Rise.

The report of the Strategic Director for Place was noted.

56

### PLANNING APPLICATION NO. 25/0895/FUL & 25/0896/LBC - SITE OF ROYAL CLARENCE HOTEL

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

- the site being of significant historic importance and of ongoing public interest;
- she enquired on the expected timescale for delivery of the redevelopment, given that the developer had referred to the timelines from the previous committee stage;
- having a reputable developer with heritage experience was welcomed, but emphasised the need for clarity on public expectations; and
- a timescale was needed on record and sought confirmation on when works were likely to commence and complete.

No Member questions were raised for Councillor Moore.

The Chair confirmed there were no public speakers registered to speak on the item.

The Principal Project Manager – Development Management presented the application for the redevelopment of the Royal Clarence, to include 25 new residential dwellings on the upper floors with part residential on the ground and part basement floor and commercial on the remaining ground and basement floor as a public house and restaurant.

Members received a presentation which included:

- the application was for ground floor commercial units for a public house and restaurant, and 25 residential apartments above, creating a five and six storey mixed development use;
- the applicants had submitted an updated phasing plan (Condition 4), which was found to be acceptable and would limit heritage harm;
- the phasing schedule outlined when works were expected to commence and complete on the site;
- a previous consent was granted for a similar scheme with ground floor commercial use and flats above, with a similar external appearance;
- the current proposal included revised internal layouts, including a repositioned stair core, altered internal walls, larger lightwells and updated heritage considerations;
- the site was a Grade II listed building, surrounded by multiple high-value heritage assets and was located within a central conservation and archaeologically sensitive area;
- the buildings current condition was poor, having suffered fire damage, structural deterioration and water ingress;
- the proposed apartments met national space standards and offered acceptable resident amenities and the development would be car free; and
- the development would use obscured glazing, screening and noise controls to ensure there were no significant amenity impacts to neighbours.

The Principal Heritage Officer advised:

- he had visited the site repeatedly over the past six years, and his most recent visit he noted the extent of degradation and that the building was unsafe;
- specialists now understood how and why the structure was moving, and how it could be remedied;
- Heritage officers and historic specialists had worked closely with the developer in recent weeks to accelerate solutions and the proposed scheme was considered acceptable;
- the developers could deliver a suitable resolution and urged Members to grant permission so work could begin as soon as possible; and

- he would be closely involved throughout construction, providing advice and monitoring to ensure the heritage fabric was properly protected.

The Principal Project Manager – Development Management advised:

- the Heritage impacts were of significant consideration, and officers and specialists had undertaken extensive discussions throughout the project;
- the upper floors of the Well House were proposed for demolition down to the third floor level due to structural collapse and instability;
- a new steel frame was proposed to support the remaining historic fabric and carry the reconstructed upper levels, and stabilising the existing wall spine and adjoining structures;
- details on how the steel frame would integrate with original fabric were not yet finalised, but would be secured by a planning condition;
- externally, the scheme was similar to the approved 2022 design, restoring the historic appearance facing Cathedral Green and Martins Lane;
- the scheme included 25 market dwellings, with no on-site affordable housing, due to mixed ownership being difficult to deliver and high heritage and structural costs affecting viability;
- off-site affordable housing and GP surgery contributions had been proposed;
- due to significant financial constraints, a clawback mechanism was needed following completion to capture any surplus value;
- currently there was a lack of five-year housing supply, which meant that a tilted balance applied in favour of sustainable development;
- the public benefits included preventing further deterioration and returning the site to active use and the officer recommendation was to approve; and
- the developer intended to start on the site between late January and early February 2026, subject to legal agreement completion.

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

- there were some minor roofline alterations proposed compared with the 2022 approval, which was a small increase to a central roof area;
- the overall design remained similar to the 2022 approval and Historic England had not raised any objections;
- additional flats would be created by reducing the size of some larger units from 3-bed units to 2-bed units;
- all flats would meet space standards;
- there would be sufficient fire exits, which would be assessed by Building Regulations, and discussions with building control was already underway;
- the viability assessment showed that the scheme could not support affordable housing or GP contributions at this stage;
- a further viability reassessment through the clawback mechanism would determine what contributions could be paid once the scheme was built and the sale prices were known;
- there were no delivery time restrictions included in the conditions, but noise controls did apply;
- deliveries were usually encouraged for early mornings or evenings to avoid conflicts with Cathedral Green footfall;
- small parcel residential deliveries were not regulated through planning, but commonly occurred during normal working hours;
- a Construction Management Plan had been submitted and conditioned for construction, working hours restricted to 8am–6pm weekdays, 8am–1pm Saturdays, and no Sunday or bank holiday work;
- the contractor compound would be located at the front of the site, and any

extension to the compound required an agreement with the Council or Cathedral;

- bin storage would be located at ground floor level, accessed from Martin's Lane, which was considered suitable by the waste team;
- management conditions would ensure bins were ready for collection and not left on the street;
- the developer submitted an Energy & Sustainability Statement advising that the scheme would likely achieve policy requirements for CO<sup>2</sup> reduction. A post-completion energy statement would be required within three months to confirm actual performance; and
- restricting Saturday construction times was technically possible but rarely imposed. A strong justification would be needed to restrict standard permitted hours and could be considered unreasonable and would extend the overall build time.

During debate, Members expressed the following views:-

- supported the proposal to restore the look and feel of Cathedral Green and regenerate a long-vacant city centre site;
- the development would deliver new housing, particularly sustainable homes in a central location;
- there were some concerns about construction impacts, especially disruption to Saturday mornings and city centre activity;
- the complexity of the site was highlighted, including high costs and challenges following the 2016 fire;
- the homes would not be low-cost or starter units, due to the expense and complexity of redevelopment;
- the developer was commended for committing to the project and working closely with council officers;
- there was an emphasis on urgency, with calls to complete the development quickly to reduce impacts on nearby businesses, tourism, and the wider city;
- retaining the historic frontage was a respectful tribute to the original Royal Clarence building;
- some heritage loss was acknowledged, but restoring an active, living frontage was important; and
- the proposal was viewed as a necessary and hopeful step toward healing a long-standing wound in the city centre.

The Strategic Director for Place made the following concluding points:

- the building was iconic, both for its historic significance and the narrative surrounding the fire;
- officers had spent significant time working closely with the developer, professional teams, and Historic England to ensure the scheme was deliverable;
- there had been a focus on remaining close to the original consented scheme while preserving as much historic fabric as possible;
- structural integrity and building conditions were a concern, particularly due to prolonged exposure to the weather and the Well House and other elements had deteriorated more than expected;
- the site condition was terrible in places, requiring intensive work over the past six months to stabilise it and the building was now stable and capable of being developed;
- the development would require a carefully phased construction approach;
- officers had applied a planning balance, acknowledging some loss of historic buildings;

- the harm was assessed as less than substantial, and was outweighed by the benefits of restoring the iconic building; and
- if approved, the expectation was for a rapid delivery, with work potentially starting in February 2026 and preparations were already underway on site.

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

Application No. 25/0895:

**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 secure the following:

- £1,284.72 per dwelling for recreational impacts on the Exe Estuary protected marine site.

Subject to a Deferred Contributions Mechanism:

- 35% Affordable Housing to be paid as a financial contribution of £2,394,258.82;
- £16,083 for expansion of oversubscribed GP surgeries at Barnfield Hill, Southernhay House, St Leonards Practice and St Thomas Health Centre; and
- the conditions set out in the application report and supplementary information sheet.

Application No. 25/0896:

**RESOLVED** to delegate to the Head of Service (City Development) to GRANT building consent subject to the conditions as set out in the committee report and supplementary information sheet.

**The meeting was briefly adjourned at 18:12 and resumed at 18:17.**

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**PLANNING APPLICATION NO. 25/0781/FUL - MARY ARCHES STREET CAR PARK**

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

- the site being a flagship, council-owned site, and her comments reflected those of herself and Councillor Read, and the work undertaken with local residents;
- the proposal referred to a gate in an existing alleyway between 20 and 21 North Street;
- the alleyway provided a historic, publicly owned access used by residents and a gate would create a dead-end, increasing community safety risks rather than reducing them;
- a gate would also restrict evening and winter access, contradicting claims of community involvement. The access routes were important for public access to the rear of the properties, and for bin collection and needed to be retained;
- a gate would also conflict with the NPPF and Local Plan, which required connectivity and respect for existing urban structure;
- the Frank Knight report failed to reference the Exeter Local Housing Needs Analysis 2024 and the demand for co-living was not evidenced, with growth in single-person households was predicted to be low;

- the financial contribution toward housing supply was noted but units were not suitable as long-term homes and there was a lack of futureproofing if demand dropped;
- the area already had a high concentration of co-living and student accommodation, which conflicted with policy and the need for a mixed community;
- the development was a very high density, with a proposed sixth floor and rooftop equipment, which made the height five metres higher than the existing car park and created a visual dominance over Mary Arches Street and Bartholomew Cemetery;
- there was a conflict with emerging Local Plan D1, which required appropriate density and compatibility with its surroundings and this was not sufficiently sympathetic to nearby heritage buildings;
- the development would damage the medium and short range views around the city centre;
- the views from Mount Dinham and St. David's Hill into the conservation area would be lost;
- longer distance views would result in a solid block, which was contrary to council development plans;
- there was an issue with disabled parking allocations which was not clear;
- the synagogue had requested dedicated disabled parking for deliveries and access with one space was allocated, so disabled parking for residents would be insufficient;
- disabled parking needed to be provided proportionally to the housing units; and
- greater horseshoe bats were present in St. Bartholomew Cemetery but were not referenced in the report and appropriate mitigation for light impacts and bat flight paths was needed.

In responses to questions from Members, Councillor Moore made the following further points:

- the alleyway access routes were not public rights of way, but were public footpaths;
- there were two alleyways off North Street which served properties on both sides and provided access to buildings at the rear and connected through to Mary Arches Street;
- the proposed locking of gates at night would prevent winter access and make the routes unusable during evenings;
- gates would also be placed at the end of the alleyways, creating dead ends and increasing safety issues;
- the historic public routes as open and accessible thoroughfares needed to be retained;
- greater horseshoe bats were rare and had a high conservation protection status in Devon and had been sighted at St Bartholomew's Cemetery;
- the ecology report did reference greater horseshoe bats and the developer's submissions had not recognised the cemetery's ecological and amenity value;
- the omission was considered to be a serious material planning issue, not a minor ecological concern; and
- if the development was approved Section 106 funding should contribute to investment in the cemetery.

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

- the Exeter Civic Society urged the Planning Committee to challenge the

Officer Assessment and consider further points submitted in writing (on the planning portal);

- the site needed re-development; however, the current proposal did not deliver the improvement required for a conservation area;
- the Exeter Civic Society agreed with Historic England that the proposal would intensify discordance within the inner-city conservation area;
- the proposed increase in height would deepen the disparity between new and historic structures and the officer recommendation was seen as normalising harm, because the existing structure was already poor;
- harm was assessed at the upper end of being less than substantial, despite acknowledging it was a missed opportunity to repair post-war damage and set a dangerous precedent for new schemes;
- such cumulative harm conflicted with NPPF requirements to avoid entrenching decline and the least harmful option had not been demonstrated, contrary to NPPF expectations;
- the proposal did not meet Exeter's demonstrated housing need and co-living was not an appropriate response to local housing demands;
- Exeter's housing register showed there were 2,000–2,200 single-person households waiting for affordable, self-contained one-bedroom homes;
- census data from 2021 showed that people over 55 made up more than half of single-person households and those under 35 accounted for only around 30%;
- Mary Arches was highly suitable for older residents, but they were unlikely to afford this development and co-living accommodation was unsuitable for over-55s;
- the scheme therefore failed to address elderly housing need and diverted land away from urgently needed conventional housing;
- the Exeter Civic Society submitted a vision for North Street improvements and sought developer contributions which were not reflected in the Section 106 report;
- given the site was council owned, the scheme should be held to a higher standard; and
- the Exeter Civic Society urged the Committee to refuse to the proposal.

No Member questions were raised for Mr Vonhoff.

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

- welcomed being selected by the City Council as preferred partner following a competitive tender process;
- the proposal was designed to be sensitive to its surroundings and aligned with the Council's development brief, in which, all criteria of that brief had been met;
- council officers were thanked for their support and collaboration, highlighting the importance of public to private partnership working;
- Utopia Homes' specialised in urban brownfield regeneration, which was described as environmentally sustainable and protected greenfield land;
- he highlighted how Utopia Homes' had invested in Exeter, citing successful delivery at Exmouth Junction with council support;
- the height, scale, and massing were shaped through the pre-application process, which involved Design South West, Planning officers and Historic England;
- the Design Review Panel had been generally supportive of the scheme;
- the scheme had been amended multiple times at officers' request, including reducing the building footprint to retain nearby trees;
- the development was aiming to create a greener, more welcoming environment, with new tree planting, a green pedestrian route and pocket park

- on the site;
- if approved, there was an intention to remove the footbridge over North Street and begin demolition of the bridge and car park promptly; and
- he requested committee support for the officer recommendation for approval.

Mr Hammond responded to Members' questions as follows:

- there was a strong belief in the co-living model in Exeter, which was described as a high-quality and needed product and needed to be located in urban, city-centre locations;
- there was a discounted market rent for key workers, similar to their Exmouth Junction scheme, where around 60% of residents were healthcare workers;
- there was strong demand for co-living from young professionals, and continued investment demonstrated confidence in demand for the product;
- the preference for co-living was not a viability issue, but a deliberate choice to meet perceived market demand;
- there was a planning condition requiring the scheme to be future-proofed, should co-living become unviable, in which officers could provide more detail on;
- the company would not invest millions of pounds without confidence in demand and expressed confidence in the Knight Frank report, market research and experience;
- he had strong confidence that demand existed and would continue to exist;
- the gating issues arose primarily from police consultation, based on security and crime prevention advice. They had no objection to public routes through the site and were willing to support ungated public access if the council preferred that;
- heritage was a key consideration for the site and initial surveys had already been undertaken with extensive engagement with the Council;
- planning conditions required further archaeological investigations before any commencement and ongoing archaeological monitoring during development; and
- concerns raised in the updated heritage officer report would be best addressed by officers rather than responding directly at the meeting.

The Principal Project Manager (Development) presented the application for the demolition of the multi-storey car park and construction of a co-living development alongside public realm improvements, landscaping, cycle and car parking, servicing, refuse and recycling provision, and associated works.

Members received the following updated information:

- the site plan included in the committee report was incorrect and had been updated and circulated;
- further representations had been received from the Exeter Civic Society and was published on the website as noted on the update sheet;
- the Synagogue had re-confirmed their objection due to loss of parking;
- final comments had been received from the Urban Design & Landscape Officer and were appended to the update sheet, and a letter from the pre-application Design Review Panel had been added to the website;
- there were two updates to the planning obligations, which included a decimal point adjustment to the car club sum on pages 37, 74 and 77 and the archaeology public engagement contribution was confirmed as £93,035;
- there was a planning balance assessment set out in the update sheet to clarify the stages of assessment and the weight given to benefits and harms, which did not change the officer recommendations; and
- there was an updated condition which included the full set of plans to be

approved.

Members received a presentation which included:

- there were several alleyways between North Street and Bartholomew Street, but none had public rights of way throughout and the route through Mecca Bingo site was gated;
- the application was for the multi-storey car park at the corner of North Street and Bartholomew Street East and the surface car park along Mary Arches Street;
- following an ecological assessment reviewed by Dorset Council ecology specialists, Greater Horseshoe bats had been identified in the area. The species were highly light-sensitive and considered very unlikely to be around the multi-storey car park or other lit areas;
- existing trees on Bartholomew Street East would be lost due to development, but key trees on Mary Arches Street and Mitre Lane would be retained;
- replacement tree planting would be secured by conditions and the proposed additional planting would be sought to support biodiversity net gain;
- nearby heritage assets included St Mary Arches Church (Grade I) and the Synagogue (Grade II\*) as well as Grade II and Locally Listed Buildings;
- the existing multi-storey car park and the open spaces had been identified as making a negative impact on the conservation areas, and re-development would remove those harmful aspects;
- under historic alignment, Mary Arches Street was widened during post-war redevelopment with historic frontages remaining on the south side;
- views looking up and down North Street showed a steep gradient, the repaired city wall opposite, and existing car park frontage with landscaped beds and ornamental tree planting;
- the extent of the application site was outlined, including the existing alleyway serving rear commercial properties;
- the alleyway adjacent 21 North Street would be gated, with access retained as required and that buildings to the right would be demolished;
- a condition had been proposed for buildings at Bartholomew Street East requiring obscure glazing to affected windows for the side elevation;
- existing and proposed tree retention was explained around Mitre Lane and Mecca Bingo;
- Highways matters were outlined, including revised loading bay arrangements and amendments requested by Devon County Highways;
- the current situation around Synagogue Place, including the synagogue location, motorcycle parking, and surrounding historic buildings was explained;
- an intrusive archaeological investigation confirmed Roman and medieval remains on site and a Written Scheme of Investigation would secure archaeological recording prior to development;
- public engagement and exhibitions linked to the archaeology would be provided and supported by a financial contribution;
- the proposal involved demolition of the existing car parks and redevelopment with two linked co-living blocks:
  - Block A fronting North Street / Bartholomew Street corner; and
  - Block B fronting Mary Arches Street.
- the buildings would be linked at the ground floor level,;
- a three-storey block was proposed over the existing alleyway, with a one-and-a-half storey height passageway beneath to maintain access with a gated street frontage;
- police concerns had been raised regarding potential antisocial behaviour,

particularly at night, but passageway control would be the responsibility of the applicant, and managed through an agreed management plan secured by the S106 agreement;

- matters relating to opening hours and measures to address antisocial behaviour would be controlled through the management plan and did not need to be fixed at this stage;
- the buildings being up to six storeys, five storeys in parts and four-storey elements incorporating a rooftop garden terraces;
- building B lacked a ground floor, resulting in a five-storey appearance;
- a pocket park was being proposed on Mary Arches Street, with landscaping and layout designed to reduce antisocial behaviour;
- the scheme would also include two on-site disabled parking bays;
- there has been some significant amendments since the application was first submitted;
- the development included lounges, shared kitchens, gym, co-working spaces, media rooms, laundry, cycle stores, and bin storage;
- the development would be car-free, with delivery servicing available from a new on-street lay-by;
- residential accommodation would comprise of 297 co-living units, primarily single-occupancy studios (18–27 sqm), with shared kitchens on each floor;
- the building was designed to be adaptable, to allow for future conversion to standard flats, if required which would be secured by conditions;
- landscaping proposals included replacement tree planting, biodiversity enhancements, and further tree planting to be secured by a condition;
- planning benefits, included:
  - 297 co-living units;
  - 60 affordable private rent units, including three wheelchair-accessible units;
  - regeneration of an underused site;
  - removal of buildings harming the conservation area; and
  - sustainable, city-centre, car-free development.
- identified harm for impacts on listed buildings and loss of trees, had been assessed as being less than substantial harm;
- the planning balance benefit outweighed the harms, both with and without the tilted balance;
- visual assessments and verified views demonstrate no unacceptable impact on key views, including views of the Cathedral;
- Section 106 contributions were highlighted; and
- there would be a restriction on full-time student occupation offered voluntarily by the applicant and the recommendation was for approval delegated to Head of City Development.

The Strategic Director Place, the Principal Project Manager (Development) and the Principal Project Manager (Heritage), responded to Member questions and clarification points as follows:-

- the former restaurant and a nail bar units would be lost and not be replaced;
- the existing solar panels on the car park roof would be removed and an investigation in a potential relocation was underway;
- the new building would not include rooftop solar panels but exceeded energy standards through fabric efficiency, airtightness, and heat pumps;
- there was no requirement for a one-to-one ratio between wheelchair units and disabled parking spaces;
- the site would be highly accessible and parking allocations would be managed through a management plan;

- officers were not aware of any confirmed parking agreements with the synagogue;
- the city centre had a wide mix of accommodation types and officers did not consider the scheme would create an unacceptable community imbalance under Policy H5;
- planning rules could not prevent car ownership for tenants, however, nearby streets were subject to extensive parking controls;
- car-club provisions and sustainable travel measures were included to encourage sustainable travel;
- the applicant was selected through a competitive tender process and there was no development partnership. The Council's intention was to dispose of the site subject to planning permission;
- a full excavation would take place under a Written Scheme of Investigation, but currently only regionally significant remains were known. If any nationally important relics are found, Historic England could intervene if required;
- there were three disabled wheelchair accessible units in the scheme and two disabled parking spaces shown on the development;
- parking space use would be controlled through the site management plan;
- Traffic Regulation Orders could be explored to create on-street disabled parking and S106 funding was available for any such highway changes;
- officers had worked with the applicant for six months and secured a number of improvements, particularly to internal layout and accommodation quality;
- further design refinements may be possible, but officers considered the scheme as acceptable, as the benefits outweighed the identified harms;
- following legal advice, restrictions on student occupation could not be imposed through planning conditions, as the development was market housing;
- student occupation concerns arose during consultation and were discussed with the applicant; however, they cannot be used as grounds for refusal;
- the proposed 10% student cap was a voluntary offer, not a planning requirement and there was no local or national planning policy allowing student occupation to be restricted in market housing;
- imposing such a condition would fail the legal tests for planning conditions;
- a separate land covenant prevented the site from being used as purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA), but it did not prevent students from occupying units;
- communal areas and internal accommodation would meet required accessibility standards;
- there would be no internal electric cycle charging provided due to safety concerns and there was no requirement for internal electric charging;
- the management plan matters would be addressed through planning conditions and S106 obligations;
- gate access would be at street level on both North Street and Mary Arches Street and properties requiring access would be accommodated through controlled entry;
- the pocket park would include seating and landscaping along the street and the existing tree would be retained;
- the landscape areas would be inside the development boundary;
- the pocket park and walkway area was intended to remain publicly accessible and the developer was willing to keep it permanently open;
- public access and maintenance would be managed through the management plan;
- the site was currently entirely hard surfaced and the proposed landscaping and rain gardens would support the reduction of water runoff and improve drainage;
- there were no significant shadowing or loss of light issues anticipated and the development would not obstruct key views of the Cathedral;

- any heritage harm was considered to be less than substantial;
- deliveries to the site would use Mitre Lane and a layby on Bartholomew Street East; and
- traffic orders could also be amended to address loading and access issues if required.

The Planning Solicitor Advised Members that they were considering the planning application only and discussions around land deals was a separate process.

During debate, Members expressed the following views:-

- heritage was central to the decision which was at the heart of Exeter's identity;
- officers were thanked for the comprehensive report;
- the proposed conditions and Section 106 obligations were welcomed;
- there were two key concerns, on the impact to heritage assets and of Block B, notably its setting and relationship to surroundings;
- the site should be an exemplar development for Exeter;
- improvements made since earlier versions were acknowledged and the housing benefit was recognised;
- the application involved a difficult balancing exercise;
- concerns were raised about co-living accommodation and its demand, but it was acknowledged it was not a material planning consideration;
- the importance of the site within the city was highlighted;
- the developer's willingness to include a 10% non-student restriction, to address public perception was welcomed;
- a Member expressed a preference for one and two-bedroom homes, which would better serve local residents;
- the scheme was considered to still be a work in progress;
- there was an opportunity to properly regenerate a key part of the city and that further improvements should be sought;
- replacing the existing multi-storey car park, introducing the small pocket park and improved cycle parking were positive aspects;
- concerns were raised on massing and height, notably to surrounding buildings on North Street;
- NPPF guidance, stated that new developments should take the least harmful approach and officers had considered that parts of the design were sub-optimal;
- Historic England had objections, regarding the increased height and harm to the conservation area and listed buildings;
- the design appeared to still resembles a car park or office block in appearance and further work to address the sub-optimal design issues was needed;
- a Member was disappointment that the urban design officer was not in attendance to explain potential improvements;
- the developer's indication that they were open to further design refinement was welcomed;
- a Member in supporting the permissive public access route, highlighted that a further condition was needed to requested that any restriction on access be limited to cases of demonstrable antisocial behaviour;
- a further suggested additional condition for consideration should be on exploring disabled parking provision on Mary Arches Street with the County Council;
- the car park was owned by the City Council, and therefore had a duty to secure the best possible replacement;
- concerns were raised that the height of Block A exceeded that of the existing car park, which was inappropriate in a conservation area;

- the proposal would overshadow or dominate nearby listed buildings;
- the archaeological conditions were welcomed;
- there was an opportunity to reflect both Exeter's past and future, however, the current proposal did not achieve this;
- a Member noted the surrounding buildings included the Guildhall, Mecca Bingo Hall and other large, bulky buildings and highlighted the setting would never be picturesque;
- the site's sunken position was highlighted and the enclosed context limited design possibilities;
- the development would support city centre housing on a Brownfield site;
- the proposal was sympathetic and appropriate in relation to the site;
- the archaeological strategy was supported for the handling of the heritage beneath the site;
- Block A was acceptable in terms of massing and scale;
- the loss of retail/commercial space, was understandable given the site constraints;
- the development offered practical advantages for future residents, including proximity to shops and delivery access points;
- significant concerns were raised about Block B, including its impact on the surrounding area, physical presence and scale and that it was one storey too high;
- the difficulty of balancing harms against benefits was acknowledged, notably for upper end of less than substantial harm and sub-optimal design; and
- the committee needed to consider the application as a whole, not selectively and the decision of Members was difficult.

The Strategic Director for Place made the following concluding points:

- Members were thanked for their considered and thoughtful contributions;
- the importance of applying the planning balance, giving appropriate weight to the full range of material considerations, and avoiding undue weight being placed on any single issue was highlighted;
- the application needed to be considered as a whole, and that although the proposal brought together two distinct elements, it was submitted as one planning application;
- while Members had concerns with individual elements of the scheme, the decision needed to be based on whether the overall proposal was acceptable;
- he clarified that ownership of the land by the City Council was not a material planning consideration and did not justify applying a higher test or quality threshold than would be applied to any other application;
- he noted Members considered Block A to be an acceptable replacement for the existing multi-storey car park;
- he noted that Members considered that Block B would result in some harm, particularly due to its five-storey height within a sensitive conservation area and its proximity to listed buildings;
- the identified heritage harm was assessed as being less than substantial, and therefore not in breach of heritage policy;
- officers concluded that the public benefits of the scheme outweighed the identified harm, and that the proposal was acceptable on balance;
- Members were reminded that they must assess the proposal on its merits as submitted, and should not base their decision on a preferred alternative scheme; and
- he outlined the available decision options for Members and concluded that officers had provided a technical assessment and professional recommendation, but that the final decision rested with the committee.

The Chair moved, and Councillor Pole seconded the recommendation.

Councillor Atkinson proposed and Councillor Mitchell seconded an amendment to the Section 106 to secure:

- that the pedestrian route shall be treated as a permissive path and be kept open to the public at all times, unless closure was subsequently justified by demonstrable incidents of anti-social behaviour, as identified through the management plan required by the Section 106 Agreement.

It was clarified that the purpose of the amendment was to ensure the route remained ordinarily open, with gates positioned in the open state as a default, while allowing the management plan to authorise temporary closure only where evidence-based antisocial behaviour required it. Officers confirmed the wording would be embedded within the Section 106 Agreement and governed through the management plan.

On being put to the vote, the amendment was CARRIED unanimously.

**RESOLVED** that the Section 106 Agreement include a requirement that the pedestrian route shall be treated as a permissive path and kept open to the public at all times, unless closure is subsequently justified by demonstrable incidents of anti-social behaviour, as identified through the management plan secured within the Section 106 Agreement.

It was proposed by Councillor Rolstone and seconded by Councillor Mitchell that the following amendment be made to the motion as follows:

- that the committee note the officers report, and request officers to go back to the developer to seek further consideration on scale and massing, and design issues regarding the street facing aspects. To enable this, the planning committee defer the decision to a subsequent planning committee.

During the debate on the amendment, the following points were made:

- the amendment to the motion was a positive way forward and reflected the importance of the site;
- the developer was amenable and open to removing the gated elements and taking pride in the quality of their developments;
- it was hoped that the developer would be willing to come back with a scheme that was not sub-optimal which was excellent rather than merely acceptable;
- the scheme was close to being acceptable scheme, but was not yet at the required standard;
- the significance of the site was highlighted and its overbearing would impact on the surrounding area;
- there was a need to get the scheme right before wider regeneration proposals alter the area further and ensure long-term suitability for future residents;
- Members had concerns on the massing and views from the cathedral;
- viability constraints were acknowledged, but further redesign were possible;
- Council ownership gave no extra planning powers, but create a responsibility to leave a positive legacy for Exeter;
- it would have been helpful for Members to have additional and alternative viewpoints and visual perspectives of the site;
- further views from other angles would provide greater reassurance to members and help contextualise the scale of harm more clearly;
- a Member clarified his concerns related to specific elements rather than the

- scheme as a whole and understood the intent and principle of the amendment;
- the amendment to be a sensible way forward;
- the developer had indicated a willingness to improve sub-optimal aspects of the scheme;
- Block B as the primary area of concern;
- the site had significant potential and the developer had made a lot of progress addressing earlier concerns;
- the proposal would sit reasonably well in the area overall;
- the amendment sought consideration of the entire scheme, not just individual elements; and
- it was preferable to defer rather than refuse the application.

Councillor Rolstone in closing the amended motion, made the following points:

- her initial concern was with Block B, but the amended motion addressed the scheme more widely;
- the developer needed the opportunity to re-consider the design and respond to the concerns raised by Members;
- it was hoped that the developer representatives present had listened to the concerns of Members, notably Block B;
- the scheme had improved significantly since earlier iterations;
- it was unfortunate that external design quality, particularly Block B, had not progressed to the same extent;
- it was fair and reasonable to allow further consideration rather than moving directly to refusal; and
- the developer could return to advised that further changes were not viable and allow the committee to re-assess the application on balance.

On being put to the vote, the amendment to defer the motion was CARRIED (8 in favour, 2 against and 0 abstentions).

**RESOLVED** that the Committee DEFER determination of the application, on the grounds that further discussions were required between officers and the applicant to address:

- the scale and massing of the proposed development;
- the design quality and treatment of the street-facing elevations; and
- that these matters be explored and reported back to a subsequent meeting of the Planning Committee.

(The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 8.31 pm)

Chair

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## **STRATA - JOINT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**WEDNESDAY, 28 JANUARY 2026**

Present:

Councillors Palethorpe, Bialyk and Arnott

Apologies:

None

Officers in Attendance:

Steve Mawn, Director of IT and Digital Transformation

Neil Blaney, Director of Place

Christopher Morgan, Assistant Democratic Services Officer

Suzanne Edwards, Strata Finance Manager

Andrew Hopkins, Head of Service, Digital and Data (EDDC)

**These decisions will take effect from 10.00 a.m. on Wednesday 4 February unless called-in or identified as urgent in the minute**

### **7. ELECTION OF CHAIR**

It was proposed by Cllr Arnott, seconded by Cllr Bialyk and

RESOLVED

That Cllr Palethorpe be elected Chair of the Committee for 2025-2026.

### **8. MINUTES**

It was proposed by Cllr Arnott, seconded by Cllr Bialyk and

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### **9. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**10. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC UNDER PROCEDURAL RULES**

None.

**11. QUESTION FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCILS UNDER PROCEDURE RULES**

None.

**12. AMENDMENTS TO THE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

It was proposed by Cllr Arnott, seconded by Cllr Bialyk and

**RESOLVED**

That the proposed changes to the Terms of Reference be approved.

**13. STRATA BUSINESS PLAN AND STRATEGY**

The Director of IT and Digital Transformation introduced the item to the Committee.

He spoke on the successful transformation as evidenced by the reduced calls coming into Strata, MHCLG recognition, the role of enterprise architecture, and costs.

The Committee discussed the impact of Local Government Reorganisation on Strata and budgeting.

It was proposed by Cllr Arnott, seconded by Cllr Bialyk and

**RESOLVED**

That the Committee recommends the Strata Business Plan to be approved by the three partner Councils.

**14. STRATA BUDGET MONITORING AND PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The Strata Finance Manager introduced the item to the Committee.

The Committee discussed the projected outturn of £297,000, the budget savings from the EDDC graphics team, and funding for cloud servers.

The Committee noted the report.

The meeting started at 3.30 pm and finished at 4.05 pm.

Cllr David Palethorpe  
Chair

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## **EXECUTIVE**

Tuesday 3 February 2026

Present:

Councillor Bialyk (Chair)

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

Apologies:

Councillor Foale

Also present:

Councillor Rees (as Chair of the Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee – for Minute No. 101 below);

Councillor Holland (as an opposition group Leader);

Councillor M. Mitchell (as an opposition group Leader); and

Councillor Moore (as an opposition group Leader).

Also present:

Chief Executive, Strategic Director for Place, Strategic Director for Corporate Resources, Strategic Director for People and Communities, Head of Legal and Democratic Services & Monitoring Officer, Head of Service - Finance, Head of Service - Customers and Communities and Democratic Services Officer (MD)

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### **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 December 2025, were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

99

### **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests were made.

100

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

No questions from members of the public were received.

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### **MATTERS REFERRED BY SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

Strategic Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 15 January 2026 - Minute No. 33 – Unauthorised Encampments

The Executive considered the recommendation from the Strategic Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 15 January 2026 on exploring the viability and impact of a Negotiated Stopping Policy.

The Leader advised that the Strategic Management Board (SMB) would be asked to provide views on requirements and implications of the recommendation and explore whether the existing policy could be reviewed and updated as needed to ensure it remained appropriate and current. He further advised that a report could be brought back to Members if required.

The Leader moved the recommendation, which was seconded by Councillor Wright, voted upon, and CARRIED unanimously.

**RESOLVED** that the Executive Committee agreed to explore the viability and impact of a Negotiated Stopping Policy.

Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 22 January 2026 - Minute No. 100 – Medium Term Financial Plan

The Executive considered the recommendations from the Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 22 January 2025. He welcomed Councillor Rees as Chair of the Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee to speak to the recommendations.

Councillor Rees provided context of the scrutiny process as follows:

- this was the first full year of a complete budget scrutiny cycle through the Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee, following an evolving process over several years;
- the original intention was for the quarter 4 budget scrutiny to take place in November 2025, to align but due to unforeseen circumstances, the meeting was postponed to January 2026;
- the November period provided an earlier influence for scrutiny budget development, but the January reported provided more up-to-date financial information;
- budgets were living documents which could be adjusted during the year and Scrutiny recommendations were intended to support existing work, rather than introduce unexpected proposals; and
- Scrutiny was advised not to recommend specific figures or funding sources, as this was the responsibility of the Executive.

Councillor Rees explained the recommendations as follows:

- For the recommendation on the Peppercorn Rent - discussions were already underway, as confirmed by officers.
- The recommendation for the Community Asset Transfer, arose from cross-party discussions during the scrutiny work on Northbrook Pool. The aim was to improve supporting communities who wished to retain local assets and Officers had already begun making progress and improvements to processes.
- The recommendation for the Climate Action Plan was informed by a recent Government paper on global biodiversity Loss and ecosystem collapse. The purpose of which, would provide an opportunity to enhance the existing plan by incorporating climate adaptation strategies and community resilience measures.
- The recommendation for Parks and Green Spaces had been proposed by the Chair to address long-term reductions in council funding, following evidence that the service had been operating with minimal staffing. The ambition and income generation ideas had been shared with officers and within the context of a three-year budget, there may be opportunities to strengthen the service to realise its vision.

The Leader thanked Councillor Rees for attending and the work undertaken by the Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee. He confirmed that:

- The Peppercorn rent issues were already being addressed.
- Parks and Green Spaces resourcing would be considered but highlighted that many departments were also facing operational pressures, which needed to be considered.

- The Resident survey results indicated there was already a high satisfaction with parks and open spaces.
- Regarding the Climate Action Plan, officers regularly reviewed Government publications and relevant policy implications were assessed by Directors and brought forward as appropriate.
- There was no intention to sell community assets and directors would review the asset transfer policy to ensure it was fit for purpose and advise on any potential improvements.
- the council was still making £1.1 million of budget changes and emphasised the need to consider proposals within the wider strategic and financial context.

He advised that the Strategic Management Board (SMB) would reflect on the scrutiny recommendations and discuss with the Chief Executive to advise on what was achievable within current priorities and resources. He reiterated his appreciation for the role of scrutiny and confirmed that Members would be kept informed as work progresses.

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

**RESOLVED** that the Executive Committee agreed to consider:

- (1) that a peppercorn rent continue for Citizens Advice Exeter;
- (2) whether more resources can be directed to the Parks and Green Spaces Team;
- (3) whether the Climate Action Plan could be strengthened by adding an Adaptation and Resilience plan; and
- (4) strengthening support for the community asset transfer.

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**EXETER PLAN: PROCESS FOR AUTHORISING PROPOSED CHANGES  
RESULTING FROM THE EXAMINATION**

The Executive received the report which outlined the process for agreeing proposed modifications to the Exeter Plan during the forthcoming examination. The Exeter Plan Examination Hearings would commence in March 2026 and scheduled to conclude by May 2026. The report was seeking Council approval to grant delegated authority to the Strategic Director for Place, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for City Development, to authorise modifications arising during the hearings.

Members were advised that the delegated authority would enable officers and the Portfolio Holder to:

- meet regularly during the hearings to consider and respond promptly to modifications tabled by the Planning Inspectors;
- support efficient progress of the plan and reduce the risk of delays to the examination process;
- all proposed modifications would be subject to further technical assessment and public consultation following the conclusion of the hearings; and
- any final modifications would require approval by Executive and Council after the Examination, prior to adoption of the Plan.

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

- clarification was sought on the schedule of proposed modifications, how it was compiled, whether it is an exhaustive list of all third-party representations, and what methodology officers used to determine it;

- the high level of public reach achieved during the prior consultation was highlighted; and
- what level of modifications are anticipated during examination and what factors would give rise to further modifications.

The Portfolio Holder for City Development highlighted the need for an efficient process due to the short time span and the importance of the Exeter Plan for the city's development. The plan had already undergone extensive consultation and redrafting and assurance was given that weekly meetings had been arranged with the team to review and discuss modifications as they arise.

In response to questions raised by Executive Members, the Strategic Director for Place advised that:

- the schedule of proposed modifications listed were put forward informally by officers to assist the planning inspectors in considering evidence and representations from third parties;
- the modifications did not constitute formal modifications, and only the Inspectors could formally propose modifications during the Examination process;
- delegated authority was procedural and would apply once modifications were formally proposed by the Inspectors;
- the delegated authority would allow officers to consider the proposed modifications and undertake any technical assessment and public consultation without suspending the examination or having to seek approval from the executive and council for each modification;
- the officer suggested modifications were informed by a review of all representations submitted by third parties to the examination;
- the potential scale of modifications could range from minor terminology changes to more significant changes such as the inclusion or removal of development sites, or amendments to policy wording;
- the purpose of any modification, whether minor or significant, was to ensure the plan met the tests of soundness and legal requirements, allowing it to be adopted; and
- failure to introduce necessary modifications, risked the plan not being adoptable.

An opposition group leader raised the following points and questions:

- welcomed clarification on the status of contributions already submitted to the examination;
- expressed concern that one proposed amendment appeared to significantly alter the intent of the Plan notably the amendment affecting the status of Ludwell Valley Park and the Valley Parks Masterplan;
- the change appeared to remove or weaken the requirement to 'have regard to' the Masterplan, which was considered to substantially dilute the original wording; and
- it was enquired whether the Council intended to challenge any such proposed amendments and whether officers planned to accept them as presented to the Examination.

In response to question raised by the opposition Member, the Strategic Director for Place sought clarification on whether the question related to the officer proposed modifications or third-party representations, and received confirmation that the question was from the officer-proposed list.

The Leader advised that the matter was a specific and detailed query, which was not appropriate for a wider debate. He requested that the Opposition Leader email the full detail to the Strategic Director Place outside of the meeting to respond to.

The Deputy Leader & Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services, Community Safety and City Centre requested for future references to report items, that Members include specific reference numbers to help Members locate them within the large agenda documents. The Leader supported the request.

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

**RESOLVED** that the Executive notes the latest progress made on the Exeter Plan.

**RECOMMENDED** that Council grants delegated authority to the Strategic Director for Place, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for City Development, to authorise any proposed modifications that may arise during the Exeter Plan Examination to ensure the Plan is considered sound.

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### **GENERAL FUND ESTIMATES AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2026/27**

The Executive received the report on the General Fund revenue estimates for 2026/27 and to recommend the Band D level of Council Tax for 2026/27. The report also included the proposed Capital Programme for 2026/27 and future years.

Particular reference was made to:

- the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement had been received, with the final settlement expected in the next week;
- the business rates reset was anticipated, which would normally result in a significant reduction in council resources, but had been offset by a favourable outcome from the Government's funding formula review, largely neutralising the impact of the business rates reset for Exeter;
- Exeter fell within 5% of its previous funding level, and as such, the Council would receive support through a funding floor grant, resulting in a cash-flat settlement;
- the settlement would result in Exeter receiving the same level of core spending power for 2026–27 as it did in 2025–26;
- the Government had confirmed a three-year, multi-year settlement, projecting a cash-flat settlement across that period;
- the cash-flat settlement assumed Councils would increase their Council Tax by the maximum permitted level each year., which for Exeter was 2.99%, in line with referendum principles;
- the budget had therefore been prepared on the assumption of a 2.99% Council Tax increase, subject to Member approval at Council on 25 February 2026;
- the General Fund minimum balance was proposed at £3.010 million, which was a reduction from the previous year, based on the removal of business rate risk for 2026–27;
- the Government were now providing a guarantee of 100% business rates income, compared to the previous 92.5% threshold;
- a provision of £500,000 was included in the revenue budget to support the transitional work associated with the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR);

- a new Appendix 10 for a flexible use of Capital Receipts Strategy had been included which enabled the Council to apply to Government to use capital receipts for specific revenue-type expenditure; and
- the Capital Receipts Strategy was intended solely to support work related to local government reorganisation and was not required to balance the budget, which was already balanced within the Medium-Term Financial Plan.

In response to the Leader's clarification, it was confirmed that a 2.99% Council Tax increase equated to approximately £5 per year for a Band D property, or around 10.5p per week.

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

- referencing Appendix 3 of the report, it was noted that income over-performance within Parks and Green Spaces, included £10,000 additional income from events and £23,000 additional rental income;
- the strong performance within Waste Operations was highlighted, with an additional £100,000 in recycling income, contributing to keeping Council Tax low;
- the recycling income totalled approximately £1 million per annum, and the teams involved were commended for their performance;
- clarification was sought regarding a budget change of £510,740 on page 45 of the report shown against the Chief Executive line;
- the confirmation that future government funding was cost neutral, with no reduction in overall funding levels was welcomed;
- confirmation was sought that Exeter City Council only retained approximately 8% of the total Council Tax paid;
- finance officers were commended for achieving a balanced budget with minimal impact on frontline services; and
- the scale and effectiveness of the financial adjustments compared to previous years was highlighted.

In response to questions raised by Executive Members, the Strategic Director for Corporate Resources advised that:

- the £510,740 change in the Chief Executive's budget related to the provision for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) work, managed within the Executive Support team;
- the Council received approximately 8% of total Council Tax, with the remainder allocated to Devon County Council, the police, and fire services; and
- he commended the Operational Management and Finance teams for identifying budget adjustments to maintain a balanced budget despite inflationary pressures.

The Leader reminded Members that the 2026–27 budget was subject to Council approval on 25 February and that all Group Leaders had been contacted to provide input on other budget proposals or changes.

An opposition group leader made the following points and questions:

- clarification was sought on how the Executive intended to review the Community Asset Disposal Policy, particularly Part 3 on qualifying disposals and the objective of disposal;
- it was emphasised that including objectives such as improving community infrastructure allow assets to remain in community ownership or enable communities to bid or purchase assets, without necessarily giving them away for free;
- clarification was requested on the total expected LGR costs, referring to page 27 showing £27 million to 2029 and page 22 showing £500,000 revenue allocation in Chief Executive's budget; and
- the report also showed £1.5 million capital receipt, creating a total of £2 million for 2026–27 and request that the budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan should clearly identify total LGR costs, council contributions, and anticipated government funding.

In response to questions raised by opposition Members, the Strategic Director for Corporate Resources advised that:

- the proposed 2026–27 budget included £500,000 revenue for LGR work;
- to use the £1.55 million capital receipts, Council approval was needed for the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Policy and a successful application to central government;
- if approved by Council, a supplementary budget request would be submitted to add the £1.5 million to the LGR budget;
- currently there was no government approval or final strategy secured and the budget currently remained at £500,000; and
- for future years, transitional costs for any new unitary authority were expected to rise, and funding proposals would need to be identified.

The Leader advised that the cost for LGR would impact on all Councils, regardless of the option chosen by the Secretary of State.

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

**RECOMMENDED** that Council

- (1) approve the Council's overall revenue spending proposals in respect of the General Fund;
- (2) approve the Council's General Fund Capital Programme;
- (3) notes and considers the budget assessment by the Section 151 Officer as set out in Section 11 of the report, when agreeing the recommendations;
- (4) approve for the General Fund minimum Balance to be set at £3.010 million for 2026/27;
- (5) approve the Council Tax for each Band as set out in section 12 of the report, subject to Devon County Council, OPCC Devon and Cornwall and the Devon and Somerset Fire Authority confirming their Band D levels respectively; and
- (6) approve the Council's Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy, as set out in Appendix 10 of the report.

**RESOLVED** that the Executive agree that once the actual Council Tax amounts for Devon County Council, the Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Commissioner, and the Devon and Somerset Fire Authority are confirmed, the revised Council Tax levels be submitted to Council on 25 February 2026 for approval.

**HRA ESTIMATES AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2026/27**

The Executive received the report which proposed the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget for 2026-27, covering both the revenue account and capital programme.

Particular reference was made to:

- the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) being separated into its own report for clarity on proposed budgets and the capital programme;
- housing rent increases approved in December 2025 had been factored into the budget;
- there was no significant additional spending required this year and the budget was balanced; and
- the minimum level of reserves would remain the same as in 2025–26 and the HRA Capital Programme remained significant.

The Leader highlighted the importance of building more **council homes** to provide affordable housing in Exeter.

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

**RECOMMENDED** that Council:

- (1) approves the Council's overall spending proposals in respect of the HRA revenue;
- (2) approves the HRA Capital Programme;
- (3) notes and considers the budget assessment by the Section 151 Officer as set out in Section 10 of the report when agreeing the recommendations; and
- (4) sets the HRA minimum balance at £3.525 million for 2026/27.

**CAPITAL STRATEGY 2026-27**

The Executive received the report on the proposed 2026/27 Capital Strategy, which explained that the Capital Strategy was designed to ensure all elected members had a full understanding of the Council's long-term policy objectives, the associated capital requirements, governance arrangements, and the Council's risk appetite.

Particular reference was made to the statutory requirement for Council approval and that there were no significant changes from the previous year. A Capital Programme Board had also been established, chaired by the Chief Executive and attended by Strategic Directors, to oversee major projects and improve delivery.

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

**RECOMMENDED** that Council approve the Capital Strategy as set out in Appendix A of the report.

**TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY REPORT 2026/27**

The Executive received the report on the Treasury Management Strategy for 2026/27, which included the Annual Investment Strategy and updated Treasury Management Practices. The report advised that, in line with CIPFA and MHCLG guidance, the Council was required to approve a strategy for managing its financial investments each year. It further highlighted the need to manage risks associated with borrowing and investments, including potential losses and the impact of changing interest rates.

Particular reference was made to:

- there was a statutory requirement for annual Council approval and there were no significant changes from the previous year; and
- there was still a big disconnect between the base rates and the amount that local authorities were able to borrow, making borrowing for the capital programme still very expensive.

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

- that was the specific difference between borrowing rates and the base rate, and whether there was any projection on when they might realign;
- it was enquired about the plan for a £10 million debt maturing on 12 March 2026, which had a 4.87% rate, and how this would be refinanced; and
- the net interest payable on the council's total debt, was calculated to be well under 1% (approx. 0.7-0.8%).

In response to questions raised by Executive Members, the Strategic Director for Corporate Resources advised that:

- the £10 million debt was part of a short-term borrowing policy used as a cash flow management tool due to high PWLB (Public Works Loan Board) rates;
- it would likely be refinanced, but the decision depended on the Council's cash position at the time;
- a reduction in cash was expected by March 2026 as council tax and business rates were collected over 10 months;
- interest rates for local authority borrowing was significantly higher than the base rate;
- the PWLB 50-year loan for the HRA was 5.8%, the PWLB loan for General Fund was 6.02% and the Bank of England Base Rate was 3.75%; and
- the future of PWLB rates depended on the market's view of government borrowing rather than on the Bank of England's base rate.

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

**RECOMMENDED** that Council approve the adoption of the Treasury Management Strategy and Treasury Management Practices and the delegations contained therein.

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**THE PRUDENTIAL CODE FOR CAPITAL FINANCE IN LOCAL AUTHORITIES  
(INCORPORATING THE ANNUAL STATEMENT OF MINIMUM REVENUE  
PROVISION)**

The Executive received the report on the Treasury Management Strategy for 2026/27, which included the Annual Investment Strategy and updated Treasury

Management Practices. The report advised that, in line with CIPFA and MHCLG guidance, the Council was required to approve a strategy for managing its financial investments each year. It further highlighted the need to manage risks associated with borrowing and investments, including potential losses and the impact of changing interest rates.

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- it would likely be refinanced, but the decision depended on the Council's cash position at the time;
- a reduction in cash was expected by March 2026 as council tax and business rates were collected over 10 months;
- interest rates for local authority borrowing was significantly higher than the base rate;
- the PWLB 50-year loan for the HRA was 5.8%, the PWLB loan for General Fund was 6.02% and the Bank of England Base Rate was 3.75%; and
- the future of PWLB rates depended on the market's view of government borrowing rather than on the Bank of England's base rate.

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

**RECOMMENDED** that Council approve the adoption of the Treasury Management Strategy and Treasury Management Practices and the delegations contained therein.

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### **LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2026/27**

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### **CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY**

The Executive received the report on the Consultation and Engagement Strategy 2026–2028, which sought Council approval for its adoption. The report outlined

feedback from the public and the VCSE sector on the draft strategy and the changes made in response.

Particular reference was made to:

- a typo in the recommendation was highlighted which should state that the Executive recommends to council **the** adoption of the consultation and engagement strategy;
- the strategy outlined the council's approach to consulting and engaging with communities to ensure diverse voices were integrated into decision-making; and
- the report included the draft strategy, stakeholder feedback, and resulting changes.

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

- the strategy and the process used for its consultation was commended;
- it was enquired how recent consultation successes had informed the strategy and how it would improve outreach to harder to reach groups;
- the team were commended for their work, particularly for using innovative, inclusive, and representative methods;
- it was noted that the representative approach was time intensive but had been beneficial compared to less structured consultation methods;
- it was asked if there would be a way to measure and publicly show how consultation results fed directly into decision-making to demonstrate the value of public engagement; and
- it was asked what ongoing feedback mechanisms with community groups would be in place for the strategy, which ran until 2028.

In response to questions raised by Executive Members, the Strategic Director for People and Communities advised that:

- a variety of consultation techniques and tools were needed rather than a one-size-fits all approach;
- traditional, homegrown surveys had been shown to be unrepresentative as they did not capture representative feedback from the community;
- the new strategy involved a constant cycle of testing, learning, evaluating, and reviewing different techniques to see what was successful;
- success would be measured by the reach of consultation and whether gathered feedback was useful for informing the council's decision-making; and
- the process of continuous evaluation was embedded within the strategy itself.

Opposition group leaders made the following points and questions:

- the work and the consultation results presented were commended;
- a question was raised about the Civil Society Covenant and whether it was solely a council commitment or required a response from the community/third sector;
- the importance of principles and accountability were highlighted, especially considering varied community interests;
- the next stage of work needed to clarify how data and feedback would be interpreted, including weighting of minority views for complex issues;
- there was a need for transparency in the use of AI for collating and presenting consultation data;

- community engagement strategies were important, particularly in the lead-up to local government reorganisation, and there was a need for a consistent approach that linked consultation to delivery;
- staff should be commended for establishing a clear consultation process;
- a review and update of the current Consultation Charter to reflect the new process was needed;
- there was a need for clarity on how consultations were initiated and whether they should take place; and
- the Charter should be refined as a policy document that clearly supported and worked in conjunction with the consultation process.

In response to questions raised by opposition Members, the Strategic Director for People and Communities advised that:

- the strategy aligned with principles set out in the Civil Society Covenant, and no further work was planned at this stage;
- representative resident surveys showed there was an increased trust in the council which identified groups seeking further engagement;
- the approach to consultation was to build a long-term evidence bank rather than relying on single, one-off exercises;
- all consultation data would be provided to members for interrogation and decision-making through comprehensive, objective reports;
- various methods would be used to engage underrepresented groups and capture both quantitative and qualitative feedback where relevant;
- resources were allocated proportionately, with decisions being made jointly with Portfolio Holders;
- within the Council, officers were using AI within Microsoft Co-Pilot, experimentally for internal reports, with transparency on its use;
- a formal AI use policy would be developed when feasible, but there were difficulties, given the constant changes and development with AI, officers continued to work with other authorities to learn and understand from others;
- the Consultation Charter was Member driven, and was based on principles set by Members, which underpinned the Consultation and Engagement Strategy. It was not intended to be a detailed procedural action plan for every consultation;
- the consultation gateway process ensured that officers held early discussions on possible methodologies with consultation experts so that they could tailor approaches to specific issues and target groups; and
- methodologies were customised per issue and audience, rather than applying a one-size-fits-all process and it was not possible to set out an action plan that covered every consultation eventuality.

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

**RECOMMENDED** that Council approve the adoption of the Consultation and Engagement Strategy 2025–2028.

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#### **AMENDMENT TO GRANTS PANEL TERMS OF REFERENCE - UKRAINIAN COMMUNITY GRANTS**

The Executive received the report on the proposed amendments to the Exeter City Grants Programme Terms of Reference to allow the City Grants Panel to consider and approve grants for Ukrainian community activities. The report explained that this change would integrate the targeted Ukraine funding into the existing grants

framework, maintaining transparency, accountability, and aligned with Council priorities.

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

- enquired how the proposed alignment complimented the previous processes of the Grants Panel and its effectiveness would compare;
- the initial support for Ukrainian refugees using government funds was done ad hoc and embedding a formal grant strategy for support was commended;
- the importance of specialised advisory input for grant creation while maintaining existing decision structures was highlighted; and
- the grants panel members and staff were thanked for their work.

In response to questions and points raised by Executive Members, the Strategic Director for People and Communities advised that:

- during the crisis, grant funds from central government were spent appropriately under exceptional circumstances; and
- that in the current steady state, all funding must be allocated transparently and in line with policy, which was why the recommendation was being made at the meeting.

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

**RECOMMENDED** that Council:

- (1) approves an amendment to the Grants Panel Terms of Reference to formally include authority for the Panel to make decisions on community grants allocated through the Ukrainian Refugee Support scheme, funded through the Homes for Ukraine tariff income. The Ukrainian community activity grants follow the same governance principles, decision making processes, transparency standards and evaluation requirements as those outlined for the City Grant Fund, with modest variations where required to meet the specialised needs of Ukrainian communities; and
- (2) grant delegated authority to the Director of People & Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Communities, to agree future minor amendments to the Grants Panel Terms of Reference where such amendments are administrative, support operational efficiency, or ensure continued alignment with national guidance or funding requirements for Ukrainian support.

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### **TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION ALLOCATIONS POLICY**

The Executive received the report on the new Temporary Accommodation Allocations Policy, which was developed following an audit by the South West Audit Partnership in April 2025, who recommended the introduction of a formal policy for allocating temporary accommodation. The policy set out a clear, fair, and consistent approach to allocating temporary accommodation to eligible people who were homeless or facing homelessness and complied with relevant legislation.

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

- clarification was sought on why veterans were not explicitly mentioned in Appendix B, given the Council's commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant; and
- clarification was sought on the referral process for individuals at risk of homelessness following discharge from institutions like prisons and probation services, and how that linked with the Council's homelessness team.

In response to questions raised by Executive Members, the Strategic Director for People and Communities advised that:

- veterans were not explicitly listed in Appendix B because prioritisation was needs-based, rather than group based;
- a veteran's specific needs would already lead to their prioritisation under existing criteria. Legal duties for veterans were met through housing needs assessments which required the council to consider needs arising from their military service;
- care-experienced young people were the only group explicitly named due to specific legal duties under the Children's Act and the Council's Corporate Parenting responsibilities;
- there was no single, consistent referral process from institutions such as hospitals or prisons and some institutions followed agreed protocols well, while others did not;
- the council funded an outreach worker within the prison system, though compliance with protocols was inconsistent. The funding for the prison outreach post had been extended for a further year; and
- ongoing team restructuring aimed to improve integration with institutions discharging people at risk of homelessness and remained a work in progress, requiring continued partnership with other public sector bodies.

An opposition group leader made the following points and questions:

- the Equality Impact Assessment did not adequately address temporary accommodation needs of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers;
- concerns were raised on protections and specific requirements for victims of domestic violence which were not clearly reflected, including restrictions on placing survivors in B&B accommodation;
- enquired whether relevant regulations on domestic abuse were sufficiently embedded in the policy;
- highlighted concerns about criteria for moving between temporary accommodation, noting the lack of consideration for the needs of young children, bullying, intimidation, or other safeguarding issues; and
- real-life scenarios should inform how the policy is applied.

In response to questions raised by opposition Members, the Strategic Director for People and Communities advised that:

- the listed criteria related to prioritising moves between temporary accommodation, rather than limiting moves only for those reasons;
- moves would still be considered for other serious issues, such as bullying or safeguarding concerns involving children;
- the policy reflected current legal obligations temporary accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers was provided in exceptional emergency circumstances and this would be clarified outside of the meeting; and

- domestic violence considerations were addressed through legal duties and assessment processes rather than explicit policy wording and agreed to check and provide further clarification outside of the meeting.

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

**RECOMMENDED** that Council approve the adoption of the new Temporary Accommodation Policy.

(The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 7.19 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 25 February 2026 and 3 March 2026.**

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## Equality Impact Assessment: Temporary Accommodation Allocations Policy

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:
03/02/2026	Temporary Accommodation Allocations Policy	To publish Temporary Accommodation Allocations Policy	Race & ethnicity Disability Sex Gender reassignment Religious belief Sexual Orientation Age Pregnancy & maternity Marriage & civil partnership

**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
<b>Race and ethnicity</b> (including Gypsies and Travellers; migrant workers; asylum seekers).	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Low</b>	<p>Data from the 2021 Census Profile for the Exeter authority reports that 1.7% of the local population identified as Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh (9.3% for England and Wales), 0.3% identified as Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African (4.0% for England and Wales), 1.4% of the local population identified as mixed or multiple ethnic groups (2.9% for England and Wales) and 0.5 % identified as another ethnic group (2.1% for England and Wales), 96% of the local population identified as White (81.7% for England and Wales).</p> <p>Data taken from Exeter City Councils client information system for the period April 24 to April 25 records that 320 people were accommodated in the Authorities temporary accommodation provision.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Negative low impact for customers with specific cultural needs in accommodation sharing communal facilities with other ethnic groups, for example sharing food preparation surfaces in communal kitchens where halal or kosha foods are being prepared.</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In mitigation of this impact the authority has adequate provision to place individuals / families in these groups in self-contained accommodation.</li> <li>• All self-contained units of the authority's temporary accommodation provision are accessible to all ethnic groups.</li> <li>• Gypsies and Travellers may experience additional barriers or cultural needs in relation to shared accommodation or placement outside their established community. The Council will mitigate this through access to self-contained units where possible.</li> <li>• Where English is not a customer's first language documents can be translated into the relevant language</li> </ul>
<p><b>Disability:</b> 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.</p>	<p><b>Negative</b></p>	<p><b>Medium</b></p>	<p>Data from the 2021 Census Profile for the Exeter authority reports that 7.3% of the local population identified as disabled under the Equality Act with day-to-day activities limited a lot, 11.6% of the local population identified as disabled under the Equality Act with day-to-day activities limited a little. 81.1% reported as not disabled under the Equality Act.</p> <p>Data from the 2021 Census Profile report that 17.8% of the population of England and Wales identified as disabled under the Equality Act and 82.2% as not disabled under the Equality Act.</p> <p>Data taken from Exeter City Councils client information system for the period April 24 to April 25 records that 320 people were accommodated in the Authorities temporary accommodation provision.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High medium impact of placing customers with physical disabilities in the authority's temporary accommodation provision as there are few temporary accommodation units that are DDA (Disability Discrimination Act) compliant and / or level access, ground floor. Consequently, if ECC were to have a spike in demand for adapted units it may not be able to meet it within our current temporary accommodation portfolio. Such spikes are unusual; any impact is mitigated by utilising the local commercial hotel provision to access the appropriate facilities.</li> <li>• Low negative impact of placing customers with some diagnosed and treated mental health conditions, for example depression and anxiety, in</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Negative</b></p>	<p><b>Low</b></p>	

	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<p>the authority's temporary accommodation provision as such issues would not normally make a property unsuitable, as the problems would persist in any sort of accommodation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High negative impact of accommodating customers with learning disabilities (where the authority has a lawful duty to place) in the authority's temporary accommodation provision when appropriate support and enabling interventions are not in place nor are access to specialist medical or care services are not available to the customer. Mitigation can be reached by close working with DCC to ensure appropriate support for customer.</li> </ul>
	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Low</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low negative impact of risk to self and others that may result from the above are mitigated by utilising a limited number of bed spaces available in the authority's contractor managed accommodation where 24 - hour monitoring is in place and an out of hours service is available.</li> </ul>
<b>Sex</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Low</b>	<p>Data from the 2021 Census Profile for the Exeter authority reports that 51% of the local population were female and 48.7% were male.</p> <p>Data taken from Exeter City Councils client information system for the period April 24 to April 25 records that 320 people were accommodated in the Authorities temporary accommodation provision. Of the 320 persons accommodated 46.88% were female, 52.19% were male, 0.31% preferred not to say and 0.63% did not respond.</p>
	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Low</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low negative impact relating to the absence of an exclusively targeted provision as all accommodation is accessible to all sexes</li> <li>• Low positive impact as six units of temporary accommodation are allocated by the authority for single male use only (not exclusive when</li> </ul>

	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Low</b>	<p>demand is high) and six for single female use only (not exclusive when demand is high).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low negative impact when the authority does not have availability in its temporary accommodation provision to accommodate customers fleeing domestic abuse. Women experiencing domestic abuse are disproportionately represented among those requiring emergency accommodation. Self-contained units will be prioritised where available. Commercial hotels in the local area (or out of area), or refugee spaces can be utilised to accommodate customers.</li> </ul>
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Low</b>	<p>Gender identity: 92.9 % said they had the same sex as registered at birth, 0.02% said they had a different identity from the sex they had registered at birth, but no specific identity given. 0.01% identified as a Trans woman, 0.1% as a Trans man, 0.1% as non-binary, 0.1% all other gender identities, 6.5% did not respond.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All self-contained units of the authority's temporary accommodation provision are accessible to all customers.</li> </ul>
<b>Religion and belief</b> (includes no belief, some philosophical beliefs such as Buddhism and sects within religions).			<p>Data from the 2021 Census Profile for the Exeter authority reports that 44.6% of the local population said they had no religion or belief (37.2 % for England and Wales), 46.6% said they were Christian (46.2 % for England and Wales), 0.4% Buddhist (0.5% for England and Wales), 0.7% Muslim (6.5% for England and Wales), 0.2% Hindu (1.7% for England and Wales), 0.1% Jewish (0.5% for England and Wales), 0.6% Sikh (0.6% for England and Wales) and 6.7% failed to answer (6.0% for England and Wales).</p> <p>Data taken from Exeter City Councils client information system for the period April 24 to April 25 records that 320 people were accommodated in the authority's temporary accommodation provision. Of the 320 persons accommodated 1.88% said they were atheist, 3.44% Christian, 0.33% Islamic, 0.31% Spiritism, 8.75% no religion, 1.88% not known, 81.56% did not respond and 1.56% said other.</p>

	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Low</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negative low impact for customers with specific cultural needs in accommodation sharing communal facilities with other ethnic groups, for example sharing food preparation surfaces in communal kitchens where halal or kosha foods are being prepared.</li> <li>• In mitigation of this impact the authority has adequate provision to place individuals / families in these groups in self-contained accommodation.</li> <li>• All self-contained units of the authority's temporary accommodation provision are accessible to all ethnic groups.</li> </ul>
<b>Sexual orientation</b> (including heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual).	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Low</b>	<p>Data from the 2021 Census Profile for the Exeter authority reported that 5.3% of the local population identify as either gay, lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, asexual, queer or other sexual orientation, 86.2% as either straight or heterosexual and 8.5% failed to answer.</p> <p>Data taken from Exeter City Councils client information system for the period April 24 to April 25 records that 320 people were accommodated in the authority's temporary accommodation provision. Of the 320 people accommodated 77.81% identified as heterosexual, 1.25% as bisexual, 1.88% as lesbian / gay, 1.25% as other, 16.56% preferred not to say and 1.25% did not respond.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive low impact as there is no evidence to support a specific impact and no targeted provision in the authority's temporary accommodation provision relating to sexual orientation.</li> <li>• All temporary accommodation / services are equally accessible regardless of sexual orientation.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Age</b> (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>	<p><b>Positive</b></p>	<p><b>Low</b></p>	<p>Data from the 2021 Census Profile for the Exeter authority reported that the majority of the local population, 17.7%, were aged between 35 and 49, 16.5% were aged between 50 and 64, 13.8% were aged between 25 and 34, 12.5% were aged between 20 and 24, 8.6% were aged between 65 and 74, 8.1% were aged between 16 and 19, 5.6% were aged between 10 and 15, 5.6% were aged between 75 and 84, 4.7% were aged between 5 and 9, 4.5% were under the age of 4, 2.5% were over the age of 85 and 4.1% were over the age of 60.</p> <p>Data taken from Exeter City Councils client information system for the period April 24 to April 25 records that 320 people were accommodated in the authority's temporary accommodation provision. Of the 320 persons accommodated 0.63% were aged between 16 and 17, 29.69% were aged between 18 and 25, 23.13% were aged between 26 and 35, 23.75% were aged between 36 and 45, 12.19% were aged between 46 and 55, 10.63% were aged 56 and over.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low positive impact of placing customers in all age groups in the authority's temporary accommodation provision as suitable offers are typically available within the authorities' boundaries that meet the needs of individual groups in this area of interest. For example, customers with school age children or the elderly and frail are typically placed in accommodation as close to their schools, GP Surgeries and Hospitals as possible to reduce travel time and maximise affordability.</li> <li>• Low negative impact to customers with children placed in the authority's temporary accommodation provision where certain circumstances require them to move or exchange their allocated unit of accommodation within it to allow another customer with greater needs or vulnerabilities associated with age to occupy it.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Pregnancy and maternity</b> including new and breast-feeding mothers</p>			<p>There is no data available from the 2021 Census Profile.</p> <p>Data taken from Exeter City Councils client information system for the period April 24 to April 25 records that 320 people were accommodated in the</p>

	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Low</b>	<p>authority's temporary accommodation provision. Of the 320 persons accommodated, 150 were female. Of the 150 females, 2.50% said they were pregnant, 18.44% said they were not pregnant and 25.94% did not respond.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low negative impact relating to customers who are pregnant and / or breast feeding and are placed in the authority's temporary accommodation provision, customers in this group are typically prioritised for placements in self-contained units (when available) where there is a higher level of monitoring and light touch support available.</li> </ul>
<b>Marriage and civil partnership status</b>	<b>Neutral Impact</b>	<b>Low</b>	<p>Data from the 2021 Census Profile for the Exeter authority report that 33.2% of the local population were either never married or in a civil partnership (37.9% for England and Wales), 47.5% were married or in a civil partnership (44.6% for England and Wales), 2.1% were separated but still married or in a civil partnership (2.2% for England and Wales), 10.1% were divorced or had a civil partnership dissolved (9.1% for England and Wales) and 7.1% were widowed or surviving a partner in a civil partnership, (6.1% for England and Wales).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Usage data on marriage and civil partnership status is not routinely collected by Exeter City Councils client information system.</li> <li>• Neutral low impact as all temporary accommodation / services are equally accessible regardless of status</li> </ul>

## REPORT TO COUNCIL

Date of Meeting: 3 March 2026

Report of: Strategic Director of Corporate Resources & s151 Officer

Title: Overview of General Fund Revenue Budget 2025/26 – Quarter 3

### Is this a Key Decision?

No

### Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Council

#### 1. What is the report about?

1.1 To advise Members of the overall financial position of the General Fund Revenue Budgets for the 2025/26 financial year after nine months.

#### 2. Recommendations:

2.1 It is recommended that Council approves:

- 1) The General Fund forecast financial position for the 2025 financial year

2.2 It is recommended that Council notes:

- 2) The outstanding Sundry Debt position as at December 2025
- 3) The creditors payments performance.
- 4) The budget reduction monitoring update.

#### 3. Reasons for the recommendation:

3.1 To formally note the Council's projected financial position and to approve additional expenditure required during the financial year.

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

4.1 The impact on the General Fund working balance is set out in section 10.9. The General Fund Working Balance is projected to stand at £2.202 million at year end.

#### 5. Section 151 Officer comments:

5.1 The financial position remains challenging in the General Fund with the working balance projecting below the minimum level. Given the proximity to the financial year end, this will be addressed at year end, if this position continues in quarter 4.

#### 6. What are the legal aspects?

- 6.1 Section 28 of the Local Government Act 2003 imposes a statutory duty on the Council to monitor during the financial year its expenditure and income against the budget calculations. If the monitoring establishes that the budgetary situation has deteriorated, the Council must take such action as it considers necessary to deal with

the situation. This might include, for example, action to reduce spending in the rest of the year, or to increase income, or to finance the shortfall from reserves.

- 6.2 The Local Government Finance Act 1992 places a legal requirement on Council to approve not only the budget but also any changes to the budget proposed during the year. Council has a legal duty to ensure that the budget is balanced and that any changes to the budget are fully funded.

## 7. Monitoring Officer's comments:

- 7.1 The content of this report raises no issues for the Monitoring Officer.

## 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 there are no significant equality and diversity impacts associated with this decision.

## 9. Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

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

## 10. Report details:

### Overview of General Fund Revenue Budget 2025/26 – Quarter 3

#### 10.1 Financial Summary

FUND	Planned Transfer To / (From) Working Balance £	Budget Variance (More) / Less £	Outturn Transfer 2025/26 £
General Fund	(907,930)	(2,195,250)	(3,103,180)

#### 10.2 General Fund (Appendix 1 & Appendix 2)

For the 2025/26 financial year, the current forecasts show an overall projected underspend of £18,773 against a revised budget of £21,479,070. This includes approved supplementary budgets of £5,308,830. Variances of more than +/- £30,000 are detailed below:

#### 10.3 Chief Executive

Head of Service Area	Budget £	Current Outturn Forecast £	Current Forecast Variance £	Qtr 2 Forecast Variance £
Executive Office	1,611,270	1,481,650	(129,620)	(22,260)

- **Active & Healthy People** is funded by Sport England. Any budget that is not spent this year will be carried forward in the earmarked reserve for delivery next year.
- **Strategic Management** The underspend is predominantly due to a supplementary budget for Net Zero activities not being utilised in year.

#### 10.4 Operations

Head of Service Area	Budget £	Current Outturn Forecast £	Current Forecast Variance £	Qtr 2 Forecast Variance £
Environment & Waste	6,018,740	5,234,180	(23,720)	(482,280)

- **Environmental Health & Licensing** has received two new grants, totalling £14.5k; neither of these will be used in-year and will be moved to ringfenced reserves. This leaves an actual underspend of £209k which is predominantly due to savings within the service establishment and the difficulties with recruiting into vacant posts. These savings have been reduced by increased costs in agency staff.
- The forecast underspend in **Domestic Refuse Collection** has decreased due to the purchase of equipment and costs associated with the final phases of the rollout of food waste collection.
- **Waste Chargeable Services** has now been adjusted in regards to the decline in income expected from trade refuse. Many factors have contributed to this including the loss of a contract and packaging getting lighter. However, income from green waste continues to be strong and has helped to mitigate this reduction.
- **Waste Strategy & Facilities** is showing a forecast underspend which has arisen from supplementary budgets not being utilised in year.
- The overspend in the **Materials Reclamation Facility** has materially increased from the previous quarter. Various incidences have occurred which resulted in closure for a period of time and the replacement of essential pieces of equipment; income has reduced as a consequence as well as an increase in the cost of transporting materials to other MRF sites for disposal.

Head of Service Area	Budget £	Current Outturn Forecast £	Current Forecast Variance £	Qtr 2 Forecast Variance £
Operations	5,691,770	5,417,050	(274,720)	(317,420)

- The underspend in **Parks & Green Spaces** has increased due to additional HRA recharge for work on Vaughn Road. Agency costs have also been adjusted, due to vacant posts now being filled. Work has now commenced in assessing the impact of the recent bad weather and costs may increase due to storm damage
- There is no significant variance to report in respect of **Bereavement Services**.
- **Street Cleaning**'s quarter three forecast has improved slightly as remaining spend for the year is easier to forecast. Agency costs are still high to offset vacant posts within the establishment.
- There are no significant variances to report for **Public Conveniences**
- Utility accruals in **Engineering** for street-lighting were over-estimated at 2024/25 year-end, as costs were expected to be realised in 2025/26. However, after investigation, these costs will not materialise so this over-accrual has now been included in the year-end forecast.
- **Waterways** underspend has now reduced. Extensive reactive repairs have been carried out on the canal locks, resulting in high costs. Income has also been adjusted in line with expected revenue in the last months of 2025/26. As with Parks, the full impact of the recent bad weather has not been assessed yet and therefore has not been included in this forecast.

Head of Service Area	Budget £	Current Outturn Forecast £	Current Forecast Variance £	Qtr 2 Forecast Variance £
General Fund Asset Maintenance	1,992,100	2,324,100	332,000	332,000

- **Corporate Support** is forecasting an adverse variance of £332k due to the ongoing issue of vacant office space in the Civic Centre and therefore lower rental income from tenants than budgeted. This shortfall has been identified as a pressure in the budget for 2026/27.
- There are no significant variances to report for **Affordable Housing Development, Sundry Lands Maintenance or Corporate Property – Assets**

#### 10.5 Corporate Resources

Head of Service Area	Budget £	Current Outturn Forecast £	Current Forecast Variance £	Qtr 2 Forecast Variance £
Commercial Assets	(11,449,610)	(10,568,700)	880,910	983,460

- **Corporate Property – Estates** is showing a net forecast adverse variance of £271k: The adverse outturn to budget is predominantly driven by:
  - Lower rental income than budget due to empty properties, including Senate Court as the Council makes preparations for a move to the building
  - Delays in leasing units where significant repairs are required
  - Business rates due to empty properties higher than budget
  - Property maintenance costs higher than budget

Guildhall Shopping Centre is contributing an additional net income of £157k compared with budget. This will be transferred to the earmarked reserve as it cannot be used for general expenditure.

Excluding the Guildhall Shopping Centre position (which is ring fenced from the General Fund) the true impact on the General Fund is an adverse variance of £428k

- A net forecast adverse variance of £825k is anticipated for **Parking Services**. The net income generated by Car Parks is lower than anticipated for the following reasons:
  - The increase in debit and credit cards and use of the RingGo App has increased the costs to the Council for using these methods of payment;
  - Re-zoning some of the Car Parks from Zone 1 to Central has increased their Business Rates bills;
  - Rental income from Devon County Council renting offices at John Lewis car park has been lost after their Parking team moved out;
  - Seasonal parking permit income is lower than expected;
  - The proposed increase in car parking tariffs for 2025/26 was implemented in November 2025 limiting the benefit of the increased prices on income during the year;
  - Closure of car parks due to the installation of new payment machines (John Lewis and Guildhall) and repairs;
  - Car park fire risk assessments not included in budget

Additionally, a cost of £107k for the cash collection team is forecast, however there is no budget for this cost as it was envisaged the Council's parking operations would be cashless in 2025/26.

The adverse position is partially offset by:

- lower electricity costs, projected to be £195,000 lower than the budget;
  - lower staff costs than budget due to understaffing;
  - 7% increase in car parking charges, implemented November 2025.
- **Major Projects** is showing a net forecast favourable variance of £164k. The underspend is due to Civic Centre relocation where the 2nd tranche compensation payment to an in-situ tenant is due in 2026/27, partially offset by higher spend on Bus Station site options review than budgeted.

- An underspend of £51k is expected for **Markets**; income from commercial contracts at the Matford Centre continues to outperform the budget. The excess income has been partially offset by income from the solar array being lower than budget as a result of lower prices for selling the electricity generated and maintenance being required for some of the panels. The maintenance of the panels has started in 2025/26.

Head of Service Area	Budget £	Current Outturn Forecast £	Current Forecast Variance £	Qtr 2 Forecast Variance £
Finance	4,385,420	4,859,150	473,730	467,500

- An overspend of £84k is forecast for **Revenues & Benefits**. A restructure of Local Taxation Services (council tax and business rates) is underway with one of the key objectives; to bring an end to heavy reliance on agency officers and permanently recruit a team that is resilient for the future. Interviews have taken place for several roles, and it is hoped that new starters will join the team during February and March. The reported overspend is predominantly due to spend on agency staff, which the restructure is seeking to address.
- **Corporate:** The Rapid Impact Project has identified potential digitalisation savings and efficiencies in relation to Parks and Open Spaces and Waste service areas. A report is pending review by the Strategic Management Board and whilst savings are expected to be delivered, they may not be delivered in this financial year. In addition to this, an overspend in bank charges is forecast. A detailed review of bank charges and trends in customer payment methods is being undertaken to help inform future budget requirements so that based on bank transaction data.
- There are no significant variances to report in respect of **Unapportionable Overheads, Financial Services, or Internal Audit** at Quarter 3.

Head of Service Area	Budget £	Current Outturn Forecast £	Current Forecast Variance £	Qtr 2 Forecast Variance £
Legal & Democratic Services	1,767,340	1,624,260	(143,080)	(71,530)

- The forecast underspend in **Elections & Electoral Registration** has increased to £132k. A £42k underspend has been confirmed in temporary staff costs. The Q3 forecast for printing and postage costs is currently £9k under the estimate made in Q2 as most of the actual costs have now been received for the Postal Vote Refresh. The outturn forecast may be materially different because of the

ongoing work surrounding the cancellation of next year's elections along with possible by-elections. The underspend in Elections will be transferred to reserves at year end.

- **Democratic Representation** has savings of £33k. A majority of the underspend comes from savings against members' Special Responsibility Allowances. The second highest saving is against Member Services' salaries due to a post being recruited in year.
- There are no significant variances to report for **Legal Services** or **Procurement**.

## 10.6 People & Communities

Head of Service Area	Budget £	Current Outturn Forecast £	Current Forecast Variance £	Qtr 2 Forecast Variance £
Customer & Communities	2,429,240	2,038,960	(390,280)	(270,420)

- A forecast underspend of £347,970 in the **Exeter Community Grants Programme** is made up of £118,010 ringfenced for Wellbeing Exeter and £178,390 ringfenced for Homes for Ukraine, which will fund Ukraine Wraparound services in 2026/27. These budgets are funded from ear-marked reserves and remaining funding will be re-requested as supplementary budgets, towards this planned spend, in 2026/27. The underspend also includes £50,000 against the Consultation & Engagement budget
- In the **Customer Service Centre**, vacancy savings in the establishment has been offset with agency staff costs. A smaller amount of savings has also been achieved against non-pay budgets.

Head of Service Area	Budget £	Current Outturn Forecast £	Current Forecast Variance £	Qtr 2 Forecast Variance £
Digital & Data	2,941,670	2,913,280	(28,390)	(33,340)

- There are no significant variances to report for **Digital & Data** or **IT Services**.

Head of Service Area	Budget £	Current Outturn Forecast £	Current Forecast Variance £	Qtr 2 Forecast Variance £
General Fund Housing	2,167,130	1,835,140	(331,990)	(44,950)

- A one-off net underspend of £45k is anticipated within **Private Housing** due to vacancies within the team, partly offset with agency costs early in the year.

- Unfortunately, the hand back of the final property in the Private Sector Landlord portfolio within the **General Fund Housing – Property** budget has resulted in a £24k overspend of the budget. The age of the building and its condition has provided a challenging refurbishment to an acceptable standard. It is due to be handed back by the end of January.
- The **Housing Needs & Homelessness** service has received top up funding of £99,985 Homelessness Prevention Grant and £407,054 of Rough Sleeping Grant in year. There are plans in place to spend this additional grant in accordance with the terms and the full amount will be committed by year-end. However, it is likely that the Homelessness Prevention Grant and £211k of the Rough Sleeping Grant will be paid in the next financial year. Therefore, the unspent balance will be transferred to an earmarked reserve and requested as a supplementary budget to the planned spend in 2026/27.

Head of Service Area	Budget £	Current Outturn Forecast £	Current Forecast Variance £	Qtr 2 Forecast Variance £
HR Workforce Planning & OD	945,020	865,030	(79,990)	(59,570)

- The forecast £50k surplus for **Transportation** will be transferred to reserves at year-end to be used for future Green Travel initiatives.
- There are no significant variances to report for **Human Resources** or the **Organisational Change Programme**.

#### 10.7 Place

Head of Service Area	Budget £	Current Outturn Forecast £	Current Forecast Variance £	Qtr 2 Forecast Variance £
City Centre & Net Zero	1,485,060	1,539,950	54,890	129,990

- **Net Zero & Business** is forecast to be overspent by £36.8k; however, £85.6k will be covered by reserves for the purchase of new radios in the Business Crime Reduction Unit, taking the forecast to £48.7k underspend. The improvement from quarter two is due to a more realistic expenditure forecast in Net Zero Projects for the remainder of the year.
- The overspend in **CCTV & Homecall** is partly due to the addition of additional staffing resources to give safe 24-hour cover in the centre; this has alleviated the pressure of additional overtime costs. This additional cost has been addressed in the 2026/27 budget, with the expectation that new third-party contracts will be

secured to cover this. The income forecast has also been adjusted to a more realistic target.

- **Community Safety** is showing a £70.8k underspend; however, £48.7k relates to unused supplementary budgets and there has also been a new £115k grant received which will not be fully utilised in year and will be transferred to reserves at year-end. This leaves a £92.9k overspend which has arisen due to the combination of the income target not being met and increased agency costs to cover a vacancy.

Head of Service Area	Budget £	Current Outturn Forecast £	Current Forecast Variance £	Qtr 2 Forecast Variance £
City Development	1,722,860	1,188,650	(534,210)	(254,180)

- **Building Control & Land Charges** is reporting an underspend of £31k. However, due to movements in reserves, the actual impact on the general fund is only £3,160
- **Planning** is now forecasting a £314.6k underspend. This is due to new grants being received and existing supplementary budgets not being utilised. Once these have been taken into account, there is an actual overspend of £111.5k. This is entirely due to the forecast deficit in planning income.
- **Liveable Exeter Garden City** This underspend is because of supplementary budgets not being used.

Head of Service Area	Budget £	Current Outturn Forecast £	Current Forecast Variance £	Qtr 2 Forecast Variance £
Culture & Leisure	5,872,660	6,048,370	175,710	253,300

- The forecast underspend in **Culture** derives from the Corn Exchange, which is still forecasting a surplus of event income; however, the overspend has been reduced from quarter two due to some staffing costs moving across from another service.
- A net underspend of £133.8k is forecast for the **Museum Service**. The financial position was improved by income from the Government's Museum Renewal Fund to cover shortfalls in café rent and shop income; however, this was offset due to the transfer of miscoded staff costs into RAMM. An unbudgeted cost of £25,000 for the museum review has also been included. The service continues to make savings in utilities, although these savings will reduce in the next financial year due to the reduction in budgets.

- **Leisure** is now forecast an overspend of £300.3k, an improvement of £86k from quarter two. At that time, cautious maintenance spend at SSP was included, as the building warranty had expired; this forecast has now been adjusted down to a more realistic expectation. The overspend is due to removal of the budgets for Northbrook and Arena in 2025/26 (the Arena budget has now been re-instated for 2026/27)
- There are no significant variances to report for **Tourism, Visitor Facilities, Civic Ceremonials and Marketing**.

## 10.8 Other Financial Variations

### Net Interest

Interest payable remains on target at Quarter 3 however, interest receivable is expected to be £159k lower than budgeted as interest rates are reducing.

## 10.9 General Fund Balance

In 2025/26 it is projected that there will be an overall net contribution from the General Fund Balance of £3.103 million, reducing the balance to £2.202 million at year end, this is £898k below the £3.100 million minimum requirement for the General Fund working balance which was approved by Council in February 2025.

Movement	2025/26
Opening Balance, as at 01/04/25	<b>£5,305,182</b>
Net	(£3,103,180)
<b>Projected Balance at Year End</b>	<b>£2,202,002</b>

## 10.10 Outstanding Sundry Debt

An aged debt analysis of the Council's sundry debts is shown in the table below:

Age of Debt	March 2024	March 2025	December 2026
Up to 29 days (current)	£1,411,457	£1,264,074	£2,010,406
30 days – 1 Year	£2,738,947	£1,689,790	£2,420,802
1 – 2 years	£299,265	£1,005,233	£512,214
2 – 3 years	£273,541	£224,732	£600,529
3 – 4 years	£78,227	£202,422	£164,283
4 – 5 years	£290,834	£58,784	£143,517
5 + years	£340,009	£580,916	£384,712
<b>Total</b>	<b>£5,432,280</b>	<b>£5,025,951</b>	<b>£6,236,463</b>

In April 2025 a new Income Collection Team was formed with responsibility for sundry debtor income collection and the recovery of overpaid housing benefits. Resources have been dedicated to investigating older debts and establish what

debts are realistically recoverable, so that decisions can be made and write-offs approved in line with the Council's financial regulations.

Monthly sundry debt reports are being issued to Directors and Heads of Service so they can monitor and challenge collection rates.

At the end of December, sundry debt levels for each directorate and service area, were as follows:

Head of Service	Director	Description	Qrt 2 £	Qrt 3 £
<b>Executive Office</b>			<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Commercials Assets	Corporate Resources	Predominantly commercial property rents	2,326,890	1,821,679
Finance	Corporate Resources	Recovery of HB overpayments	53,040	-
Legal & Democratic	Corporate Resources	Election and electoral registration related	43	-
<b>Corporate Resources Total</b>			<b>2,379,973</b>	<b>1,821,679</b>
Environment & Waste	Operations	Predominantly trade refuse, recycling and licensing	182,258	229,142
GF Asset Maintenance	Operations	Civic centre recharges	(100)	(100)
HRA Asset Maintenance	Operations	HRA rechargeable repairs	31,159	29,530
Operations	Operations	Predominantly canal, waterway and allotment fees	454,375	241,598
<b>Operations Total</b>			<b>667,692</b>	<b>500,170</b>
Customer & Communities	People & Communities	Wellbeing Exeter related	45,000	45,000
GF Housing	People & Communities	Predominantly leasehold flat insurance, service charges & DFG	1,467,452	513,513
HR Workforce Planning & OD	People & Communities	Green travel recharges	901	820
HRA Housing	People & Communities	Predominantly leasehold flat ground rents	42,954	14,480
<b>People &amp; Communities Total</b>			<b>1,556,307</b>	<b>573,813</b>
City Centre & Net Zero	Place	Predominantly Home Call alarm service	87,366	87,027
City Development	Place	Predominantly CIL and Section 106 related	1,925,497	3,097,716
Culture & Leisure	Place	Predominantly group bookings for leisure services & marketing	193,123	156,058
<b>Place Total</b>			<b>2,205,986</b>	<b>3,340,801</b>
<b>Total</b>			<b>6,809,958</b>	<b>6,236,463</b>

In terms of key changes to draw to attention, circa 1,200 periodic invoices were raised in December and an invoice of £1.4m was issued in respect of CIL. Hence, the level of debts up to 29 days old and the overall level of debts. The oldest debt (+5 years) continues to reduce as a result of targeted debt management work, from £581k at the beginning of the financial year to £384k, of which £171k relates to a loan balance that is not due to be fully repaid until 2035/36.

## 10.11 Debt Write-Offs

The following amounts have been written-off during 2025/26:

	2024/25 Total	2025/26 (Qtr 3)
• Council Tax	£280,588	£192,276
• Business Rates	£5,829	£2,898
• Sundry Debt	£0	£276,426
• Housing Rents	£51,381	£29,742
• Non-HRA Rents	£33,087	£10,973
• HB Overpayments	£76,146	£85,548

## 10.12 Creditor Payments Performance

Creditors' payments continue to be monitored in spite of the withdrawal of statutory performance indicator BVPI8. The percentage paid within 30 days was 95.59% for the first nine months of 2025/26 compared with 95.69% after the first nine months of 2024/25.

## 11. Budget Reduction Monitoring (Appendix 3)

Budget savings of £2.143m were incorporated into the 2025/26 budgets, as at Quarter 3 it is forecast that £1.048m of these savings will not be made in year, mainly due to proposals in the Leisure service and digitalisation efficiencies taking longer to implement.

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

12.1 This is a statement of the projected financial position to the end of 2025/26.

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

13.1 The risks relate to overspending the Council budget and are mitigated by regular reporting to the Strategic Management Board and Members. Members have a legal responsibility to take action where balances are projected to reach an unsustainable level and the Strategic Management Board are working to address the current projected shortfall in reserves.

Areas of budgetary risk are highlighted in this report. The key areas of budgetary risks are attached as Appendix 4, for reference.

## 14. Are there any other options?

Not applicable.

**Strategic Director of Corporate Resources & s151 Officer, Dave Hodgson**

Authors: Nicola Morley, Bridget Kendrick, Claire Hodgson and Suzanne Edwards

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

Background papers used in compiling this report:

None

## 2025/26 GENERAL FUND BUDGET MONITORING - SUMMARY

## QUARTER 3

	Original Budget £	Budgets & Transfers £	Revised Budget £	Year End Forecast £	Variance to Budget £
Chief Executive	1,139,480	471,790	1,611,270	1,481,650	(129,620)
Operations	12,591,810	1,110,800	13,702,610	13,736,160	33,550
Corporate Resources	(6,753,370)	1,456,520	(5,296,850)	(4,085,290)	1,211,560
People and Communities	6,401,250	2,081,810	8,483,060	7,652,410	(830,650)
Place	8,167,790	912,790	9,080,580	8,776,970	(303,610)
less Notional capital charges	(5,376,720)	(724,880)	(6,101,600)	(6,101,603)	(3)
<b>Service Committee Net Expenditure</b>	<b>16,170,240</b>	<b>5,308,830</b>	<b>21,479,070</b>	<b>21,460,297</b>	<b>(18,773)</b>
Net Interest	1,475,000		1,475,000	1,634,640	159,640
Revenue Contribution to Capital	88,760		88,760	138,756	49,996
Minimum Revenue Provision	2,702,000		2,702,000	2,702,000	0
<b>General Fund Expenditure</b>	<b>20,436,000</b>	<b>5,308,830</b>	<b>25,744,830</b>	<b>25,935,693</b>	<b>190,863</b>
Transfer To/(From) Working Balance	16,370	(924,300)	(907,930)	(3,103,180)	(2,195,250)
Transfer To/(From) Earmarked Reserves	1,447,780	(4,384,530)	(2,936,750)	(835,847)	2,100,903
<b>General Fund Net Expenditure</b>	<b>21,900,150</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>21,900,150</b>	<b>21,996,666</b>	<b>96,516</b>
Formula Grant	(5,931,000)		(5,931,000)	(5,931,000)	0
CIL Income	(798,360)		(798,360)	(783,550)	14,810
Business Rates Growth / Pooling Gain	(5,382,000)		(5,382,000)	(5,382,000)	0
Extended Producer Responsibility	(1,410,000)		(1,410,000)	(1,521,545)	(111,545)
New Homes Bonus	(872,000)		(872,000)	(871,781)	219
Council Tax	(7,506,790)		(7,506,790)	(7,506,790)	0
	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Working Balance March 2025

£ 5,305,182

£ 2,202,002

March 2026

**2025/26 GENERAL FUND BUDGET MONITORING - DETAIL**  
**QUARTER 3**

<b>YEAR END FORECAST</b>				
	<b>APPROVED BUDGET</b>	<b>CURRENT OUTTURN FORECAST</b>	<b>CURRENT FORECAST VARIANCE</b>	<b>QTR 2 FORECAST VARIANCE</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Chief Executive</b>				
<b>Executive Office</b>				
Active & Healthy People	351,800	261,480	(90,320)	(22,260)
Strategic Management	1,259,470	1,220,170	(39,300)	0
<b>Executive Office Total</b>	<b>1,611,270</b>	<b>1,481,650</b>	<b>(129,620)</b>	<b>(22,260)</b>
<b>Chief Executive Total</b>	<b>1,611,270</b>	<b>1,481,650</b>	<b>(129,620)</b>	<b>(22,260)</b>
<b>Operations</b>				
<b>Environment &amp; Waste</b>				
Environmental Health & Licensing	1,030,570	807,100	(223,470)	(202,230)
Domestic Refuse Collection	4,538,430	4,089,530	(448,900)	(575,530)
Waste Chargeable Services	(413,470)	(361,230)	52,240	(93,540)
Waste Strategy & Facilities	571,430	359,260	(212,170)	(154,230)
Materials Reclamation Facility	291,780	1,100,350	808,570	543,250
<b>Environment &amp; Waste Total</b>	<b>6,018,740</b>	<b>5,995,010</b>	<b>(23,730)</b>	<b>(482,280)</b>
<b>Operations</b>				
Parks & Green Spaces	2,064,300	1,984,190	(80,110)	(43,940)
Bereavement Services	113,360	143,180	29,820	(13,990)
Street Cleaning	1,870,450	1,814,490	(55,960)	(39,800)
Public Conveniences	220,180	222,470	2,290	(3,320)
Engineering Services	714,450	671,220	(43,230)	(8,280)
Waterways	709,030	581,500	(127,530)	(208,090)
<b>Operations Total</b>	<b>5,691,770</b>	<b>5,417,050</b>	<b>(274,720)</b>	<b>(317,420)</b>
<b>General Fund Asset Maintenance</b>				
Affordable Housing Development	410	410	0	0
Sundry Lands Maintenance	115,670	115,670	0	0
Corporate Property - Assets	1,137,820	1,137,820	0	0
Corporate Support	738,200	1,070,200	332,000	332,000
<b>General Fund Asset Maintenance Total</b>	<b>1,992,100</b>	<b>2,324,100</b>	<b>332,000</b>	<b>332,000</b>
<b>Operations Total</b>	<b>13,702,610</b>	<b>13,736,160</b>	<b>33,550</b>	<b>(467,700)</b>
<b>Corporate Resources</b>				
<b>Commercial Assets</b>				
Corporate Property - Estates	(4,813,790)	(4,543,020)	270,770	695,390
Parking Services	(6,664,020)	(5,838,890)	825,130	556,270
Major Projects	535,250	371,070	(164,180)	(174,730)
Markets	(507,050)	(557,860)	(50,810)	(93,470)
<b>Commercial Assets Total</b>	<b>(11,449,610)</b>	<b>(10,568,700)</b>	<b>880,910</b>	<b>983,460</b>
<b>Finance</b>				
Revenues & Benefits	2,057,740	2,141,300	83,560	140,390
Corporate	(55,160)	331,020	386,180	327,110
Unapportionable Overheads	1,323,690	1,325,270	1,580	0
Financial Services	937,860	940,270	2,410	0
Internal Audit	121,290	121,290	0	0
<b>Finance Total</b>	<b>4,385,420</b>	<b>4,859,150</b>	<b>473,730</b>	<b>467,500</b>
<b>Legal &amp; Democratic Services</b>				
Elections & Electoral Registration	664,870	532,660	(132,210)	(82,470)
Democratic Representation	709,630	676,830	(32,800)	(25,000)
Legal Services	257,620	269,130	11,510	21,950
Procurement	135,220	145,640	10,420	13,990
<b>Legal &amp; Democratic Services Total</b>	<b>1,767,340</b>	<b>1,624,260</b>	<b>(143,080)</b>	<b>(71,530)</b>
<b>Corporate Resources Total</b>	<b>(5,296,850)</b>	<b>(4,085,290)</b>	<b>1,211,560</b>	<b>1,379,430</b>

YEAR END FORECAST				
	APPROVED BUDGET £	CURRENT OUTTURN FORECAST £	CURRENT FORECAST VARIANCE £	QTR 2 FORECAST VARIANCE £
<b>People and Communities</b>				
<b>Customer &amp; Communities</b>				
Exeter Community Grants Programme	1,402,780	1,054,810	(347,970)	(257,730)
Customer Service Centre	1,026,460	984,150	(42,310)	(12,690)
<b>Customer &amp; Communities Total</b>	<b>2,429,240</b>	<b>2,038,960</b>	<b>(390,280)</b>	<b>(270,420)</b>
<b>Digital &amp; Data</b>				
Digital & Data	284,260	258,670	(25,590)	(28,340)
IT Services	2,657,410	2,654,610	(2,800)	(5,000)
<b>Digital &amp; Data Total</b>	<b>2,941,670</b>	<b>2,913,280</b>	<b>(28,390)</b>	<b>(33,340)</b>
<b>General Fund Housing</b>				
Housing Needs & Homelessness	1,982,850	1,671,810	(311,040)	0
GF Housing - Property	121,640	145,640	24,000	0
Private Housing	62,640	17,690	(44,950)	(44,950)
<b>General Fund Housing Total</b>	<b>2,167,130</b>	<b>1,835,140</b>	<b>(331,990)</b>	<b>(44,950)</b>
<b>HR Workforce Planning &amp; Organisational Development</b>				
Transportation	0	(50,000)	(50,000)	(50,000)
Human Resources	870,650	840,660	(29,990)	(9,570)
Organisational Change Programme	74,370	74,370	0	0
<b>HR Workforce Planning &amp; OD Total</b>	<b>945,020</b>	<b>865,030</b>	<b>(79,990)</b>	<b>(59,570)</b>
<b>People &amp; Communities Total</b>	<b>8,483,060</b>	<b>7,652,410</b>	<b>(830,650)</b>	<b>(408,280)</b>
<b>Place</b>				
<b>City Centre &amp; Net Zero</b>				
Net Zero & Business	860,860	897,690	36,830	80,360
CCTV & Homecall	570,460	659,350	88,890	20,630
Community Safety	53,740	(17,090)	(70,830)	29,000
<b>City Centre &amp; Net Zero Total</b>	<b>1,485,060</b>	<b>1,539,950</b>	<b>54,890</b>	<b>129,990</b>
<b>City Development</b>				
Building Control & Land Charges	72,530	41,860	(30,670)	(57,220)
Planning	1,298,930	984,340	(314,590)	(196,960)
Liveable Exeter Garden City	351,400	162,450	(188,950)	0
<b>City Development Total</b>	<b>1,722,860</b>	<b>1,188,650</b>	<b>(534,210)</b>	<b>(254,180)</b>
<b>Culture &amp; Leisure</b>				
Culture	467,750	435,350	(32,400)	(52,050)
Tourism	0	20,480	20,480	26,180
Museum Service	2,607,550	2,473,720	(133,830)	(158,480)
Leisure & Sport	2,297,600	2,597,920	300,320	385,970
Visitor Facilities	91,690	73,730	(17,960)	(5,160)
Civic Ceremonials	248,290	275,180	26,890	28,280
Marketing & Advertising	159,780	171,990	12,210	28,560
<b>Culture &amp; Leisure Total</b>	<b>5,872,660</b>	<b>6,048,370</b>	<b>175,710</b>	<b>253,300</b>
<b>Place Total</b>	<b>9,080,580</b>	<b>8,776,970</b>	<b>(303,610)</b>	<b>129,110</b>
<b>TOTAL GENERAL FUND NET EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>27,580,670</b>	<b>27,561,900</b>	<b>(18,770)</b>	<b>610,300</b>

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## Monitoring Budget Reductions - 2025/26 Quarter 3 Update

Service	Description/Proposal	2025/26 Budget Reduction/ (increase)	Quarter 3 Forecast	Variance (shortfall)	Comment
<b>Leisure</b>					
Culture & Leisure	Close Northbrook Pool	286,000	165,070	(120,930)	Close down bought forward to end of September
Culture & Leisure	Exeter Arena - seek an asset transfer opportunity	300,000	0	(300,000)	Arena continues to operate as normal; budget to be returned in 2026/27
Culture & Leisure	Increase Marketing income	20,000	20,000	0	Income target forecast to be achieved; however, bad debt may decrease the overall amount received if it cannot be reversed
Culture & Leisure	Decrease Tourism costs	29,000	0	(29,000)	Completion not expected until 1st April therefore no savings forecast
<b>Car Parks</b>					
Commercial Assets	RingGo transaction charge passed to customer	80,000	40,000	(40,000)	Estimated savings calculated based on changes being implemented in November 2025
Commercial Assets	Explore commercial activity in car parks using managing agents	50,000	0	(50,000)	Saving not being achieved however development of the initiative is well under way.
Commercial Assets	Above inflation increase - 3% built in - extra 4% (so 7%) - takes into account no increase in 2024/25	88,000	77,000	(11,000)	Estimated savings calculated based on changes being implemented in November 2025
Commercial Assets	Howell Road & Triangle car parks - move to central zone	370,000	323,000	(47,000)	Estimated savings calculated based on changes being implemented in November 2025
Commercial Assets	Cashless (Service Review Option)	40,000	40,000	0	Saving not being achieved however cost offset by underspend on staffing in other Car Parks areas.
Commercial Assets	Increase income budget - Matford Centre	28,000	157,000	129,000	Expected to exceed reduction due to continued overperformance of auctioneer income against budget
<b>Operations</b>					
Operations	No longer clean private landowner areas without contribution	33,080	33,080	0	No overspend forecast so savings achieved
Operations	Dedicate some Engineers to capital projects only	70,700	66,700	(4,000)	No overspend forecast against budget lines so savings achieved
<b>General Fund Housing</b>					
General Fund Housing	Additional HMO income	20,000	20,000	0	The additional licence income for HMOs has been achieved
General Fund Housing	Reduce the number of Extralet properties and replace with more cost effective properties	21,500	21,500	0	Savings on Extralet costs are on track to be delivered as at quarter 3
<b>Other</b>					
City Centre & Net Zero	Carbon Literacy Training - sell training sessions to local organisations	20,000	0	(20,000)	Staffing issues have led this training programme to be delayed until 26/27
Commercial Assets	Cease accepting cash and cheques at ECC sites	88,070	48,070	(40,000)	Saving not being achieved due to delay in delivery however partially offset by underspend on staffing in other Car Parks areas.
<b>SUBTOTAL SERVICE REVIEW REDUCTIONS</b>		<b>1,544,350</b>	<b>1,011,420</b>	<b>(532,930)</b>	
Culture & Leisure	Remove duplication in Culture Service	200,000	0	(200,000)	Completion not expected until 1st April therefore no savings forecast
Miscellaneous	Stop budgeting for Pension Contributions where individual is not in Pension Scheme	98,310	83,590	(14,720)	Small variance expected at quarter 2
Miscellaneous	Implement digitalisation to improve efficiency - up to £1.2m over 3 years (£0.3m in year 1)	300,000	0	(300,000)	The Rapid Impact Project has identified potential digitalisation savings and efficiencies in relation to Parks and Open Spaces and Waste service areas. A report is pending review by the Strategic Management Board and whilst savings are expected to be delivered, they may not be delivered in this financial year.
<b>SUBTOTAL OTHER PROPOSALS</b>		<b>598,310</b>	<b>83,590</b>	<b>(514,720)</b>	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>2,142,660</b>	<b>1,095,010</b>	<b>(1,047,650)</b>	

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**2025/26 BUDGET MONITORING**  
**AREAS OF BUDGETARY RISK**

The table below notes service-areas that, based on either experience last year or market factors this year, have been identified as having significant budgetary risk within the 2025/26 revenue budgets.

The revenue budget areas of risk are:

Service	2025/26 Approved Budget	Risk Rating	Risk and mitigation
<b>Operations</b>			
<b>Environment &amp; Waste</b> (Revenue)	£6,018,740		<p>Although this service is still forecast to make a small underspend, the position has changed since quarter two monitoring, mainly due to pressures in the MRF. The plant was closed for a month after a major incident, there have been various mechanical failures resulting in increased equipment costs and income from the sale of recyclate materials is now forecast to not achieve target.</p> <p>There are still significant challenges in recruiting permanent members of staff, resulting in large underspends across both Environmental Health &amp; Licensing and the Waste services. Agency staff are being employed to fill these gaps and more overtime is being approved to cover weekend shifts but there is no indication at this time that these costs will exceed staff savings. Once the new kerbside collection rounds are introduced to meet the deadline of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026, additional recruitment may result in vacancies being filled.</p>
<b>General Fund Asset Maintenance</b>	£1,954,600		<p>This budget includes rental income and service charges from tenants at the Civic Centre. However as there continue to be a number of vacancies there is likely to be significantly less income received than budgeted, and current projections are in line with the actual rents received in 2024/25.</p>

Service	2025/26 Approved Budget	Risk Rating	Risk and mitigation
<b>Corporate Resources</b>			
<b>Corporate Property – Estates</b>	(£4,813,790)		There are a number of vacant properties within the Corporate Property - Estates commercial portfolio, leading to a forecast deficit of rental income against budget. However, new tenants may be found, so this situation will continue to be monitored throughout the year. The Guildhall Shopping Centre is expected to contribute additional net income compared with the Budget however any surplus that may be generated cannot be used for General Fund expenditure.
<b>Parking Services</b>	(£6,664,020)		Achieving the Budgeted income is at risk due to higher Business Rates from rezoning, lower season ticket income and higher payment charges from increased use of debit and credit cards and RingGo. Initiatives are being undertaken to reduce payment charges. The benefit from an increase in car parking charges has been limited due to later implementation (November 2025) than budgeted.
<b>Revenues and Benefits</b> Housing Benefit Subsidy	£28,654,800		The Council currently administers over £29 million of Housing Benefit payments for rent allowances and rent rebates. Not all expenditure can be claimed back as subsidy. Certain supported and temporary accommodation costs are not eligible for full subsidy; these claim types will remain in Housing Benefit and not move to Universal Credit. As more Housing Benefit claims move onto Universal Credit the amount of unsubsidised expenditure will be an increased proportion of total expenditure. Errors made by ECC officers are not subsidised in full if they go over a set percentage of total expenditure. As total expenditure reduces due to Universal Credit rollout, the margins within which error payments are subsidised will reduce, increasing the risk of a subsidy loss in this area.

Service	2025/26 Approved Budget	Risk Rating	Risk and mitigation
<b>Place</b>			
Leisure & Sport (Revenue)	£2,297,600		<p>At quarter three, the forecast overspend in Leisure has reduced to £300,000. The reduction is due to a cautious approach to forecasting costs at St Sidwells Point at quarter two and these costs not yet materialising. However, there is a risk that these costs may still be realised.</p> <p>The overspend is due to two centres having their 2025/26 budgets being removed. Northbrook was closed by the end of September and handed back to the Northbrook Trust on the first of October. Therefore, all costs associated with the closure that ECC are liable for should all be recognised now.</p> <p>As Arena remains within ECC's estate, it has been forecast to achieve the same out-turn as last year, meaning that budgeted savings won't be achieved. Plans to increase income through facilities hire are currently being worked on and will be included in future forecasts if they are material. However, these may not be significant enough to improve the year-end position by the time they are implemented.</p>

**Risk Rating Key:**

	Current forecasts indicate either a favourable variance compared to the budget or no variance at all
	Current forecasts indicate an adverse budgetary variance of between 0% and 5% that will be kept under review
	Current forecasts indicate an adverse budgetary variance of more than 5% and will be monitored closely

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## REPORT TO COUNCIL

Date of Meeting: 3 March 2026

Report of: Strategic Director of Corporate Resources & s151 Officer

Title: 2025/26 General Fund Capital Monitoring Statement – Quarter 3

### Is this a Key Decision?

No

### Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Council

### 1. What is the report about?

- 1.1. To report the current position in respect of the Council's revised annual capital programme and to advise Members of the anticipated level of deferred expenditure into future years.

The report seeks Member approval to amend the annual capital programme to reflect the reported variations.

### 2. Recommendations:

- 2.1. It is recommended that Council approve:

The overall financial position for the 2025/26 annual capital programme.

### 3. Reasons for the recommendation:

- 3.1. Local authorities are required to estimate the total of capital expenditure that it plans to incur during the financial year when it sets the prudential indicators for capital expenditure. This shows that its asset management and capital investment strategies are affordable, prudent and sustainable.

Capital expenditure is a significant source of risk and uncertainty since cost variations, delays and changing specifications are often features of large and complex capital projects.

To manage the risks associated with capital programming the annual capital programme is updated every three months to reflect any cost variations, slippage or acceleration of projects.

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

- 4.1. The financial resources required are set out in the body of this report.

## 2. Section 151 Officer comments:

5.1 Progress with delivering the General Fund capital programme remains weak. The Capital and Projects Board, chaired by the Chief Executive is now meeting regularly in order to drive forward progress.

## 5. What are the legal aspects?

5.1. Monitoring of capital expenditure is required to comply with the provisions of the Local Government Act 2003.

6.2 The requirements imposed on the Council by the Act are set out in section 3 of the report.

## 6. Monitoring Officer's comments:

7.1 This report raises no issues for the Monitoring Officer.

## 7. Equality Act 2010 (The Act)

7.1. In recommending this proposal no potential impact has been identified on people with protected characteristics as determined by the Act because the impact of each scheme is considered prior to approval. Any significant deviation from this will be noted within the body of this report.

## 8. Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

8.1. We are working towards the Council's commitment to carbon neutral by 2030. The impact of each scheme is considered prior to approval.

## 9. Report details:

### 9.1. REVISIONS TO THE CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The 2025/26 Capital Programme, including commitments brought forward from 2024/25, was last reported to Council on 9 December 2025. Since that meeting the following changes have been made that have increased the programme:

Description	£	Approval/Funding
<b>Revised Capital Programme, as reported to Council 9 December 2025</b>	<b>50,612,170</b>	
Replacing CCTV Equipment (John Lewis Car Park)	£23,700	Approved by Council 9 December 2025
Replace broken and analogue City Centre CCTV cameras	£42,556	
Matford Centre Solar PV	£175,000	

RAMM conference room equipment	£70,000	
<b>Revised Capital Programme</b>	<b>50,923,426</b>	

## 9.2. PERFORMANCE

The revised capital programme for the current financial year is £50.923 million. There are some schemes where the timing of the spend is uncertain, these schemes have a budget of £13.831 million, of the remaining £37.093 million budget the spend during the first nine months of the year was £3.113 million, which equates to 8.39% of the revised programme. This compares with £4.629 million (18.41%) that was spent in the first nine months of 2024/25.

The current programme is detailed in Appendix 1. The Appendix shows a total forecast spend for 2025/26 of £18.672 million with £24.499 million of the programme potentially being deferred to 2026/27 and beyond and £2.752 million potential saving.

Appendix 2 shows the approved budgets for 2026/27 with the proposed 2025/26 budget to be carried forward to 2026/27 and beyond for Council to consider for approval.

## 9.3. AVAILABLE CAPITAL RESOURCES

The available capital resources for the General Fund for 2025/26 are £6.416 million. An estimated spend of £18.672 million is required of which £13.761 million will be funded from borrowing with £1.505 million capital receipts carried forward to 2026/27.

Appendix 3 sets out the forecast use of the resources available for the General Fund and the likely amounts of borrowing that will be necessary to fund the capital programme over the next three years.

The value of actual capital receipts received in the quarter in respect of the General Fund are:

	General Fund £
<b>Balance as at 30 September 2025</b>	<b>981,606</b>
New Receipts	522,900
<b>Balance as at 31 December 2025</b>	<b>1,504,506</b>

#### 9.4. EXPENDITURE VARIANCES

The main variances and issues concerning expenditure are as follows:

Scheme	Variance £
<b>Parks Anti-Intrusion Measures</b>	<b>£40,000</b>
<b>Bonhay Road/Andlaw House Footpath</b>	<b>(£40,000)</b>
<p><b>Officer Responsible: Head of Service – Operations</b></p> <p>The Bonhay Road/Andlaw House Footpath scheme will underspend this year to compensate for an overspend on the Parks Anti-Intrusion Measures project.</p> <p>The capital allocation for Andlaw House represents a contingency provision to address any potential impact on the adjacent ECC leat should the adjoining footpath fail. The footpath itself is neither owned nor managed by Exeter City Council.</p>	
<b>District Street Lighting</b>	<b>(£346,140)</b>
<p><b>Officer Responsible: Head of Service – Operations</b></p> <p>The District Street Lighting scheme is dependent on Devon County Council’s supplier’s timescales for completing this work, and budget has been held for some time in anticipation. A reassessment of the cost to complete this project has determined that budget held by the Council was in excess of the now anticipated costs, so a saving of £346k is expected.</p>	
<b>Farm Hill Retaining Walls (23 no.)</b>	<b>(515,456)</b>
<p><b>Officer Responsible: Head of Service – Operations</b></p> <p>Budget estimates were derived from initial surveys of all retaining walls at Farm Hill which might require the Council’s intervention, however a detailed review of land ownership in the area led to a significant reduction in scope.</p>	
<b>Mallison Bridge</b>	<b>(£35,630)</b>
<p><b>Officer Responsible: Head of Service – Operations</b></p> <p>Devon County Council have decided not to pursue a bridge solution at this time, so Exeter City Council’s contribution, funded from a bequest, has been removed from the capital programme. Devon County Council has reimbursed all historic costs incurred and the bequest has been restored; it is available to use towards any future plans for Mallison Bridge.</p>	
Scheme	Variance £
<b>BLRF - Exeter Canal Basin</b>	<b>(£589,400)</b>
<b>BLRF - Belle Isle</b>	<b>(£661,870)</b>
<b>BLRF – Lower Wear Road</b>	<b>(£293,390)</b>

**Officer Responsible: Head of Service – Commercial Assets**

Despite feasibility work undertaken by the Council the developments at Belle Isle, Exeter Canal Basin and Lower Wear Road weren't feasible for residential development in the short term, as required by the grant conditions set out within the Brownfield Land Release Fund (BLRF). Therefore, these budgets which amount to £1.545 million will not be spent and grant money returned.

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Variance £</b>
<b>Financial Management</b>	<b>(125,000)</b>
<b>Datacentre Relocation</b>	<b>(35,940)</b>
<b>NCSC Zero Trust</b>	<b>(53,910)</b>

**Officer Responsible: Head of Service, Digital and Data**

Following the approval of the Digital Customer Strategy and the Strata Business Plan officers have reviewed all existing capital budgets. From this review, £304,000 has been identified from previous projects that have either been completed or discontinued where the remaining capital funds not spent can be moved to support new digital projects.

The largest amounts being proposed to move are:

The “Financial management” project – this project is no longer required and is now dormant. No further work is planned because several parts of the system would have needed additional development from the supplier, and the council cannot continue without a fully tested and working solution.

The “Datacentre Relocation” and “NCSC Zero Trust” projects – both have been overtaken by other work. The Azure migration project already covers the datacentre element, and the Cyber Assessment Framework has now been completed, replacing the need for further Zero Trust work.

**9.5. SCHEMES TO BE DEFERRED TO 2026/27 AND BEYOND**

Schemes which have been identified as being wholly or partly deferred to 2026/27 and beyond are:

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Budget to be Deferred £</b>
<b>Depot Improvement Works</b>	<b>7,516,560</b>

**Officer Responsible: Head of Environment and Waste**

The waste depot improvement works including the MRF enhancements is awaiting a decision at Council on 10 February 2026 regarding the direction of travel of the project. Following that decision, key contractors can then be procured. It anticipated that most works and expenditure will take place in the 2026/27 financial year.

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Budget to be Deferred £</b>
<b>Bowling Green Marshes Coastal Defence Scheme</b>	<b>168,390</b>
<b>Cricklepit Bridge</b>	<b>84,000</b>
<b>District Street Lightning</b>	<b>200,000</b>
<b>Bonhay Rd/Andlaw House Footpath</b>	<b>104,815</b>

<b>Landfill Gas Extraction Systems</b>	<b>76,101</b>
<b>Mincinglake Valley Park Reed Beds &amp; Pipe Inlet</b>	<b>40,525</b>
<b>ECC Bridge Repair Programme</b>	<b>219,825</b>
<b>Riverside Walls at Quay</b>	<b>50,000</b>

**Officer Responsible: Engineering & Assets Manager**

Following an unsuccessful procurement exercise for the Bowling Green Marshes Coastal Defence Scheme an alternative approach has been selected which has required re-scoping and redesigning the project before procurement can commence. The new project approach will have lower cost but will also have a longer duration, taking it into the next financial year.

The next inspection of Cricklepit bridge is due in 2026/27, no works are expected before the inspection takes place.

Delivery of works for the District Street Lighting project remain in Devon County Council's control with the project not expected to be completed this year.

Due to overall project budget increases, Devon County Council are still exploring options for delivery of Mallison Bridge. Works will not be carried out in 2025/26, so budget for Exeter City Council's contribution to this project is being deferred to next financial year.

Works are not expected to be carried out on Bonhay Rd/Andlaw House Footpath this financial year.

The landfill gas extraction project is expected to progress during the year but previous delays due to the need for additional wintertime monitoring of boreholes is likely to defer some of the works into the next financial year.

Procurement of a consultant for Mincinglake Valley Park was delayed due to the need for further monitoring visits required to collect sufficient data for the study. These visits are now complete, and work is underway to finalise the consultant contract to allow a commission to commence this Financial Year.

Devon Highways have dictated that some bridge works cannot start until after April 2026 due to other highways works on-going in the city, therefore budget has been reprofiled to next year in accordance with expected project dates.

It is not expected that Devon County Council will start works on the Riverside walls at the Quay in 2025/26, so budget for Exeter City Council's contribution to this project is being deferred to next financial year.

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Budget to be Deferred £</b>
<b>Parks Infrastructure</b>	<b>135,083</b>
<b>Cemeteries &amp; Churchyards Infrastructure Improvements</b>	<b>90,608</b>
<b>Heavitree Paddling Pools</b>	<b>100,010</b>
<b>Play Areas</b>	<b>273,460</b>
<b>Outdoor Leisure Facilities - Newcourt</b>	<b>121,270</b>

**Officer Responsible: Parks & Green Spaces Parks**

Parks Infrastructure and Cemeteries and Churchyard infrastructure, timings of spend against the scheme are dependent on either deterioration of existing assets or the availability of suppliers to provide facilities required.

Works on Heavitree Paddling Pools are expected to progress when the new contract starts in the next financial year.

Play areas improvements and outdoor leisure facilities works had to be paused temporarily to allow for contract procurement. Anticipated contract start date is now March 2026 and budgets have been deferred to reflect this delay.

Scheme	Budget to be Deferred £
<b>Fire Risk Assessment Works</b>	<b>1,574,510</b>
<b>Exmouth Buoy Store</b>	<b>212,720</b>
<b>Guildhall MSCP</b>	<b>863,400</b>
<b>John Lewis MSCP</b>	<b>335,760</b>
<b>Princesshay 2 MSCP</b>	<b>424,400</b>
<b>Leighton Terra &amp; KW St MSCP</b>	<b>306,100</b>

**Officer Responsible: Head of Service, Asset Maintenance**

There is a tender process underway for the fire door repair project. The budget has been reprofiled to reflect the timing of spend.

The Exmouth Buoy store project is in design phase and works are not expected to start until the next financial year.

Guildhall MSCP is in consultation and design phase. The budget has been reprofiled to reflect the timing of spend.

A review of the stock conditioning survey previously undertaken in 2020 is required to identify the key priorities for asset management of the car parks. Budgets relating to car parks have been deferred to the next financial year and will be reprofiled once projects are finalised.

Scheme	Budget to be Deferred £
<b>BLRF - Clifton Hill</b>	<b>201,930</b>
<b>Matford Centre Solar PV</b>	<b>128,000</b>
<b>St Nicholas Priory Roof</b>	<b>88,120</b>
<b>Guildhall Shopping Centre Enhancements</b>	<b>10,866,630</b>

**Officer Responsible: Head of Commercial Assets**

Clifton Hill is dependent on the planning process, but it is now expected that the grant will be spent in Autumn 2026.

A procurement exercise is underway for the Matford Centre Solar PV, with the contract due to be awarded in early March 2026. The budget has been reprofiled to reflect that the project will now be completed in the next financial year.

The Council is awaiting a further progress update from the tenant at St Nicholas Priory to determine the scope and timeline of the project and what level of grant funding is being secured. This is not expected to be until the next financial year.

The Guildhall shopping centre enhancements budget is recognised as a scheme with external factors that impact on delivery time. Whilst the exact timeline of spend is uncertain due to external factors such as changing tenants and ad-hoc works

required to maintain the building, it is recognised at this stage the budget will not be required in 2025-26 and the budget has been reprofiled to reflect this.	
<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Budget to be Deferred £</b>
<b>Riverside Decarbonisation Project</b>	<b>4,045,290</b>
<b>Officer Responsible: City Centre and Net Zero</b>	
The profile of the grant award for the Riverside & RAMM decarbonisation project has been confirmed and the budget allocated accordingly with a required completion date by 31 March 2028.	
<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Budget to be Deferred £</b>
<b>Pinhoe Community Hub</b>	<b>1,222,714</b>
<b>Officer Responsible: Executive Office</b>	
The scheme is now progressing, with a revised planning application due to be submitted in Spring 2026. The budget has been reprofiled to reflect expected timing of spend on the project.	

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

10.1. The Capital Programme contributes to all the key purposes, as set out in the Corporate Plan.

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

11.1. Areas of budgetary risk are highlighted to committee as part of the quarterly budget monitoring updates.

## 12. Are there any other options?

There are no other options.

**Strategic Director of Corporate Resources & s151 Officer, Dave Hodgson**

Author: Kayleigh Searle

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

Background papers used in compiling this report: -

None

List of appendices:

Appendix 1: 2025/26 CAPITAL MONITORING - QUARTER 3

Appendix 2: BUDGETS CARRIED FORWARD TO 2026/27 AND BEYOND

Appendix 3: GENERAL FUND AVAILABLE RESOURCES

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2025/26 CAPITAL MONITORING - QUARTER 3

APPENDIX 1

Service	Scheme	Total 2025/26 Capital Programme	2025/26 Spend to Quarter 3	2025/26 Forecast Spend	2025/26 Budget to be Carried Forward to 2026/27 and Beyond	2025/26 Programme Variances (Under)/Over
		£	£	£	£	£
<b>Operations</b>						
Environment & Waste	Waste Infrastructure	376,340	35,345	376,340	0	0
	Improved recycling containers	11,670	14,002	14,002	0	2,332
	Depot Improvement Works	7,816,560	114,924	300,000	7,516,560	0
	Food Waste Collections	857,140	31,842	857,140	0	0
	Fleet Lease costs	1,251,280	0	1,251,280	0	0
	Noise Monitoring Equipment	4,290	0	4,290	0	0
Operations Service	Capitalised Staff Costs	211,193	0	211,193	0	0
	Bowling Green Marshes Coastal Defence Scheme	218,390	1,999	50,000	168,390	0
	Parks Infrastructure	180,110	11,705	45,028	135,083	0
	Cemeteries & Churchyards Infrastructure Improvements	120,810	0	30,203	90,608	0
	Bank Repairs & Stabilisation to Watercourses	19,230	0	19,230	0	0
	Pinhoe Playing Field Upgrades	38,900	6,066	19,450	19,450	0
	Parks Anti-Intrusion Measures	10,706	34,149	50,706	0	40,000
	Cricklepit Bridge	91,970	0	0	84,000	(7,970)
	Trews Weir refurb	337,580	177,603	337,580	0	0
	District Street Lighting	746,140	0	200,000	200,000	(346,140)
	Exeter Quay Cellars cliff face	34,377	0	34,377	0	0
	Ash Die Back Tree Replacement	82,520	57,304	82,520	0	0
	Bromhams Farm Playing Fields	59,669	28,381	30,000	29,669	(0)
	Longbrook Street wall behind 30-38	5,000	0	5,000	0	0
	Northbrook Wild Arboretum	221,560	19,910	221,560	0	0
	Farm Hill Retaining Walls (23 no.)	515,456	0	0	0	(515,456)
	Mallison Bridge	35,630	0	0	0	(35,630)
	Bonhay Rd/Andlaw House Footpath	144,815	0	0	104,815	(40,000)
	St James' Weir & Ducks Marsh Meadow banks	75,000	0	75,000	0	0
	Heavitree Paddling Pools	100,010	0	0	100,010	0
	Play Areas	273,460	0	0	273,460	0
	Landfill Gas Extraction Systems	176,101	1,438	100,000	76,101	0
	Mincinglake Valley Park Reed Beds & Pipe Inlet	70,525	0	30,000	40,525	0
	Exeter Canal Bank Repairs	43,300	0	43,300	0	0
	ECC Bridge Repair Programme	463,745	103,920	243,920	219,825	(0)
	Countess Wear Retaining Wall Rebuild	29,323	17,038	29,323	0	0
	Canal Basin Bridge Refurbishment	50,000	0	50,000	0	0
	Outdoor Leisure Facilities - Newcourt	121,270	0	0	121,270	0
	Riverside Walls at Quay	50,000	0	0	50,000	0

Service	Scheme	Total 2025/26 Capital Programme	2025/26 Spend to Quarter 3	2025/26 Forecast Spend	2025/26 Budget to be Carried Forward to 2026/27 and Beyond	2025/26 Programme Variances (Under)/Over
		£	£	£	£	£
	Leisure Complex - Build Project	650,000	180,239	650,000	0	0
	Civic Centre Air Conditioning Replacement	25,000	0	25,000	0	0
	Riverside Leisure Centre	29,000	0	29,000	0	0
	Fire Risk Assessment Works	1,624,510	32,500	50,000	1,574,510	0
	Leisure Complex - Fit Out	346,640	0	346,640	0	0
	Exmouth Buoy Store	212,720	0	0	212,720	0
	Riverside Sports Hall Roof	60,870	0	60,870	0	0
	Guildhall MSCP	883,400	0	20,000	863,400	0
	John Lewis MSCP	357,760	0	22,000	335,760	0
	Princesshay 2 MSCP	424,400	0	0	424,400	0
Asset Maintenance	Leighton Terra & KW St MSCP	306,100	0	0	306,100	0
	Civic Centre Phase 3 Roof Rep	15,700	9,069	15,700	0	0
	City Wall	554,190	377,586	554,190	0	0
	Backlog Maintenance	396,850	86,649	396,850	0	0
	Cathedral Green Display Cases	35,000	0	35,000	0	0
	Topsham Museum	257,070	227,312	257,070	0	0
	Leisure Property enhancements	2,027,010	63,736	2,027,010	0	0
	Commercial Property Ancillary Accommodation flat roof recovering	46,720	1,265	46,720	0	0
	RAMM Roof Repair & Insulation	72,530	16,844	72,530	0	0
	Corn Exchange Lift	50,000	0	50,000	0	0
Democratic Services	RAMM Conference room	70,000	0	70,000	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>23,289,540</b>	<b>1,650,825</b>	<b>9,440,021</b>	<b>12,946,654</b>	<b>(902,865)</b>
<b>Corporate Resources</b>						
	Bus Station Construction	100,370	6,683	100,370	0	0
	Improved Car Park Security Measures at King William Street & Arena Park	19,670	0	19,670	0	0
	Wat Tyler House - resolving ongoing water ingress with new rainwater system	269,170	0	269,170	0	0
	Commercial Properties - capital improvements to enable ongoing income (compliance with EPC legislation)	120,000	0	120,000	0	0
Commercial Assets	BLRF - Exeter Canal Basin	589,400	0	0	0	(589,400)
	BLRF - Mary Arches Car Park	1,285,420	0	1,285,420	0	0
	BLRF - Belle Isle	661,870	0	0	0	(661,870)
	BLRF - Clifton Hill	201,930	0	0	201,930	0
	BLRF - Lower Wear Road	293,390	0	0	0	(293,390)
	Paris Street Car Park	75,000	0	75,000	0	0
	Matford Centre Solar PV	233,000	57,531	105,000	128,000	0
	Car Park pay equipment	210,000	207,261	210,000	0	0
	CCTV John Lewis Car Park	23,700	0	23,700	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>4,082,920</b>	<b>271,475</b>	<b>2,208,330</b>	<b>329,930</b>	<b>(1,544,660)</b>

Service	Scheme	Total 2025/26 Capital Programme	2025/26 Spend to Quarter 3	2025/26 Forecast Spend	2025/26 Budget to be Carried Forward to 2026/27 and Beyond	2025/26 Programme Variances (Under)/Over
		£	£	£	£	£
<b>People &amp; Communities</b>						
	Customer Contact Platform	155,540	85,081	155,540	0	0
	Annual Contribution to Strata	53,910	53,904	53,904	0	(6)
	Financial Management	160,140	25,499	35,140	0	(125,000)
	Datacentre Relocation	35,940	0	0	0	(35,940)
	NCSC Zero Trust	53,910	0	0	0	(53,910)
	IT Replacement Programme	10,000	7,324	10,000	0	0
	Core telephony	16,850	2,336	3,899	0	(12,951)
	EUC model equipment (replacement laptops)	309,550	148,926	309,550	0	0
	Booking	17,970	0	0	0	(17,970)
	Chatbot	17,970	0	17,970	0	0
	Print & post review	7,190	0	7,190	0	0
	PSTN Replacement	27,770	3,812	27,770	0	0
	ECC Civic Centre HFX Door Access Replacement	35,100	13,102	13,102	0	(21,998)
	System Upgrade Cost 2012 Server replacement	3,380	1,129	3,380	0	0
Digital & Data	Microsoft Purview	9,000	0	9,000	0	0
	Microsoft Power Apps	30,000	0	30,000	0	0
	Software Upgrade	101,050	14,931	101,050	0	0
	Sharegate	3,400	0	3,400	0	0
	SharePoint- wider rollout	89,840	15,780	89,840	0	0
	Health and Safety	26,950	21,425	26,950	0	0
	GIS Cloud migration	5,620	0	5,620	0	0
	EzyTreev	10,000	0	0	0	(10,000)
	Mobile Working Replacement	17,970	0	17,970	0	0
	iTrent on Prem to iTrent Hosted	35,940	0	35,940	0	0
	Azure Migration Prof Services	53,900	0	53,900	0	0
	Transformational Staffing Costs	79,060	0	79,060	0	0
	Telephony	29,770	3,278	3,278	0	(26,492)
	Dark Fibre Migration	15,000	1,795	15,000	0	0
	Civic Centre ICT fit-out	30,000	12,675	30,000	0	0
Housing	Disabled Facility Grants	1,216,990	755,153	1,216,990	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>2,659,710</b>	<b>1,166,150</b>	<b>2,355,443</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(304,267)</b>
<b>Place</b>						
	CCTV improvements	7,980	0	7,980	0	0
City Centre & Net Zero	Shared Prosperity Fund	42,556	0	42,556	0	0
	Riverside & RAMM Decarbonisation Phase 4	4,395,290	23,724	350,000	4,045,290	0
	Riverside & RAMM Decarbonisation Projects	900,150	0	900,150	0	0
Culture & Leisure	Leisure Equipment Replacement Programme	438,090	762	438,090	0	0
	Pinhoe Community Hub	1,276,470	0	53,756	1,222,714	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>7,060,536</b>	<b>24,486</b>	<b>1,792,532</b>	<b>5,268,004</b>	<b>0</b>

Service	Scheme	Total 2025/26 Capital Programme	2025/26 Spend to Quarter 3	2025/26 Forecast Spend	2025/26 Budget to be Carried Forward to 2026/27 and Beyond	2025/26 Programme Variances (Under)/Over
		£	£	£	£	£
<b>SUB TOTAL PLANNED CAPITAL PROGRAMME</b>		<b>37,092,706</b>	<b>3,112,936</b>	<b>15,796,326</b>	<b>18,544,588</b>	<b>(2,751,792)</b>
<b>APPROVED COMMITTED SCHEMES WITH EXTERNAL FACTORS THAT IMPACT ON DELIVERY TIMESCALES</b>						
Asset Maintenance	Green Space Depot Site (Belle Isle)	2,875,970	0	2,875,970	0	0
Commercial Assets	Guildhall Shopping Centre Enhancements	10,866,630	0	0	10,866,630	0
	St Nicholas Priory Roof	88,120	0	0	88,120	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>13,830,720</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,875,970</b>	<b>10,954,750</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>GENERAL FUND SERVICES TOTAL</b>		<b>50,923,426</b>	<b>3,112,936</b>	<b>18,672,296</b>	<b>29,499,338</b>	<b>(2,751,792)</b>

## BUDGETS CARRIED FORWARD TO 2026/27 AND BEYOND

Service	Scheme	2026/27 Budget as	Proposed	Proposed Budget	Total 2026/27	2027/28 Budget as per
		per Budget	Budget to be	Reprofiled to	Capital Programme	Budget Book/Council
		Book/Council	Carried Forward	Future Years		Approvals
		Approvals	to 2026/27 and			
			Beyond			
		£	£	£	£	£
<b>Operations</b>						
Environment & Waste	Depot Improvement Works	0	7,516,560		7,516,560	
	Fleet Lease costs	2,329,910	0		2,329,910	2,066,520
Operations Service	Capitalised Staff Costs	150,000	0		150,000	150,000
	Bowling Green Marshes Coastal Defence Scheme	217,870	168,390		386,260	
	Parks Infrastructure	75,000	135,083		210,083	
	Cemeteries & Churchyards Infrastructure Improvements	0	90,608		90,608	
	Pinhoe Playing Field Upgrades	0	19,450		19,450	
	Cricklepit Bridge	0	84,000		84,000	
	Trews Weir refurb	5,877,782	0	(5,627,782)	250,000	5,627,782
	District Street Lighting	200,000	200,000	(200,000)	200,000	200,000
	Piazza Terracina	158,560	0		158,560	
	Ash Die Back Tree Replacement	75,000	0		75,000	
	Bromhams Farm Playing Fields	0	29,669	(15,000)	14,669	15,000
	Farm Hill Retaining Walls (23 no.)	265,000	0		265,000	
	Bonhay Rd/Andlaw House Footpath	0	104,815		104,815	
	Heavitree Paddling Pools	426,680	100,010		526,690	
	Play Areas	166,900	273,460		440,360	
	Landfill Gas Extraction Systems	80,000	76,101		156,101	
	Mincinglake Valley Park Reed Beds & Pipe Inlet	100,000	40,525		140,525	
	ECC Bridge Repair Programme	200,000	219,825		419,825	
Oxford Road Car Park Retaining Wall	200,000	0		200,000		
Outdoor Leisure Facilities - Newcourt	0	121,270		121,270		
Riverside Walls at Quay	0	50,000		50,000		
Asset Maintenance	Fire Risk Assessment Works	0	1,574,510		1,574,510	
	Exmouth Buoy Store	0	212,720		212,720	
	Guildhall MSCP	0	863,400		863,400	
	John Lewis MSCP	0	335,760		335,760	
	Princesshay 2 MSCP	0	424,400		424,400	
	Leighton Terra & KW St MSCP	0	306,100		306,100	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>10,522,702</b>	<b>12,946,654</b>	<b>(5,842,782)</b>	<b>17,626,574</b>	<b>8,059,302</b>
<b>Corporate Resources</b>						
Commercial Assets	BLRF - Clifton Hill	0	201,930		201,930	0
	Matford Centre Solar PV	0	128,000		128,000	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>329,930</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>329,930</b>	<b>0</b>

Service	Scheme	2026/27 Budget as per Budget Book/Council Approvals £	Proposed Budget to be Carried Forward to 2026/27 and Beyond £	Proposed Budget Reprofiled to Future Years £	Total 2026/27 Capital Programme £	2027/28 Budget as per Budget Book/Council Approvals £
<b>People &amp; Communities</b>						
	Annual Contribution to Strata	53,910	0		53,910	53,910
	IT Replacement Programme	10,000	0		10,000	10,000
	EUC model equipment (replacement laptops)	150,000	0		150,000	150,000
	Telephony - Phase 2	35,936	0		35,936	
	Purview	3,594	0		3,594	
	Corporate Asset Management System	150,000	0		150,000	
	Azure Virtual Desktop	25,155	0		25,155	
	System Upgrades	35,936	0		35,936	
	Civic Centre Closure	400,000	0		400,000	
	XLPrint - Cloud Migration	12,578	0		12,578	
Digital & Data	IKEN - Cloud Migration	28,749	0		28,749	
	SDWANT (Discovery)	26,952	0		26,952	
	AI Implementation plan	17,968	0		17,968	
	Digitalisation of paper records	53,000	0		53,000	
	Exeter Tickets Website	12,500	0		12,500	
	One Housing Migration	100,000	0		100,000	
	Parks and Green spaces self-service	20,000	0		20,000	
	Exeter RIT	120,000	0		120,000	
	Waste Management self-service	30,000	0		30,000	
	Telephony routing	3,594	0		3,594	
	Strata staff cost Capitalisation	107,808	0		107,808	
Housing	Disabled Facility Grants	800,000	0		800,000	800,000
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>2,197,680</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,197,680</b>	<b>1,013,910</b>
<b>Place</b>						
City Centre & Net Zero	Riverside & RAMM Decarbonisation Phase 4	0	4,045,290	(1,454,000)	2,591,290	1,454,000
	New Solar PV projects	1,029,500	0		1,029,500	
Culture & Leisure	Leisure Equipment Replacement Programme	100,000	0		100,000	100,000
	Pinhoe Community Hub	0	1,222,714		1,222,714	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1,129,500</b>	<b>5,268,004</b>	<b>(1,454,000)</b>	<b>4,943,504</b>	<b>1,554,000</b>
<b>SUB TOTAL PLANNED CAPITAL PROGRAMME</b>		<b>13,849,882</b>	<b>18,544,588</b>	<b>(7,296,782)</b>	<b>25,097,688</b>	<b>10,627,212</b>
<b>APPROVED COMMITTED SCHEMES WITH EXTERNAL FACTORS THAT IMPACT ON DELIVERY TIMESCALES</b>						
Commercial Assets	Guildhall Shopping Centre Enhancements	0	10,866,630	(8,866,630)	2,000,000	8,866,630
	St Nicholas Priory Roof	0	88,120		88,120	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>10,954,750</b>	<b>(8,866,630)</b>	<b>2,088,120</b>	<b>8,866,630</b>
<b>GENERAL FUND SERVICES TOTAL</b>		<b>13,849,882</b>	<b>29,499,338</b>	<b>(16,163,412)</b>	<b>27,185,808</b>	<b>19,493,842</b>

## GENERAL FUND AVAILABLE RESOURCES

GENERAL FUND	2025-26 £	2026-27 £	2027-28 £	FUTURE YEARS £	TOTAL £
<b>CAPITAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE</b>					
Capital Receipts Brought Forward	0				0
GF Capital Receipts	1,504,506	12,364,000	250,000	0	14,118,506
Revenue Contributions to Capital Outlay	138,756	267,650	0	0	406,406
Disabled Facility Grant	1,216,990	800,000	800,000	800,000	3,616,990
Community Infrastructure Levy	455,602	8,207,948	0	0	8,663,550
Other - Grants/External Funding/Reserves/S106	3,100,017	3,767,923	4,531,782	0	11,399,722
<b>Total Resources Available</b>	<b>6,415,871</b>	<b>25,407,521</b>	<b>5,581,782</b>	<b>800,000</b>	<b>38,205,174</b>
<b>GENERAL FUND CAPITAL PROGRAMME</b>					
Capital Programme	50,923,426	13,849,882	3,330,430	1,263,910	69,367,648
Overspends/(Savings)	(2,751,792)				(2,751,792)
Slippage	(29,499,338)	13,335,926	16,163,412		0
<b>Total General Fund</b>	<b>18,672,296</b>	<b>27,185,808</b>	<b>19,493,842</b>	<b>1,263,910</b>	<b>66,615,856</b>

<b>UNCOMMITTED CAPITAL RESOURCES:</b>					
Capital Receipts Brought Forward	0	1,504,506	13,868,506	14,118,506	0
Resources in Year	6,415,871	25,407,521	5,581,782	800,000	38,205,174
Less Capital Receipts to carry forward	(1,504,506)	(13,868,506)	(14,118,506)	(14,118,506)	(14,118,506)
Less Spend in Year	(18,672,296)	(27,185,808)	(19,493,842)	(1,263,910)	(66,615,856)
<b>Borrowing Requirement</b>	<b>13,760,931</b>	<b>14,142,287</b>	<b>14,162,060</b>	<b>463,910</b>	<b>42,529,188</b>

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## REPORT TO COUNCIL

Date of Meeting: 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2026

Report of: Strategic Director - Corporate Resources

Title: 2025/26 Housing Revenue Account Budget Monitoring Report – Quarter 3

### Is this a Key Decision?

No

### Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Council

### 1. What is the report about?

1.1 To advise Members of the financial position of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Revenue and Capital Budgets for the 2025/26 financial year after nine months.

In addition to the budgetary over/under-spends reported to this committee, Appendix 1 also highlights areas of risk, so that Members are aware that certain budgets have been identified as being vulnerable to factors beyond the control of the Council, which may result in potential deviations from budget, and are therefore subject to close monitoring by officers.

### 2. Recommendations:

2.1. It is recommended that Council notes and approves (where applicable):

- The HRA forecast financial position for 2025/26 financial year as detailed in Appendix 2.
- The revision of the HRA Capital Programme to reflect the reported variations detailed in Appendix 4.

### 3. Reasons for the recommendation:

3.1. To formally note the HRA's projected financial position and to approve the reported variations to the HRA Capital Programme.

The Housing Revenue Account is a statutory account and local housing authorities have a duty to keep a HRA in accordance with proper accounting practices and to review the account throughout the year. Members are presented with a quarterly financial update in respect of the HRA and this is the third update for 2025/26.

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

4.1. The financial resources required to deliver both housing services to Council tenants and to invest in new and existing housing stock during 2025/26 are set out in the body of this report.

The impact on the HRA's available financial resources are set out in Appendix 3.

## **5. Section 151 Officer comments:**

5.1. The HRA continues to show a positive projection against the budget. There are no significant issues to draw to the Council's attention.

## **6. What are the legal aspects?**

6.1. The statutory requirement for a Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is set out in Part VI of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. Section 74 of the Act sets out the duty to keep a HRA as a ring-fenced fund and sets out the structure within which the HRA operates. Part VI of the Act sets out the detailed statutory provisions on the operation of the HRA, including credits to the account (income) and debits to the account (expenditure). Section 76 sets out the duty to prevent a debit balance on the HRA. The authority must implement proposals that will secure that the account for each financial year will not show a debit balance. Members will also note the provisions of Schedule 4 of the Act which sets out the requirements concerning 'The Keeping of the Housing Revenue Account'.

## **7. Monitoring Officer Comments:**

7.1. As set out in the introduction to this report, Members will note the budgetary over/under-spends and will particularly note the areas of risk set out at Appendix 1 to this report. Members will be alert to the fact that certain budgets have been identified as potentially resulting in deviations from budget. This report makes it clear that these budgets will be subject to close monitoring by officers. The key issue is that the authority must ensure that the HRA for the financial year does not show a debit balance

## **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 there are no significant equality and diversity impacts associated with this decision.

## **9. Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:**

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

## **10. Report Details:**

### **HRA BUDGET MONITORING – QUARTER 3**

#### **10.1. Background to the HRA**

The HRA records expenditure and income relating to council dwellings and the provision of services to tenants. Housing authorities have a statutory duty to maintain a HRA account, which is primarily a landlord account, in order to account to their tenants for income and expenditure on council housing separately from other functions and services of the Council. This includes tenancy management, repairs and maintenance, council house building and council house retrofits.

10.2. **Projected transfer from the working balance**

2025/26 Budget	£
MANAGEMENT	1,727,260
EDWARDS COURT	(158,960)
TENANCY SERVICES	1,921,450
RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT	323,640
SUNDRY LANDS MAINTENANCE	472,020
REPAIR & MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME	8,917,790
REVENUE CONTRIBUTION TO CAPITAL	1,000,000
CAPITAL CHARGES	3,724,680
HOUSING ASSETS	3,004,690
RENTS	(22,110,850)
INTEREST	1,739,350
<b>Approved Budgeted transfer from the working balance</b>	<b>(561,070)</b>
Supplementary budgets – Council approved 10th June 2025	(19,000)
Reduction in internal decorations revenue to fund increase in capital programme – Council approved 2 <sup>nd</sup> September	157,000
<b>Revised Budgeted transfer from the working balance</b>	<b>(423,070)</b>

The HRA has working balances of £4,905,388 as at 31 March 2025. This is higher than the £3.525 million contingency resolved to be retained.

10.3. **Revenue Monitoring**

The budget variances anticipated at Quarter 3 indicate that £350,740 will be taken from the working balance in 2025/26 – See appendix 2. This represents a movement of £72,330 compared to the revised budget £423,070. Variances are detailed below:

Budget Heading	Forecast Outturn Budget Variance (Under) / Overspend	
	Quarter 2	Quarter 3
<b>Management</b>	(£45,000)	(£20,160)
<p><b>Officer Responsible: Interim Head of Housing &amp; Head of Asset Maintenance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £45k grant is being received in year to compensate for additional employer's National Insurance contributions.</li> <li>• £60k is required for an interim project role to review compliance with the Social Housing Regulator consumer standards within the HRA.</li> <li>• £35k savings have been identified within Older Persons Accommodation on utilities and alarm replacements not required in year.</li> </ul>		

<b>Tenancy Services</b>	<b>(£140,670)</b>	<b>(£66,600)</b>
<p><b>Officer Responsible: Interim Head of Housing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a £19k saving in RTB sales administration as additional fees have been charged in year.</li> <li>• There are vacancies within the Lettings &amp; Home Ownership team, partly offset by agency costs resulting in a net saving of £9k.</li> <li>• Similarly, there is a net underspend of £25k within Tenancy Services</li> <li>• The Income Recovery team are anticipated to underspend by £14k due to posts being vacant for part of the year but offset by court fees being higher than budgeted.</li> </ul>		
<b>Repairs and Maintenance Programme</b>	<b>(£60,000)</b>	<b>(£50,500)</b>
<p><b>Officer Responsible: Head of Asset Maintenance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due to delays in the procurement of the Planned Works contract which commenced in October there will be in-year underspends of £45k on re-pointing works and £15k on asbestos surveys.</li> <li>• Overspends of £12k are projected on fire alarm testing and risk assessment budgets, but these can be offset by a corresponding reduction in the Fire Risk Assessment Works capital budget.</li> <li>• There are other projected net savings of £2.5k on other service contracts, including radon testing which did not identify as much remedial work as originally estimated.</li> </ul>		
<b>Housing Assets</b>	<b>£35,000</b>	<b>£35,000</b>
<p><b>Officer Responsible: Head of Asset Maintenance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An additional £35k is required for consultancy support with the audit of Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund claims.</li> </ul>		
<b>Capital Charges</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>£29,930</b>
<p><b>Officer Responsible: Interim Head of Housing &amp; Head of Asset Maintenance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capital charges will be £30k higher than budgeted. Depreciation is a real cost to the HRA as it represents the amount of money which needs to be set aside in the Major Repairs Reserve to provide for future capital works or to repay debt. A higher depreciation charge results in a revenue overspend in the year, but more funding available for future capital spend.</li> </ul>		
<b>Total budget (underspend)/overspend</b>	<b>(£210,670)</b>	<b>(£72,330)</b>
<b>2025/26 HRA Deficit / (Surplus)</b>	<b>£212,400</b>	<b>£350,740</b>

#### 10.4. Impact on HRA Working Balance

The HRA Working Balance represents amounts set aside to help facilitate service improvements, repay debt or to provide investment in the stock in future financial years. The forecast balance, as at 31 March 2026, is set out below:

Movement	2025/26
Opening HRA Working Balance, as at 1 April 2025	£4,905,388
Forecast transfer (from) / to the working balance for 2025/26	(£350,740)
Balance resolved to be retained (HRA contingency)	(£3,525,000)
<b>Forecast Balance Available, as at 31 March 2026</b>	<b>£1,029,648</b>

The transfer from the working balance anticipated for 2025/26 brings the working balance as at 31 March 2026 closer to the HRA balance resolved to be retained of £3.525 million.

#### 10.5. **HRA Available Resources over the Medium Term**

The forecast HRA available resources for delivering both housing services and capital investment are set out in Appendix 3 for the period to 2028/29.

The total available resources is made up of several reserve balances; the HRA working balance, the Useable Capital Receipts reserve and the Major Repairs Reserve.

The HRA working balance is the movement on revenue budgets, contributions can be made from this reserve towards financing capital budgets in the form of 'Revenue Contributions to Capital'. The useable capital receipts reserve is made up of both the Right-to-Buy (RTB) receipts reserve and the Non-RTB receipts reserve; these reserves are available to finance capital spend, some restrictions apply. The Major Repairs Reserve is increased each year by the HRA depreciation charge to revenue, this reserve is then available to spend on the HRA capital programme.

The total forecast HRA available resources is impacted by variances in both revenue budgets detailed in section 10.3 above and variances in capital budgets detailed in section 10.7 below.

The forecast total available resources over the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) has increased by £1,586,104 since last reported at Quarter 2. This is due to the capital receipt of £1.165m from the sale of Pendragon Road and additional Right to Buy receipts.

Total available reserves over the MTFP are now expected to be £5,892,820 after deducting the £3.525 million balance resolved to be retained (HRA contingency).

#### 10.6. **HRA Debt**

In October 2018 the Government formally removed the HRA debt cap, which restricted the amount of borrowing stock-holding local authorities could have for the purposes of the HRA. The lifting of the 'debt cap' means that local authorities are now able to borrow for housebuilding in accordance with the Prudential Code.

Executive on 8 October 2019 approved the first Council House Building Programme to deliver 100 new homes into the HRA at a cost of £18 million. On 5 April 2020, the Council took out a loan of £15.36 million from the Public Works Loan Board to support this programme, with the balance to be funded by capital receipts.

As at 31 March 2024, the HRA's borrowing stood at £73.242 million. The total of the £15.360 million new loan and the former 'debt cap' level of £57.882 million. The HRA

currently has approval to borrow a further £7.7 million, this has been deferred whilst borrowing rates remain elevated but will likely be required in the next 12 to 24 months.

#### 10.7. HRA Capital Programme

The 2025/26 HRA Capital Programme was approved by Council on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2025. Since that meeting the following changes have been made that have increased the 2025/26 programme.

Description	2025/26	Approval / Funding
<b>HRA Capital Programme</b>	<b>£16,344,475</b>	
Budgets carried forward from 2024/25 HRA Capital Programme	£1,802,599	Council – 10 <sup>th</sup> June 2025
Additional approvals 2024/25 outturn	£3,520,792	Council – 10 <sup>th</sup> June 2025
Additional approvals Q1	£687,000	Council – 2 <sup>nd</sup> September 2025
Q2 changes	(2,937,000)	Council – 9 <sup>th</sup> December 2025
<b>Revised HRA Capital Programme</b>	<b>£19,417,866</b>	

The current approved HRA Capital Programme is detailed in Appendix 4.

The appendix shows a total forecast spend in 25/26 of £16,495,074. The details of key (greater than +/- £30k) variances from budget are set out below.

Scheme	Overspend / (Underspend)
<b>HRA long leases (Right of Use assets)</b>	<b>(£2,645,792)</b>
<b>Officer Responsible: Interim Head of Housing</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This budget was included in the capital programme for the long lease arrangements for a number of properties which would sit within the HRA to help alleviate financial pressures on temporary accommodation. However, the Council will not be entering into these agreements and the budget is therefore no longer required.</li> </ul>	

Schemes identified as being wholly or partly deferred to, or brought forward from, 2026/27 and beyond are:

Scheme	Budget deferred to / (brought forward from) future years
<b>Kitchen replacements</b>	<b>(£104,000)</b>
<b>Officer Responsible: Head of Asset Maintenance</b>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spend on kitchens is projected to be £104k higher than budgeted this year due to the number of CAT1 hazards identified from the stock condition survey which need to be addressed. This will be offset by reducing the annual budgets for the remainder of the MTFP.</li> </ul>	
<b>Lift Upgrades</b>	<b>£369,000</b>
<b>Officer Responsible: Head of Asset Maintenance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The specification for two upgrade projects is being finalised and will go out to tender in Quarter 4, so the balance of this approval will be spent in 2026/27.</li> </ul>	

## 10.8 Historic Council Own Build Final Accounts to 31 March 2026

The Council's Own Build (COB) properties at Rowan House and Knights Place form part of the overall Housing Revenue Account, but separate income and expenditure budgets are maintained in order to ensure that they are self-financing.

As the 21 units were built using Homes and Communities Agency funding in conjunction with borrowing (£998k), they are accounted for separately in order to ensure that they are self-financing. A separate COB working balance and Major Repairs Reserve are maintained until such time as a sufficient balance has been accumulated to repay the debt attributable to these properties, at which point the units can be accounted for with the wider HRA stock.

### Key Variances from Budget

Capital charges are projected to be £790 higher than budgeted for these properties, so the budgeted transfer from working balance will increase to £7,790 during 2025/26.

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

11.1 The Housing Revenue Account contributes to the strategic priorities of Homes and People as set out in the Corporate Plan 2025-2028.

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

12.1 For clarity, these are specific financial risks, alongside the risks captured in the corporate risk register.

It is not permissible for the HRA to go into an overall financial deficit position, it is therefore important to ensure that an adequate level of HRA balances is maintained as a contingency against risks. The HRA resolve to retain a working balance at no less than £3.525 million to mitigate against financial risks.

Areas of budgetary risk are highlighted to committee as part of the quarterly budget monitoring updates, please see Appendix 1.

## 13. Are there any other options?

None.

**Strategic Director of Corporate Resources, David Hodgson**

Author: Claire Hodgson, Lead Accountant - Housing

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

Background papers used in compiling this report:

None

Three areas of budgetary risk have been identified within the HRA, as follows:

Budget Title	2025/26 Approved Budget	Risk Rating	Risk and mitigation
General Maintenance	£3,580,230 (revenue)		<p>There have been overspends on this budget in recent years due to volatility in the demand of the level and cost of requested repairs. This includes increased focus on monitoring and remedial works where damp and mould issues are identified. In recognition of this the budget was significantly increased for 25/26 based on previous spend.</p> <p>Spend to month nine is within the profile and will be closely monitored for the rest of the year.</p> <p>Mitigation measures include contract meetings with the Contractor which include budget review and work in progress updates. Other supporting measures include weekly Surveyors meetings to highlight repair demand pressures.</p>
Repairs to Void Properties	£1,822,180 (revenue)		<p>Property turnover and the varying condition of properties when returned to the Council represent a budgetary risk, and this budget has also overspent in recent years and has been increased for 25/26.</p> <p>As at Quarter 3 spend is within budget.</p> <p>Mitigation includes increasing the number and timeliness of property inspections by Housing Officers to identify sub-standard property conditions wherever possible and provide earlier alerts to issues.</p>
Rental Income from Dwellings	(£22,110,850) (revenue)		<p>Right to Buy sales, new properties, the number of new tenancies set at convergent rent levels, the number of days lost through major works and rent lost in respect of void properties all impact on the annual rental income.</p> <p>Rental income after the first 38 weeks is largely in line with profile.</p>

**Risk Rating:**

	Potential for a favourable variance compared to the budget or no variance at all
	Potential for adverse budgetary variance of between 0% and 5% that will be kept under review
	Potential for an adverse budgetary variance of more than 5% and will be monitored closely

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HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNTS BUDGET MONITORING 2025-26

APPENDIX 2

QUARTER 3

ACTUAL TO DATE			YEAR END FORECAST				
PROFILED BUDGET	ACTUAL TO DATE	VARIANCE TO DATE	MANAGEMENT UNIT	APPROVED BUDGET	Q2 FORECAST VARIANCE	Q3 FORECAST VARIANCE	CURRENT OUTTURN FORECAST
£	£	£		£	£	£	£
			<b>PEOPLE &amp; COMMUNITIES - HRA HOUSING</b>				
174,505	136,636	(37,869)	RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT	271,790	0	0	271,790
1,154,533	960,820	(193,713)	MANAGEMENT	1,854,900	(45,000)	(20,160)	1,834,740
(124,425)	(327,632)	(203,207)	EDWARDS COURT	(158,960)	0	0	(158,960)
1,411,913	1,230,116	(181,797)	TENANCY SERVICES	1,921,450	(140,670)	(66,600)	1,854,850
(17,504,423)	(17,759,875)	(255,452)	RENTS	(22,110,850)	0	0	(22,110,850)
			<b>HRA ASSET MAINTENANCE</b>				
226,335	217,374	(8,961)	SUNDRY LAND MAINTENANCE	472,020	0	0	472,020
7,025,490	5,821,597	(1,203,893)	REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME	8,779,790	(60,000)	(50,500)	8,729,290
3,045,700	2,891,238	(154,462)	GENERAL MAINTENANCE	3,580,230	0	0	3,580,230
1,366,640	1,348,871	(17,769)	REPAIRS TO VOID PROPERTIES	1,822,180	0	0	1,822,180
1,183,170	957,409	(225,761)	SERVICE CONTRACTS	1,470,740	0	0	1,470,740
1,429,980	624,079	(805,901)	OTHER	1,906,640	(60,000)	(50,500)	1,856,140
0	0	0	REVENUE CONTRIBUTION TO CAPITAL	1,000,000	0	0	1,000,000
0	0	0	CAPITAL CHARGES	3,724,680	0	29,930	3,754,610
1,891,150	1,723,382	(167,768)	HOUSING ASSETS	2,928,900	35,000	35,000	2,963,900
1,251,045	1,090,390	(160,655)	INTEREST	1,739,350	0	0	1,739,350
			MOVEMENT TO/(FROM) WORKING BALANCE	(423,070)	210,670	72,330	(350,740)
			<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
			<b>Working Balance</b>	<b>4,905,388</b>	<b>31 March 2026</b>	<b>4,554,648</b>	

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COUNCIL OWN BUILD SITES

PROFILED BUDGET	ACTUAL TO DATE	VARIANCE TO DATE	MANAGEMENT UNIT	APPROVED BUDGET	Q2 FORECAST VARIANCE	Q3 FORECAST VARIANCE	CURRENT OUTTURN FORECAST
£	£	£		£	£	£	£
53,170	49,946	(3,224)	MANAGEMENT	86,920	0	0	86,920
(10,180)	(11,913)	(1,733)	ROWAN HOUSE	(13,570)	0	0	(13,570)
(60,730)	(72,191)	(11,461)	KNIGHTS PLACE	(80,970)	0	0	(80,970)
0	0	0	INTEREST	(2,510)	0	0	(2,510)
0	0	0	CAPITAL CHARGES	17,130	0	790	17,920
			MOVEMENT TO/(FROM) WORKING BALANCE	(7,000)	0	(790)	(7,790)
			<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
			<b>Working Balance</b>	<b>339,044</b>	<b>31 March 2026</b>	<b>331,254</b>	

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## APPENDIX 3

## HRA AVAILABLE RESOURCES - 2025/26 QUARTER 3

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT	2025-26 £	2026-27 £	2027-28 £	2028-29 £	TOTAL £
<b>CAPITAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE</b>					
Usable Receipts Brought Forward					5,221,900
Major Repairs Reserve Brought Forward					4,999,469
Other HRA Sales	1,189,000	912,000			2,101,000
RTB sales	3,833,581				3,833,581
Major Repairs Reserve	3,754,610	3,724,680	3,724,680	3,724,680	14,928,650
Revenue Contributions to Capital	1,000,000	1,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	6,000,000
Local Authority Housing Fund grant and s106	580,790	-	-		580,790
Grants and contributions	1,260,500				1,260,500
Commuted sums	0				0
Borrowing	4,948,380	2,800,000			7,748,380
<b>Total Resources available</b>	<b>16,566,861</b>	<b>8,436,680</b>	<b>5,724,680</b>	<b>5,724,680</b>	<b>46,674,270</b>
<b>CAPITAL PROGRAMME</b>					
HRA Capital Programme	21,667,866	9,973,253	6,966,569	5,525,867	44,133,555
Budget for long leases no longer required	(2,645,792)				(2,645,792)
Q1 - changes	687,000	0	0	0	687,000
Q2 - changes	(2,937,000)	2,612,500	292,500		(32,000)
Q3 - changes	(277,000)	335,000	(35,000)	(35,000)	(12,000)
					0
<b>Total Housing Revenue Account</b>	<b>16,495,074</b>	<b>12,920,753</b>	<b>7,224,069</b>	<b>5,490,867</b>	<b>42,130,763</b>
<b>UNCOMMITTED CAPITAL RESOURCES:</b>					
Usable Receipts Brought Forward	5,221,900	6,639,359	5,801,359	3,601,359	5,221,900
Major Repairs Reserve Brought Forward	4,999,469	3,653,797	7,724	708,335	4,999,469
Resources in Year	16,566,861	8,436,680	5,724,680	5,724,680	36,452,901
Less Estimated Spend	(16,495,074)	(12,920,753)	(7,224,069)	(5,490,867)	(42,130,763)
<b>Uncommitted Capital Resources</b>	<b>10,293,156</b>	<b>5,809,083</b>	<b>4,309,694</b>	<b>4,543,507</b>	<b>4,543,507</b>
<b>WORKING BALANCE RESOURCES:</b>					
Balance Brought Forward	4,905,388	4,554,648	4,769,149	4,461,669	4,905,388
HRA Balance Transfer - to/(from) Working Balance	(580,070)	214,501	(307,480)	412,644	(260,405)
Q1 forecast under/(over)spend 2025-26	157,000				157,000
Q2 forecast under/(over)spend 2025-26	210,670				210,670
Q3 forecast under/(over)spend 2025-26	(138,340)				(138,340)
Balance Carried Forward	4,554,648	4,769,149	4,461,669	4,874,313	4,874,313
Balance Resolved to be Retained	(3,525,000)	(3,525,000)	(3,525,000)	(3,525,000)	(3,525,000)
<b>Uncommitted HRA Working Balance (after balance resolved to be retained of £3.525m)</b>	<b>1,029,648</b>	<b>1,244,149</b>	<b>936,669</b>	<b>1,349,313</b>	<b>1,349,313</b>
<b>TOTAL AVAILABLE CAPITAL RESOURCES (after balance resolved to be retained of £3.525m)</b>	<b>11,322,804</b>	<b>7,053,232</b>	<b>5,246,363</b>	<b>5,892,820</b>	<b>5,892,820</b>

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## CAPITAL MONITORING - QUARTER 3

	2025-26 Capital Programme	2025-26 Spend	2025-26 Forecast Spend	2025-26 Budget to be Carried Forward to Future Years	TO 2026-27	TO 2027-28	TO 2028-29	2025-26 Programme Variances Under ()
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
<b>HRA CAPITAL</b>								
Adaptations	360,000	268,496	360,000					-
Communal Door Entry Systems	500,000		500,000					-
FRA Door Entry Instals	150,000		150,000					-
Balcony Walkway Improvements	108,000		108,000					-
Bathroom Replacements (inc. Communal)	600,000	537,798	600,000					-
Boiler Replacement Programme & Central Heating	455,875	293,789	455,875					-
Common Area Footpath & Wall Improvements	97,000		97,000					-
Communal Area Improvements - New Flooring	162,614	0	162,614					-
Electrical Central Heating	10,000	7,318	10,000					-
Replacement of Fire alarms	172,500	56,793	172,500					-
Electrical Rewires - Communal & domestic	626,126	515,356	626,126					-
Energy Conservation		58,542	0					-
SHF Wave 3	946,478	179,067	946,478					-
Fire Risk Assessment Works	1,510,000	413,019	1,498,000					(12,000)
Fire Safety Storage Facilities	109,462	42,528	109,462					-
Kitchen Replacements (inc. Communal)	827,000	708,870	931,000	(104,000)	(34,000)	(35,000)	(35,000)	-
LAINGS Refurbishments	350,000	127,731	350,000					-
Lift Upgrades	400,000	31,008	31,000	369,000	369,000			-
Reroofing - Flats and Houses	1,600,250	106,794	1,600,250					-
Porch Canopies	59,200	12,445	59,200					-
Rennes House	1,007,498	100,330	1,007,498					-
Structural Repairs	609,160	62,013	609,160					-
Window & Door Replacements	1,400,000	357,050	1,400,000					-
Plastering	125,000	118,098	125,000					-
Central Heating - Abbeville & Hamlin	0		0					-
Right of Use - HRA long leases	2,645,792		0					(2,645,792)
<b>HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT TOTAL</b>	<b>14,831,955</b>	<b>3,997,046</b>	<b>11,909,163</b>	<b>265,000</b>	<b>335,000</b>	<b>(35,000)</b>	<b>(35,000)</b>	<b>(2,657,792)</b>
<b>COUNCIL OWN BUILD CAPITAL</b>								
Social Housing Acquisitions - Open Market	800,000	402,601	800,000					-
Local Authority Housing Fund	580,789	465,143	580,789					-
Council House Building Programme - Bovemoors Lane	14,605	0	14,605					-
Council House Building Programme - Hamlin Gardens	78,000	2,218	78,000					-
Council House Building Programme - Vaughan Road Phase A	3,112,517	2,609,374	3,112,517					-
<b>COUNCIL OWN BUILD TOTAL</b>	<b>4,585,911</b>	<b>3,479,335</b>	<b>4,585,911</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>OVERALL HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT TOTAL</b>	<b>19,417,866</b>	<b>7,476,381</b>	<b>16,495,074</b>	<b>265,000</b>	<b>335,000</b>	<b>(35,000)</b>	<b>(35,000)</b>	<b>(2,657,792)</b>

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## **REPORT TO COUNCIL**

Date of Meeting: 3 March 2026

Report of: Strategic Director – People and Community

Title: Annual Pay Policy Statement 2026/27

### **Is this a Key Decision?**

No

### **Is this an Executive or Council Function?**

Council

#### **1. What is the report about?**

To set out the council's annual Pay Policy Statement 2026/27 which must be approved by Full Council each financial year in line with legislation.

#### **2. Recommendations:**

That Executive recommends to Council to approve:

- (1) The attached Policy, Report and Appendices be adopted and published in accordance with the legislation.
- (2) Delegated authority be given to the Strategic Director – People and Community to make necessary amendments to the pay policy statement following any changes in legislation or subsequent increases in pay.

#### **3. Reasons for the recommendation:**

3.1 Section 38 (1) of the Localism Act 2011 requires English and Welsh Authorities to produce a statutory Pay Policy Statement each financial year commencing in 2012/13 and thereafter each subsequent financial year.

3.2 Following the revocation of the restriction of the Public Sector Payment Regulations on 19 March 2021, the government have yet to announce any replacement proposals. Any future termination payments will be subject to any new legislation. In the meantime, any payments made should demonstrate value for money and be conducive to the effective and efficient operation of the Authority.

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

There are no new resource implications created as a result of the revisions to the Pay Policy Statement.

#### **5. Section 151 Officer comments:**

5.1 There are no financial implications for Council to consider.

## **6. What are the legal aspects?**

6.1 Local Authorities are required by Section 38 (1) of the Localism Act 2011 to set out a written statement each financial year relating to:

- the remuneration of chief officers;
- the remuneration of its lowest paid employees; and
- the relationship between the remuneration of its chief officers and the remuneration of its employees who are not chief officers

6.2 The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) regulations 2017 requires local authorities who employ over 250 or more employees to produce a gender pay gap report.

## **7. Monitoring Officer's comments:**

7.1 This report is produced in accordance with the statutory obligations set out above. The Monitoring Officer has no additional comments.

## **8. Report details:**

In line with statutory requirements, the Council's Pay Policy Statement has been reviewed and updated for 2026/27 for approval by full Council prior to publishing on the Council's website.

The following needs to be taken into account when reviewing the revised policy and appendix:

- the increase in the nationally determined real living wage (Grade B) in November 2025 which comes into effect at Exeter City Council on 1 April 2026 (paragraph 3.2);
- the Local Government Services pay award for 2026/27 is yet to be resolved. This could increase our lowest pay scale;
- the Chief Executives pay award for 2026/27 is yet to be resolved;
- the Chief Officers pay award for 2026/27 is yet to be resolved;

The appendix will/may require amending once the pay negotiations have been completed for 2026/27.

## **9. How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan?**

The attached statement supports a well-run Council and our compliance with statute.

## **10. What risks are there and how can they be reduced?**

There are no new implications arising from the recommendations.

## **11. Equality Act 2010 (The Act)**

11.1 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.

11.2 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.

11.3 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.

11.4 In recommending this proposal no potential impact has been identified on people with protected characteristics as determined by the Act because consideration has been given to the impact upon differing groups and a full assessment is not required.

## **12. Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:**

No direct carbon/environmental impacts arising from the recommendations.

## **13. Are there any other options?**

No

**Strategic Director – People and Community, Jo Yelland**

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

Background papers used in compiling this report:

None

Contact for enquires:  
Democratic Services (Committees)  
Room 4.36  
01392 265275

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# Exeter City Council

## Pay Policy Statement 2026/27

### 1. Purpose and scope of the Policy

Section 38 (1) of the Localism Act 2011 (Part 1, Chapter 8, Sections 38 to 43) requires English and Welsh local authorities to produce a statutory pay policy statement each financial year.

1.1. The Act requires that a relevant authority must approve, through Full Council, a pay policy statement for the following financial year and this must set out the authority's policies for the financial year relating to:

- a) the remuneration of its chief officers, (see Appendix 1)
- b) the remuneration of its lowest-paid employees (see Section 4 and Appendix 1, and
- c) the relationship between:
  - the remuneration of its chief officers (Section 4 and Appendix 1), and
  - the remuneration of its employees who are not chief officers (see Section 4 and Appendix 1)

The statement must state:

- (a) the definition of "lowest-paid employees" adopted by the authority for the purposes of the statement, and (see Section 3)
- (a) the authority's reasons for adopting that definition. (see Section 3)

1.2. The statement must include the authority's policies relating to:

- a) the elements of remuneration for each chief officer, (see Section 2 and 5 and Appendix 1)
- b) remuneration of chief officers on recruitment, (see Section 5 and Appendix 1)
- c) increases and additions to remuneration for each chief officer, (see Section 5)
- d) the use of performance-related pay for chief officers, (see Section 5)
- e) the use of bonuses for chief officers, (see Section 5)
- f) the approach to the payment of chief officers on their ceasing to hold office under or to be employed by the authority, and (see Section 5)
- g) the remuneration of chief officers who return to local authority employment (See Section 5)

h) the publication of and access to information relating to remuneration of chief officers. (see Section 6)

1.3. This policy also takes into account “Openness and accountability in local pay: Guidance under section 40 of the Localism Act 2011” and the letter from the Secretary of State to leaders of local authorities and chairs of fire and rescue authorities of 20 February 2013.

1.4. In the context of managing scarce public resources, remuneration at all levels within the Council needs to be adequate to secure and retain high-quality employees dedicated to the service of the public, but at the same time providing value for money to the residents of Exeter.

1.5. Exeter City Council already works within a pay and reward framework which seeks to ensure that its pay and reward processes and procedures facilitate the retention and recruitment of employees with the right skills and capabilities to meet the needs of the Council now and in the future. The framework also takes account of regional and national variations, local market factors and is open and transparent and complies with equal pay legislation.

## **2. Definition of Chief Officers**

2.1. The posts which are defined as ‘Chief Officers’ for the purposes of this Statement are those scheduled in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 under sections 4(1), 5(1), 2(6, 7 and 8) together with other members of the councils Strategic Management Board. For Exeter City Council this term includes:

### **Chief Executive & Head of Paid Service under Section 4(1) of the Act.**

**Strategic Director – Corporate Resources**

**Strategic Director – Operational Services**

**Strategic Director – People and Community**

**Strategic Director – Place**

2.2. The post of Chief Executive is made on terms and conditions of employment agreed by the Joint National Council for Chief Executives and supplemented by local terms and conditions of employment agreed by Exeter City Council.

2.3. All the remaining posts are made on the terms and conditions of employment agreed by the Joint National Council for Chief Officers and supplemented by terms and conditions of employment agreed by Exeter City Council.

2.4. With the exception of the Chief Executive all Chief Officer posts as defined in this Statement are subject to job evaluation using the LGA’s Senior Managers job evaluation. The remuneration of the Council’s Chief Officers is set out in Appendix 1.

### **3. Definition & Remuneration of Lowest Paid**

- 3.1. All posts which are not designated as Chief Officers in accordance with this Statement, and with the exception of apprentice roles, are subject to job evaluation using the National Joint Council for Local Government Services National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service.
- 3.2. The Council has adapted the National Local Government Pay Scale to include locally agreed spinal column points. With effect from 1 January 2014, the Council adopted the Real Living Wage as its minimum spinal column point, and the Living Wage of £13.45 per hour from 1 April 2026 and will equate to Grade B of the Council's pay scale. The Real Living Wage is determined nationally in or around November each year. The Council applies any uplift to the living wage from 1 April in the year following the increase.
- 3.3. The Council therefore defines its lowest paid employees as those on Grade B of the Council's pay scale. The Council has adopted this definition as it can be easily understood.
- 3.4. The Council has 15 grades (excluding Apprentice) on its existing pay scale for employees not designated as Chief Officer in this Statement. With the exception of Grades B and C, each Grade provides for incremental progression of either 3 or 5 scale points subject to satisfactory service. Increments are applied on the 1 April each year (or on the 6 month anniversary of the employee's appointment if the appointment falls between October and March inclusive, with subsequent increments applying from 1 April each year) until the postholder reaches the maximum of the grade.

### **4. Relationship between Remuneration**

- 4.1. The Hutton Review of Fair Pay in the Public Sector outlined that the most appropriate metric for pay dispersion is the multiple of Chief Executive to median earnings. Whilst not a requirement of this Statement, tracking this multiple as recommended in the Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency will ensure public service organisations are accountable for the relationship between the pay of their executives and the wider workforce.
- 4.2. The Council also publishes as part of this Statement the relationship between its Chief Executive and lowest paid employee. Both pay multiples are set out in Appendix 1.
- 4.3. Through this policy the pay multiple of the Chief Executive will be monitored annually. Should the multiplier between the annual salary paid to a full-time employee on the lowest spinal column point and the annual full-time salary payable to the Chief Executive be greater than 10, this will be reported to full Council for consideration.

## 5. Chief Officer Remuneration

- 5.1 The Joint Negotiating Committee has previously emphasised that ‘it is good governance that local authorities can demonstrate that decisions on pay and reward packages for chief executives and chief officers have been made in an open and accountable way.’
- 5.2 Salaries for chief officers operate based on fixed pay points and are therefore not subject to a salary scale providing for incremental progression.
- 5.3 New appointments will be made to the appropriate pay point in force at the time of the appointment. These fixed pay points will be agreed through an accountable and transparent process. Salary levels will be consistent with similar organisations which aim to pay according to median salaries. There will be due regard to balance the need to ensure value for money but enable Exeter City Council to recruit and retain high quality chief officers in the context of national, regional and local labour markets.
- 5.4 In determining any future changes to the remuneration package for appointments to Chief Officer posts as defined in this Statement, the Leader of the Council will take independent pay advice. The Leader will then, in consultation with the Chief Executive (except in relation to the pay of the Chief Executive), make recommendations which will be subject to the approval of full Council.
- 5.5 The Leader of the Council, in consultation with the Chief Executive (except in relation to the remuneration package of the Chief Executive), may recommend to full Council changes to the remuneration package following an annual review. Any changes to the remuneration packages will be subject to full Council approval.
- 5.6 Salary increases for Chief Officers defined in this Statement in relation to cost of living will be made in line with increases agreed by the Joint National Council’s for Chief Executives and Chief Officers as appropriate.
- 5.7 There are no additional payments made to chief officers in relation to performance related pay or the use of bonuses.
- 5.8 Any termination payments to Chief Officers on ceasing office will comply with Local Government Pension Scheme Employer Discretions Policies which are subject to the Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006, as amended and in force at the time. All such payments are equally applicable to all employees.
- 5.9 A Chief Officer appointment (under an employment contract or contract for services) will not be offered to any former Chief Officer in receipt of a severance payment, except in circumstances where they left employment as a result of being made redundant from their previous Chief Officer role, without the approval of Full Council.
- 5.10 Exeter City Council will not enter employment or service contracts with any persons in receipt of a local government pension within 6 months of

the termination date of their previous employment without the approval of Full Council. Employees of the Council who are also in receipt of a local government pension may have their pension abated in accordance with legislation / policy as enacted / determined by the relevant pension administrator.

5.11 The Council's Policy on Market Supplements applies to all posts at the Council, including Chief Officers. Evidence based market supplements will be subject to periodic review (every 2 years) to ensure they continue to be justifiable. No Chief Officer is currently in receipt of a Market Supplement.

5.12 Additional payments are made by Central Government to officers (including the Returning Officer) carrying out additional duties at Parliamentary, European and other national elections and referendums. These payments are set nationally and are not within the scope of this Statement. Payments to the Returning Officer and other officials for duties in relation to City Council elections are linked proportionately to these national rates.

## **6. Termination payments of Chief Officers including redundancy and pension discretion:**

6.1 There is currently no restriction on Public Sector Exit Payments following the revocation of the Public Sector Exit Payments Regulations on 19 March 2021.

6.2 The Council applies its normal redundancy payments arrangements to Chief Officers and does not have separate provisions for them.

6.3 The Council also applies the appropriate Pensions regulations when they apply. The Council has agreed policies in place on how it will apply any discretionary powers it has under Pensions regulations.

6.4 Any costs that are incurred by the Council regarding Chief Officers are published in the authority accounts as required under the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015.

## **7. Transparency & Publication of Data**

7.1 This Statement aims to ensure that the process for setting pay at a senior level is transparent fair and consistent. This policy will be reviewed annually to track the relationship of chief officer pay with the rest of the workforce.

7.2 The Council will publish its Pay Policy Statement on the Exeter City Council website alongside information related to the Council's management structure. Further information relating to the remuneration of Chief Officers is published in the Council's annual Statement of Accounts.

## **8. Equality Impact Considerations**

8.1 The principles of equal pay are integral to this policy and applied consistently within the pay and reward frameworks adopted by Exeter City Council. The definition of Equal Pay is:

- (a) Like work where the woman and the man are doing the same job
- (b) Work rated as equivalent where the 2 jobs are different but have been evaluated by the employer's job evaluation scheme at the same level/grade
- (c) Work of equal value where the jobs are different but an argument is made that both jobs should be regarded as being of equal value or worth.

## **9. Related Policies/Strategies, Procedures and Legislation**

9.1 Exeter City Council pay and reward policies and procedures are operated within the framework of JNC and NJC terms as nationally negotiated and agreed and supplemented by local agreements. The Council applies the national framework for job evaluation and works within equality and equal pay legislation in order to apply all pay related issues in a fair, consistent and transparent way.

9.2 Key policies/procedures/strategies and legislation include:

- Exeter City Council Pay and Reward Policies, frameworks and local agreements.
- Equal Pay Legislation
- Equality Act 2010
- Localism Act 2011
- Openness and accountability in local pay: Guidance under section 40 of the Localism Act February 2012
- Local Government Act 1972
- Local Government & Housing Act 1989

**1. Levels and elements of remuneration for each chief officer role as at April 2026**

<b>Post title</b>	<b>Full time Remuneration</b>
Chief Executive	£142,591
Strategic Directors x4	£102,290

**2. The FT remuneration of the lowest paid employee**

<b>Post title</b>	<b>Full time Remuneration</b>
MRF Operative	£25,949

**3. The multiplier of the remuneration of the chief officer based upon taxable earnings:**

<b>Post Title</b>	<b>Full time Remuneration</b>
Annual median pay of all employees	£30,060
Pay multiple of Chief Executive to median	4.60
Pay multiple of Chief Executive to lowest paid FT employee	5.50

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## REPORT TO COUNCIL

Date of Meeting: 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2026

Report of: Strategic Director of Corporate Resources

Title: Cathedral & Quay MSCP Refurbishment

### Is this a Key Decision?

No

### Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Council

### 1. What is the report about?

1.1 This report seeks the allocation of critical funding to undertake the refurbishment and upgrade of Cathedral and Quay Multi-Storey Car Park (MSCP) and to implement the outsourcing of the management function in order to address the identified health and safety issues and protect and enhance the Council's income from this key asset.

### 2. Recommendations:

2.1 That Council agree:

(1) An estimated budget of £2,500,000 for undertaking the refurbishment and upgrade works at Cathedral and Quay MSCP; and

(2) The outsourcing of the management function of Cathedral and Quay MSCP on terms to be agreed, to enable it to re-establish itself as a premier MSCP for the City.

### 3. Reasons for the recommendation:

3.1 Notwithstanding the visual appearance of the car park, it has been recently confirmed as being structurally sound.

3.2 The full reopening of the car park will necessitate undertaking a series of localised concrete repairs together with an associated refurbishment which will enhance both the user experience and future utilisation of this key asset.

3.3 The costly and persistent anti-social behaviour which has established itself at the car park will be addressed through the introduction of CCTV (and other security measures) together with significantly enhanced levels of passive surveillance (arising from the opening and utilisation of all car park decks). The proposed outsourcing to a private operator, is however considered to be the primary deterrent to future anti-social behaviour occurring. The operator will have a greater on-site presence, and the performance and appearance of the car park will be measured in relation to a range of contractually binding key performance indicators.

For enquiries please contact: [democratic.services@exeter.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@exeter.gov.uk)

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

4.1 Borrowing £2.5m will cost around £160,000 a year at current interest rates. Given the potential to generate around half a million pounds additional income, the proposal should have a positive impact on the General Fund.

4.2 Concerning any impact on existing internal resourcing and configuration arrangements, it is anticipated that the Council's Car Park Service will be unaffected by these proposals.

#### **5. Section 151 Officer comments:**

5.1 The project, if approved, will enable the car park to become fully operational with the additional income funding the costs of borrowing. Using an external managing operator should assist with reducing the antisocial behaviour seen at the car park in recent years.

#### **6. What are the legal aspects?**

6.1 All contracts for supplies, works and services must be let in compliance with the Council's Procurement and Contract Procedures and the Procurement Act 2023.

#### **7. Monitoring Officer's comments:**

7.1 This report raises no issues for the Monitoring Officer.

#### **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.

#### **9. Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:**

9.1 The proposed upgrade works for Cathedral & Quay MSCP will enhance the asset's environmental and sustainability credentials primarily through:

- Undertaking an extensive replacement of existing mechanical and electrical systems and associated ventilation infrastructure.

#### **10. Report details:**

10.1 Cathedral & Quay (C&Q) multi storey car park is one of 5 MSCP's situated within the city centre which are owned and directly operated by the Council. The car park is a key commercial asset for the Council and its location situated between the historic Quayside and Exeter Cathedral (and the prime retail district) means it also has an important strategic function in supporting the vitality and viability of the city centre.

10.2 The C&Q car park was constructed in the late 1980's and is located within a conservation area, bordering the historic Roman city wall to the east of the site. At the time of opening it was considered the premier city centre car park for Exeter. However, the reducing level of investment (particularly Post COVID) both in terms of repair/maintenance and on-site management over the last 5 + years has led to a decline in the asset's performance.

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10.3 In terms of layout, the car park extends to 355 spaces (incl. 2 EV charging points) over 5 split deck levels and is operated on a Pay & Display basis within a Tariff Zone band 2. Albeit all the spaces are available for public use, 43 ground level spaces are designated solely for local business permit holders. This designated arrangement is unusual within the Council's car park portfolio and relates only to C&Q.

10.4 In terms of C&Qs operation, the car park no longer benefits from the presence of on-site management staff and is subject to an 8am-6pm charging period from Monday to Sunday (albeit the car park is closed and secured through the activation of lower-level roller shutter doors at 8pm).

10.5 An issue which appears to have accelerated C&Qs decline relates to a Council decision to close the upper 2.5 decks (amounting to c 145 car spaces) in 2020. This decision was taken following concerns regarding the structural rigidity of the upper decks which were displaying signs of concrete deterioration and structural defects. A non-intrusive survey was undertaken at the time which apparently supported this decision.

10.6 The closure of these decks together with the lack of suitable management/security measures and lower levels of passive surveillance has led to a sustained campaign of opportunistic anti-social behaviour against C&Q. This has generated a constant and costly stream of vandalism including graffiti, damage to mechanical and electrical equipment and a range of compliance related installations. This consistent and destructive activity has further compounded the detrimental impact on the car park's image and subsequent levels of utilisation.

10.7 The anti-social behaviour is also a significant safety concern with activity such as rough sleeping, drug use, setting alight bonfires which cause health and safety risks to the perpetrators and wider members of the public. These behaviours impact on the reputation of the car park and deter genuine customers (and thereby further reduce income generation) and impact directly on the quality of life for those residents living nearby.

### Pre Market Engagement

To establish market appetite and to generate increased profile for this initiative, the Commercial Assets service undertook a period of formal pre-market engagement through placing a Preliminary Market Engagement Notice on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2025. We attach a copy of the Notice at Appendix 1.

This led to a period of meaningful market engagement with a range of contractor, operator and consultancy organisations. As part of this process an information briefing pack was issued to interested parties and on-site meetings were convened enabling a tour of C&Q and the wider city centre car park estate.

Arising from the above, a range of submissions were received from interested parties which set out further details on expertise, approach and potential solutions for the C&Q refurbishment/outsourcing project. This market feedback has been valuable in further refining the project scope and generally positioning this initiative.

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## Structural Assessment

Following engagement of a leading car park structural consultant, C&Q was subject to a rigorous intrusive structural assessment which included:

- Undertaking chemical analysis of concrete samples
- Revealing areas of reinforcement to measure steel bar diameter
- Imaging

Arising from this analysis we have been categorically advised that the car park structure is capable of withstanding loads required of it (as a multi storey car park) and that this has been tested on the basis of the 'current' recommended load as stipulated in the latest IStructE Design Recommendations for Multistorey Car Park Design published in May 2023 (this is relevant as it considers modern cars and also has an element of future proofing).

This positive outcome enables C&Q to be refurbished with a relatively standard scheme (avoiding any structural strengthening works), as opposed to having to be decommissioned/closed or operated subject to utilisation restrictions.

In summary therefore the car park is structurally acceptable, subject to being refurbished, maintained and having a life-care plan in place.

## Outline Refurbishment Specification and Cost

The refurbishment scope and specification have been developed to directly address health and safety, compliance and security issues at C&Q. In addition, the layout/design and associated decoration works will also ensure the car park becomes a more welcoming and user-friendly environment for customers.

We set out below a high-level itemised summary of the proposed refurbishment specification

### i) Structural

- Localised concrete repairs

### ii) Mechanical & Electrical

- Replacement of lighting
- Installation of CCTV
- Replacement of 3 x no lift cars
- Replacement of ventilation system

### iii) Compliance

- Replacement of access/fire doors

### iv) Layout/Design

- Resurfacing of all decks (using resin finish).
- Demarcation and re-lining (involving removal of dedicated permit holder bays)
- Removal of planters
- Improvements to car park entrance
- Installation of security fencing (top deck)

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#### v) Decoration

- Refurbishment of stair cores
- Walls, columns and soffit painting (using anti-graffiti paint)
- Deep cleaning of all car park areas
- Removal of vegetation around the car park

#### vi) External Works

- Improvements to paths / access routes around the perimeter
- Improvements to external lighting
- Landscaping works to external areas.

The total cost of the refurbishment project has been assessed at £2.49million and a copy of the cost plan is attached at Appendix 2. The key cost and programme assumptions include:

- Risk allowance is assumed at 10%
- An implementation programme of c 6 months which will necessitate the closure of the car park
- Costs do not include any legal / arrangement fees
- Works will be procured via a Design & Build contract

#### Car Park Management

Following a period of internal consultation, and with agreement from the Council's Car Park Management team, it has been resolved that the management of C&Q once refurbished and reopened should be outsourced to a leading private sector car park operator. Albeit there will be an additional annual cost (fee) attached to this arrangement, it is considered that this option will enable C&Q to re-establish itself as a premier city centre multi storey car park.

It is important to highlight that this externalisation arrangement will involve the Council entering into a Management Agreement (not a traditional Lease), enabling the Council to retain ownership and a high degree of strategic control over the asset.

Subject to the agreement of satisfactory commercial terms, the entering into of a Management Agreement will enable the Council to transfer a range of functions inter alia including security, cleaning, promotion maintenance/repair and staffing. The extent of transference by the Council will need to be agreed internally and will be informed by the annual management fee levied and any associated incentivisation provisions agreed with the private operator.

The appointed operators' performance will be monitored in accordance with a range of pre-agreed KPIs contained within the contract which can be kept under annual review.

In terms of duration, Management Agreements are typically a minimum of 3 yrs with the ability to extend for a further 2 years by agreement between parties.

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## Procurement and Project Implementation

The Commercial Assets team have selected the procurement route via the NHS SBS Framework. This well established and utilised Framework comprises a range of Procurement Lots including Lot 7 Design, Build, Finance & Operation of Sustainable Car Parks.

Lot 7 DBFO comprises a variety of leading car park contractor and management organisations whose appointment to the Framework has followed a period of rigorous assessment by NHS SBS to verify the organisation's credentials, suitability and ability to offer value for money for the works and services it provides.

It is the Council's intention to utilise Lot 7 and conduct a mini competition. Acting in accordance with Framework Guidelines, this will involve undertaking an Expression of Interest stage to establish a long list of interested organisations who have confirmed their intention to bid. The second stage will require the issue of a Project Brief (invitation to Tender) where bidders will prepare detailed commercial and technical submissions in relation to the linked refurbishment and onward management of C&Q.

Submissions received from bidding organisations will need to be interrogated and clarified and thereafter assessed against a pre-agreed evaluation and selection criteria enabling either a final shortlisting (and best and final offer stage) or a direct appointment recommendation to be made. Key bid evaluation factors will include price, experience, delivery track record, risk mitigation and demonstrable added value. The tender period is expected to take c. 8 - 12 weeks.

Following Council ratification of the appointment, detailed heads of terms and associated contractual agreements will be negotiated, finalised and entered enabling the project to mobilise and the refurbishment to commence.

## Forecast Financial Performance and Funding

In the last full financial year 2024/25 C&Q generated £309,555 of gross revenue (net of VAT) and a similar figure is forecast for the current year. This equates to £1,474 per car space from the currently reduced capacity of 210 spaces and £872 per space overall.

Given the number of closed spaces and the existing car park condition (it is estimated that the total car park is on average only 20% occupied during charging hours), there is significant potential to improve the trading performance at the car park, particularly as it is currently a Zone 2 car park (with potential to be grouped with Central car parks once the quality of the facility is enhanced post refurbishment). At current tariffs, the forecast impact on revenue of incremental increases in occupancy of 10% is shown below.

<b>Increase in % of capacity utilised</b>	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%
<b>Forecast increase in gross income (net of VAT)</b>	£156,910	£313,820	£470,730	£627,640	£784,550

An increase of 30% to achieve an average of 50% utilisation is forecast to be reasonably achievable post refurbishment. However, as C&Q will be closed to carry out the works it is anticipated that it may take up to 3 years for the potential revenue levels to be fully met. On this basis the following revenues are forecast post works completion:

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Year following re-opening	1	2	3
<b>Forecast Gross Revenue (net of VAT)</b>	<b>£546,200</b>	<b>£683,140</b>	<b>£786,414</b>
Per car space (355 spaces)	£1,152.32	£1,441.22	£1,659.10
<b>Increase from 2024/25 Revenue</b>	<b>£236,645</b>	<b>£373,585</b>	<b>£476,859</b>

The forecast year 3 revenue/space is compared to that generated in 2024/25 from other Zone 2 car parks operated by the Council. Given the location of the C&Q car park the forecast is deemed to be a prudent and reasonable estimate at this stage, however operator procurement submissions will be required to include revenue forecasts which will assist in verifying the assumptions.

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

11.1 Achieving vacant possession of the Civic site together with relocating to Senate Court supports the delivery of the following overarching strategic priorities:

- **Well Run Council:** The refurbishment and outsource proposals for C&Q will enable this key asset to re-establish itself as a premier MSCP for the City. Contributing towards an improved image for the city centre, releasing additional economic investment and realising reduced capital repair expenditure (arising from the suppression of any potential anti-social behaviour).
- **Local Economy:** The refurbishment and reopening of C&Q is expected to further support the economic vibrancy and vitality of The Quayside and the core retail district adjacent to The Cathedral
- **Sustainable Environment:** The introduction of modern and efficient mechanical and electrical plant is expected to contribute to the Council’s sustainability and energy efficiency agenda

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

12.1 The top 5 project risks and associated mitigation strategies are as follows;

Risk	Mitigation Strategy
Risk of Project Budget / Construction Inflation	Ensure competitive procurement through NHS SBS Framework. Cost Benchmark all rates.
Risk of increased structural repair scope.	Intrusive surveys already undertaken. Ensure sufficient project risk provision held during the construction stage.
Risk of Project Programme Over-run	Robust project programme established.
Viable Financial Management Proposal	Market testing already undertaken. Further engagement through two-stage framework process.
Timescale for Car Park Handover / Occupation	Early contractor engagement to programme the works and consider

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	logistics. Potential to keep part of the car park open
--	--

### **13. Are there any other options?**

13.1 None

#### **Strategic Director Corporate Resources, Dave Hodgson**

Author: Ben Colman, Head of Service – Commercial Assets

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

Background papers used in compiling this report:

None

List of Appendices:

- Appendix 1 – Cathedral & Quay - Preliminary Market Engagement Notice
- Appendix 2 – Cathedral & Quay Refurbishment – Itemised Cost Plan

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Planning

## PME - Cathedral & Quay Multi Storey Car Park, Exeter - Project Management and Operational Services

Exeter City Council

Watch this notice

UK2: Preliminary market engagement notice - Procurement Act 2023 - [view information about notice types \(https://www.find-tender.service.gov.uk/Home/NoticeTypes\)](https://www.find-tender.service.gov.uk/Home/NoticeTypes)

Notice identifier: 2025/S 000-030750

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-0544da

Published 6 June 2025, 7:28pm

Last edited 18 July 2025, 6:40pm

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### Engagement

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## Scope

## Reference

PR122025/DN777118

## Description

Exeter is a dynamic and growing city with a population of over 130,000 people (which has grown by c.15% over the last 10 years). The city is the economic hub of Devon with an unemployment rate of 2.2%, 35,000 daily commuters and a travel to work area of 500,000 people.

The city is strategically located on the M5, A38 and A30 and is served by two national rail lines. Exeter is home to a burgeoning economy and major employers like the Met Office, Devon County Council and the Devon and Exeter NHS Foundation Trust. The University of Exeter, a leading Russell Group university, and Exeter College anchor the educational offer of Exeter and the Southwest. The city also provides easy access to a fantastic local environment including the countryside, moor and the coast, linked to a high-quality built environment and heritage.

As part of an extensive commercial, operational and civic portfolio, the Council owns and operates a significant car park estate which comprises a total of 31 car parks amounting to 3720 spaces. The city

centre is served by 3 multi storey car parks which includes the Cathedral & Quay (C&Q) car park which is accessed directly from Western Way (A3015) directly to the south of the city centre.

The C&Q car park was constructed in the late 1980's and at the time was considered the premier city centre car park for Exeter. The car park is owned freehold by the Council and is situated in a prominent and strategically important location between Exeter Cathedral (and the prime retail district) and the historic Quayside.

Key information regarding the C&Q is set out below:

1. Construction method - In-situ concrete frame with waffle deck slab with brick facades and stair & ventilation towers.
2. Total no of spaces - 355 spaces
3. No of spaces in use (excl. permit holders) - 166 spaces
4. No of levels - 5 split-level decks
5. Payment Method - Pay and Display
6. Charging Period - 8am to 6pm (Monday to Sunday)
7. Average net annual income for 2022-25 period (excl. permit holders) - £289,098 (£1741/space)
8. Zone and Tariff - Zone 2
  - 2 hours £3.40
  - 3 hours £4.50
  - 4 hours £5.60
  - 5 hours £6.70
  - All day £11.00 (pay by cash or phone)
9. No of Permit holders - 40 situated on ground floor

10. C&Q is located within a conservation area, and borders the historic Roman city wall to the east of the site

The car park has fallen into a state of disrepair over the last 5 year and as a result is not fully operational with the top 2.5 decks now closed. The decision to close these decks has also led to an increase in antisocial behaviour which in turn has had a further detrimental impact on the car park's image and utilisation.

Having regard to the performance of the Council's other city centre car parks, C&Q clearly has a significant amount of latent potential. However, this potential will only be realised following the car park's refurbishment together with the implementation of an active asset management strategy which addresses its medium-term operation/management and promotion. These combination of circumstances present a rare opportunity for the Council and a private sector partner to align and collaborate in identifying a solution to transform the performance of a major city centre car parking asset.

The Council is seeking to engage the marketplace to initiate a dialogue and to gauge market appetite for entering into a form of partnership which will focus on optimising the performance of C&Q car park into the future.

The Council is flexible concerning partnering options however key priorities include:

- Identifying leading project management expertise to successfully complete the refurbishment works on behalf of the Council
- Entering into suitable partnership arrangements (e.g. Management Agreement, Geared Ground Lease) which effectively transfers the responsibility to operate, manage and promote the car park to a leading private sector operator on terms to be agreed. This agreement would be focused on optimising this car park asset (resulting in strengthening the net income stream over time) and is likely to incorporate agreed KPI's and annual reviews.

- Creating the conditions to optimise utilisation and income generation through a potential review of C&Q's existing tariff zoning, permit holding and staffing arrangements.

The Council views C&Q as a potential pilot initiative and subject to the outcome of this procurement exercise is willing to consider the option of identifying and transferring additional car park/s into a partnership arrangement supported by an approved business case.

### **Total value (estimated)**

£7,200,000 including VAT

Above the relevant threshold

### **Contract dates (estimated)**

1 June 2026 to 31 May 2036

10 years

### **Main procurement category**

Works

### **Additional procurement category**

Services

### **CPV classifications**

- 45213312 - Car park building construction work
- 71520000 - Construction supervision services
- 71541000 - Construction project management services
- 98351000 - Car park management services

### **Contract locations**

- UKK43 - Devon CC

# Engagement

## Engagement deadline

25 July 2025

## Engagement process description

Exeter City Council is commencing a formal Preliminary Market Engagement (PME) exercise in advance of initiating a procurement process. The purpose of such engagement is to understand the level of market interest and to seek market intelligence on offerings in the market and to help develop the authority's requirements and approach to the proposed future tender exercise.

To inform this Preliminary market engagement exercise the Council has compiled an information briefing pack which includes the following:

- Land Registry Title and Plan
- Condition survey for Cathedra & Quay car park (prepared by Kendall Kingscott, dated April 25)
- Applicable Tariff Zoning arrangements across the Council's car park estate
- Summary of annual income statistics (2022-24) for car parks situated within Central and Zone 1 areas

This briefing pack can be made available upon request by messaging via the Council's e-tender portal.

In order to ensure the best outcome from this process, the Council will be holding a series of engagement sessions in Exeter which will include a tour of C&Q car park (and other car park assets as necessary) together with a project scoping discussion and question and answer session with the Council's Commercial Assets and Car Park Operational teams.

Market Engagement Submissions:

To assist in shaping and positioning this proposition the Council is seeking a written response from interested parties who have actively engaged with this preliminary market engagement process. These responses will be important in informing the options available to the Council and subsequent decisions in selecting the preferred procurement option to proceed with.

Interested parties are asked to consider and respond to the following 5 Questions:

1. Does this outline proposition align with your new business development strategy. If so, please explain why?

2. What do you consider are the key opportunities and constraints associated with this initiative?

3. Do you consider that a partnership approached as outlined above establishes the best prospects for a successful outcome. If so, please explain why?

4. What market insight and expertise can you bring to bear in helping to structure and deliver this proposition?

5. Are there any additional issues or considerations you would wish to highlight?

This is an information only gathering exercise. No contract will be awarded following the conclusion of this preliminary market engagement exercise, but your input may be used to shape and finalise the development of the subsequent tender exercise that may follow.

Clarification questions and general requests are to be submitted in writing via the Council's e-procurement portal.

Site visits and project scoping sessions are scheduled to be held on Wednesday 2nd July and Thursday 3rd July (subject to availability. Alternative dates may be offered if necessary). Please message via the council's e-procurement portal to book a site visit.

Written market engagement submissions are to be submitted by 5pm on Friday 25th July.

Link to Council e-tender portal:

<https://procontract.due-north.com/Advert?advertId=46606cf8-0043-f011-8136-005056b64545&p=69ce52d6-e03c-e511-80ed-000c29c9ba21> (<https://procontract.due-north.com/Advert?advertId=46606cf8-0043-f011-8136-005056b64545&p=69ce52d6-e03c-e511-80ed-000c29c9ba21>)

## Participation

### Particular suitability

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SME)

## Contracting authority

### Exeter City Council

Public Procurement Organisation Number: PCHX-3846-DMNW

Civic Centre  
Exeter  
EX1 1JN  
United Kingdom

Contact name: Lynda Chaffey

Email: [eccprocurement@exeter.gov.uk](mailto:eccprocurement@exeter.gov.uk)

Website: <https://exeter.gov.uk> (<https://exeter.gov.uk/>)

Region: UKK43 - Devon CC

Organisation type: Public authority - sub-central government

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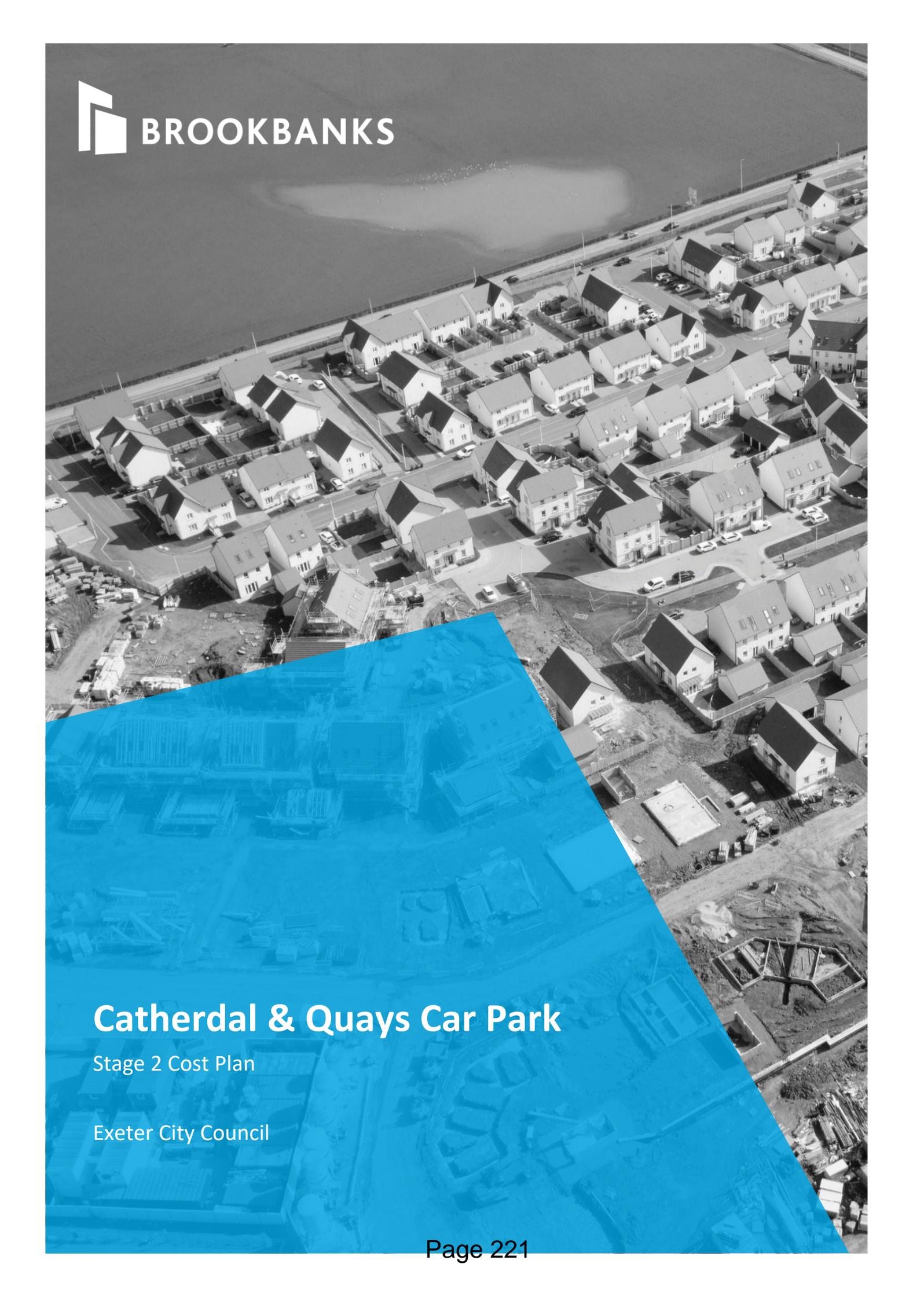
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**Catherdal & Quays Car Park**

Stage 2 Cost Plan

Exeter City Council

Contents

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- 1 Introduction
- 2 Assumptions and Exclusions
- 3 Area Schedule
- 4 Elemental Summary
- 5 Elemental Breakdown
- 6 External Works Breakdown

Introduction

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1 Introduction

1.1 This estimate has been prepared by Brookbanks. Given the level of the design information at this time a number of assumptions and key assumptions have been made to produce this document.

2 Executive Summary

2.1 The project relates to the development of 27 apartments classed as 'temporary accommodation' but constructed to the BCHA social rent specification.

2.2 The construction is steel frame design with exposed walkways to the North Elevation. The foundations are taken as trenchfill. Calofiers with ASHPs have been assumed.

3 Basis of Estimate

3.1 This estimate has been based upon the following information:

- \* Stripe Consulting - Cathedral & Quay Car Park Exeter Structural Assessment Report

#### 4 Assumptions

- 4.1 It is assumed that all decks are to be resurfaced using resin finish.
- 4.2 It is assumed that 10% of the upper floors require corrosion repairs.
- 4.3 It is assumed that 20% of the upper floors require spalling works.
- 4.4 Allowances have been made for making good staircores and replacing treads.
- 4.5 An allowance has been made for cashless payment system installation. The cost is in line with recent tenders for Guildhall & John Lewis car parks
- 4.6 Allowance has been made to replace the existing electrical services, including lighting and small power, within the car park.
- 4.7 New ventilation has been assumed.
- 4.8 New rainwater drainage has been assumed throughout.
- 4.9 Allowance has been made to clean external walls and for an amount of repointing to brickwork.
- 4.10 Allowance has been made to apply anti-graffiti paint to internal walls
- 4.11 Allowance has been made for external lighting to both the building and bollard light.
- 4.12 Security fencing around the top floor of the car park has been assumed.
- 4.13 Allowance has been made to resurface and relay external paths around the car park.
- 4.14 Preliminaries based at 16%.
- 4.15 Overheads and profit based at 6%.
- 4.16 Risk allowance based at 10%
- 4.17 It is assumed the works will be procured on a Design & Build basis.

Further assumptions are listed in the comments section of the cost breakdowns.

#### 5 Exclusions

- 5.1 Carbon reinforcement is allowed 'below the line'.
- 5.2 Sprinklers; it is assumed that these are not required.
- 5.3 Dealing with any specific requirements in terms of archaeology or antiquities affecting the adjacent City Wall.
- 5.4 Works to existing lift shaft; new lift car only are allowed.
- 5.5 Any ecological requirements.
- 5.6 Implications of global pandemics and any effects from global trade tariffs.
- 5.7 Indexation beyond current day.
- 5.8 External works other than those detailed in the elemental breakdown.
- 5.9 Please note that other exclusions are included in the cost breakdown.
- 5.1 VAT.

## Area Schedule

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### 6.0 SCHEDULE OF FLOOR AREAS

Areas have been measured from the Scope of Works drawings, as noted in the basis of this estimate.

Gross / Net areas have been measured in accordance with The New Rules of Measurement (1st Edition) Published in 2009 by the RICS.

<b>Definitions:</b>	<b>NIA</b>	Area excluding all circulation, toilets, showers, plant, back of house storage, ducts, structures etc
	<b>GIA</b>	Area up to internal face of external wall including all internal structures but excluding voids
	<b>GEA</b>	Area up to external face of external wall including all internal structures

Areas denoted as NIA do not necessarily equate to effective areas; (i.e. client fit out of retail areas will likely effect the NIA

The measures and areas within this document should not be relied upon for any other purpose other than the formulation of the Cost Plan itself.

The areas are subject to design team confirmation and agreement.

#### Summary of Gross Internal Areas (GIA):

4,090  
**4,908**

Ref	Element	Building Works		External works		Total cost		£/m <sup>2</sup>	Comments
0	Facilitating Works	£	-	£	33,500.00	£	33,500.00	£	6.83
1	Substructure	£	-	£	-	£	-	£	-
2.1	Frame	£	9,400.00	£	-	£	9,400.00	£	1.92
2.2	Upper Floors	£	-	£	-	£	-	£	-
2.3	Roof	£	-	£	-	£	-	£	-
2.4	Stairs & Ramps	£	30,000.00	£	-	£	30,000.00	£	6.11
2.5	External Walls	£	25,000.00	£	-	£	25,000.00	£	5.09
2.6	External Doors & Windows	£	4,500.00	£	-	£	4,500.00	£	0.92
2.7	Internal Walls	£	22,500.00	£	-	£	22,500.00	£	4.58
2.8	Internal Doors	£	39,200.00	£	-	£	39,200.00	£	7.99
3.1	Wall Finishes	£	98,000.00	£	-	£	98,000.00	£	19.97
3.2	Floor Finishes	£	543,000.00	£	-	£	543,000.00	£	110.64
3.3	Ceiling Finishes	£	88,200.00	£	-	£	88,200.00	£	32.28
4	Fixtures, Fittings & Equipment	£	7,500.00	£	-	£	7,500.00	£	1.53
5	Mechanical, Electrical & Plumbing	£	735,263.20	£	-	£	735,263.20	£	149.81
8	<i>External Works</i>								
8.1	Site preparation works	£	-	£	-	£	-	£	-
8.2	Drainage	£	-	£	5,000.00	£	5,000.00	£	1.02
8.3	External Services	£	-	£	12,000.00	£	12,000.00	£	2.44
8.4	Minor Structures	£	-	£	6,000.00	£	6,000.00	£	1.22
8.5	Hard Landscaping	£	-	£	51,208.00	£	51,208.00	£	10.43
8.6	Walls and Fencing	£	-	£	44,000.00	£	44,000.00	£	8.96
8.7	Soft Landscaping	£	-	£	30,000.00	£	30,000.00	£	6.11
8.8	Lighting	£	-	£	60,000.00	£	60,000.00	£	12.22
8.9	Street Furniture	£	-	£	1,000.00	£	1,000.00	£	0.20
<b>SUB-TOTAL: BUILDING WORKS</b>		<b>£1,602,563.20</b>	<b>£209,208.00</b>	<b>£1,811,771.20</b>	<b>£369.15</b>				
9	Post Contract Design Fees (3%)	£	48,076.90	£	6,276.24	£	54,353.14	£	11.07
10	Preliminaries (16%)	£	256,410.11	£	33,473.28	£	289,883.39	£	59.06

11	Main Contractor's OHP (5%)	£ 96,153.79	£ 12,552.48	£ 108,706.27	£ 22.15
12	Risk Allowance (10%)	£ 200,320.40	£ 26,151.00	£ 226,471.40	£ 46.14
<b>Estimated Overall Construction Cost</b>		<b>£2,203,524.40</b>	<b>£287,661.00</b>	<b>£2,491,185.40</b>	<b>£507.58</b>
12	Carbon Reinforcement	£ 392,601.60	excluded	£ -	-
<b>Estimated Overall Construction Cost</b>		<b>£2,596,126.00</b>	<b>£287,661.00</b>	<b>£2,491,185.40</b>	<b>£507.58</b>

Ref	Description	Quantity	Unit	Rate	Total	Comments
<b>0</b>	<b>Facilitating Works</b>					
0-1-1	Remove existing patch tarmac repairs and dispose	200	m2	£ 30.00	£ 6,000.00	Patch repairs
0-1-2	Removal of existing drainage	1	item	£ 10,000.00	£ 10,000.00	
0-1-3	Rwmove existing doors and dispose off site	1	item	£ 7,500.00	£ 7,500.00	
0-1-4	Remove existing M&E services	1	item	£ 10,000.00	£ 10,000.00	
<b>Facilitating Work to summary</b>					<b>£ 33,500.00</b>	
<b>1</b>	<b>Substructure</b>					
1-1-1	No works					
<b>Substructure to summary</b>					<b>£ -</b>	
<b>2</b>	<b>Superstructure</b>					
<b>2-1</b>	<b>Frame</b>					
2-1-1	Frame repairs; corrosion on waffle slab ribs; remove areas of corrosion; apply concrete repair; inc formwork and reinforcement	20	m2	£ 350.00	£ 7,000.00	Taken as 25% of upper 3 floors
2-1-2	Frame repairs; spalling concrete to waffle slabs; remove areas of corrosion	40	m2	£ 60.00	£ 2,400.00	Taken as 40% of upper 3 floors
<b>Frame to summary</b>					<b>£ 9,400.00</b>	
<b>2-2</b>	<b>Upper Floors</b>					
2-2-1	No works					
<b>Upper Floors to summary</b>					<b>£ -</b>	
<b>2-3</b>	<b>Roof</b>					
2-3-1	No Works					See surfacing covered under floor finishes
<b>Roof to summary</b>					<b>£ -</b>	
<b>2-4</b>	<b>Stairs and Ramps</b>					
2-4-1	Allowance for misc making good to staircores	1	item	£ 10,000.00	£ 10,000.00	

2-4-2	New colour contrasting stair treads	1	item	£	20,000.00	£	20,000.00	
<b>Stair and Ramps to summary</b>							£	<b>30,000.00</b>
<b>2-5</b>	<b>External Walls</b>							
2-5-1	Allowance for graffitti removal (shot blasting or similar)	1	item	£	10,000	£	10,000.00	To internal walls
2-5-2	Repointing of external brickwork	100	m2	£	150	£	15,000.00	Assumed allowance
<b>External Walls to summary</b>							£	<b>25,000.00</b>
<b>2-6</b>	<b>Windows and External Doors</b>							
2-6-1	External Doors to staircores	3	nr	£	1,500.00	£	4,500.00	
<b>Windows and External Doors to summary</b>							£	<b>4,500.00</b>
<b>2-7</b>	<b>Internal Walls and Partitions</b>							
2-7-1	Misc cosmetic repairs to internal walls	1	item	£	10,000.00	£	10,000.00	
	Repairs to barriers	1	item	£	12,500.00	£	12,500.00	
<b>Internal Walls and Partitions to summary</b>							£	<b>22,500.00</b>
<b>2-8</b>	<b>Internal Doors</b>							
2-8-1	Fire Doors to Stairwell; Double	20	nr	£	1,500.00	£	30,000.00	
2-8-2	Plant room single doors; assume FD60; steel doors	1	nr	£	1,200.00	£	1,200.00	
2-8-3	Riser cupboard doors; double; FD60	10	nr	£	800.00	£	8,000.00	
<b>Internal Doors to summary</b>							£	<b>39,200.00</b>
<b>Superstructure to summary</b>							£	<b>130,600.00</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Internal Finishes</b>							
<b>3-1</b>	<b>Wall Finishes</b>							
3-1-1	Anti-graffiti paint to walls	4,900	m <sup>2</sup>	£	20.00	£	98,000.00	Cost based on GIA
3-1-2	Allowance to repaint / recoat existing restraint barriers	1	item	£	20,000.00	£	20,000.00	
<b>Wall Finishes to summary</b>							£	<b>98,000.00</b>
<b>3-2</b>	<b>Floor Finishes</b>							
3-2-1	Waterproofing layer	200	m <sup>2</sup>	£	10.00	£	2,000.00	
3-2-2	Trix-flex	4900	m <sup>2</sup>	£	90.00	£	441,000.00	Resin-based surface finish
3-2-3	Preparation to the above	4900	m2	£	10.00	£	49,000.00	
3-2-4	Flooring to core areas	400		£	120.00	£	48,000.00	Hard wearing flooring to core areas
3-2-5	Redecoaration of stair strings	1	item	£	3,000.00	£	3,000.00	
<b>Floor Finishes to summary</b>							£	<b>543,000.00</b>
<b>3-3</b>	<b>Ceiling Finishes</b>							
3-3-1	Anti-corrosion paint to waffle deck concrete floors	4900	m2	£	18.00	£	88,200.00	

Ceiling Finishes to summary				£	88,200.00		
Finishes to summary				£	729,200.00		
<b>4</b>	<b>Fittings, Furnishings and Equipment</b>						
4-1-1	<b>Fittings, Furnishings and Equipment</b>						
4-1-6	Signage	1	item	£	7,500.00	£	7,500.00 New car park signage
Fittings, Furnishings and Equipment to summary				£	7,500.00		
<b>5</b>	<b>Services</b>						
5-1	<b>Sanitary Installations</b>						
5-1-1	No Works						
Sanitary Installations				£	-		
5-2	<b>Services equipment</b>						
5-2-1	No works						
Services Equipment				£	-		
5-3	<b>Disposal installations</b>						
5-3-1	Disposal installations	4900	nr	£	8.00	£	39,200.00 New drainage / rainwater system
5-3-2	Allowance for petrol interceptor	1	item	£	6,500.00	£	6,500.00 Assume new petrol interceptor
Disposal Installations				£	45,700.00		
5-4	<b>Water installations</b>						
5-4-1	No works						
Water installations				£	-		
5-5	<b>Heat source</b>						
5-5-1	No Works						
Heat source				£	-		
5-6	<b>Space heating and air conditioning</b>						
5-6-1	No Works						
Space Heating and Air Conditioning to Summary				£	-		
5-7	<b>Ventilation systems</b>						
5-7-1	Ventilation to staircores	3	nr	£	40,000.00	£	120,000.00
Ventilation Systems to Summary				£	120,000.00		
5-8	<b>Electrical installations</b>						
5-8-1	Landlord LV distribution	4900	m2	£	18.00	£	88,200.00
5-8-2	General lighting	4900	m2	£	25.00	£	122,500.00
5-8-3	Lighting control system	4900	m2	£	9.00	£	44,100.00

5-8-4	Small power installation	4900	m2	£	5.00	£	24,500.00
<b>Electrical Installations to Summary</b>							<b>£ 279,300.00</b>
<b>5-9</b>	<b>Fuel installations</b>						
5-9-1	No works						
<b>Fuel Installations to Summary</b>							<b>£ -</b>
<b>5-10</b>	<b>Lift and conveyor installations</b>						
5-10-1	Allowance for 13 person lift; replacement car	3	Nr	£30,000.00	£	90,000.00	Cat 1 lift vandal resistant
5-10-2	Allowance for maintenance period	1	item	£10,000.00	£	10,000.00	

Ref	Description	Quantity	Unit	Rate	Total	Comments
<b>0</b>	<b>Facilitating works</b>					
0-1	Demolition Works; removal of existing turrets to top deck	1	item	£ 45,000.00	£ -	excluded
	<b>Facilitating Work to summary</b>				£ -	
<b>8.00</b>	<b>External works</b>					
<b>8.1</b>	<b>Site preparation works</b>					
	No Works					
	<b>Site preparation to summary</b>				£ -	
<b>8.2</b>	<b>Drainage</b>					
8-2-1	Allowance for misc external drainage	1	item	£ 5,000.00	£ 5,000.00	Misc drainage works to surrounding paths
	<b>Drainage to summary</b>				£ 5,000.00	
<b>8.3</b>	<b>External services</b>					
	<i>Water Mains Supply</i>					
8-3-1	No works					
	<i>Electricity Mains Supply</i>					
8-3-2	Misc allowance for external electrical service	1	item	£ 2,000.00	£ 2,000.00	
	<i>Gas Mains Supply</i>					
8-3-3	No works					
	<i>Telecommunications and other Communication Systems Connections</i>					
8-3-4	Telecom connections	1	item	£ 10,000.00	£ 10,000.00	Allowance for new fibre connection
	<b>External Services to summary</b>				£ 12,000.00	
<b>8.4</b>	<b>Minor Structures</b>					
8-4-1	Works to repair existing turrets	3	nr	£ 2,000.00	£ 6,000.00	To replace turrets
	<b>External Services to summary</b>				£ 6,000.00	
<b>8.5</b>	<b>Hard Landscaping</b>					
	<i>Footpaths</i>					

`8-5-1	Base (100mm)	900	m2	£	12.00	£	10,800.00	New footpath to perimeter
`8-5-2	Blinder (35mm)	900	m2	£	20.00	£	18,000.00	New footpath to perimeter
`8-5-3	Surface 30mm Cold Asphalt	900	m2	£	16.00	£	14,400.00	New footpath to perimeter
`8-5-4	Edging; Inc. bedding and haunching	188	m	£	16.00	£	3,008.00	New footpath to perimeter
`8-5-5	Works to existing adjoining footpaths	1	item	£	5,000.00	£	5,000.00	Allowance for making good pavement pavements / connections

<b>Hard Landscaping to summary</b>							£	<b>51,208.00</b>
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<b>8.6</b>	<b>Walls &amp; Fencing</b>							
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`8-6-1	Security Fencing	300	m	£	130.00	£	39,000.00	To upper deck
`8-6-2	Misc fencing	1	item	£	5,000.00	£	5,000.00	To close off footways / cut throughs

<b>Walls &amp; Fencing to summary</b>							£	<b>44,000.00</b>
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<b>8.7</b>	<b>Soft Landscaping</b>							
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`8-7-1	Allowance to cut back vegetation	1	item	£	10,000.00	£	10,000.00	Allowance for
`8-7-2	Allowance for misc landscaping	1	item	£	20,000.00	£	20,000.00	

<b>Soft Lighting to summary</b>							£	<b>30,000.00</b>
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<b>8.8</b>	<b>Lighting</b>							
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`8-8-1	Allowance for external bollard lighting	1	item	£	50,000.00	£	50,000.00	To full perimeter
`8-8-2	Allowance for external lighting to building	1	item	£	10,000.00	£	10,000.00	

<b>Lighting to summary</b>							£	<b>60,000.00</b>
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<b>8.9</b>	<b>Street Furniture</b>							
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`8-9-1	Litter bins	4	nr	£	250.00	£	1,000.00	
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<b>Street Furniture to summary</b>							£	<b>1,000.00</b>
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<b>External works to collection</b>							£	<b>209,208.00</b>
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## Notice of Motion on Reductions to Library Opening Hours

This Council acknowledges that Devon County Council (DCC) has currently committed to keeping Devon's libraries open, but notes that proposed changes to the branch libraries within the Exeter City Council area are being disproportionately affected by the current proposal. This Council believes that fully funding our libraries is a choice rather than a necessity given that DCC will no longer have to find funding for Special Needs and Disability education, which is widely known to have been exhausting DCC finances.

Within DCC's rationale for the proposed changes is the assertion that 70.63% of the current staffed opening hours across the service will be retained, this is *not* the case in the branch libraries that serve Exeter. In fact, the opposite is true with:

- Pinhoe library being reduced from 15 hours to 6 hours (40% RETENTION, 60% REDUCTION)
- St Thomas library being reduced from 38 hours to 15 hours (39.47% RETENTION, 60.53% REDUCTION)
- Topsham library being reduced from 17.5 hours to 6 hours (34.3% RETENTION, 65.7% REDUCTION)

Given that a recent Freedom of Information request indicates no significant change in the usage of these branch libraries pre- and post-COVID, there seems to be no case for such dramatic cuts to these opening hours. Therefore, this Council believes that this can only be a deliberate effort to deteriorate services in Exeter to the extent that they become unviable, which will ultimately lead to their closure. This appears to be a plan for the closure of Exeter's branch libraries by stealth.

This Council notes that libraries perform multiple roles that go beyond the very important activity of book lending, for instance, by providing access and assistance with using computers and printing services, early years learning activities, knit and natter groups, reading groups, assistance with job searching and other valuable community activities that bring people together. As such, reducing the branch library opening hours to the extent proposed will overly affect people who rely most on libraries, including children and young families, older residents, jobseekers and those in need of IT support. We also note the important role that branch libraries play in providing safe spaces for residents to gather and connect with one another<sup>i</sup>. According to research from the University of East Anglia<sup>ii</sup>, through the activities of the type outlined here, a branch library typically delivers £1 million in value which is far below its cost. In Libraries Unlimited own literature they argues that '[t]he value for money spent on the library service is enormous, with every £1 spent generating £3 of social impact value for the county.<sup>iii</sup> Decisions about library services should fully consider their social and cultural value, not only the financial pressures.

In the preamble to their consultation survey, DCC emphasise an anticipated increase in reliance on volunteers to extend staffed hours. While we recognise the value that volunteers bring to libraries, this serves to diminish the skills and expertise of library workers and librarians, who are experts in the management of library stock, retrieval of information and promotion of information literacy – an important skill in this age of misinformation. The proposed cuts to library services along with an increase in dependency on volunteers serves to 'deprofessionalise' the library sector. Volunteers, such as the 'Friends of' groups, are highly valued and very important to the library service, but they are not a substitute for staff.

Furthermore, it is troubling that there appears to be no plan for the direct consultation of staff during the consultation period, which ignores their expertise.

This Council resolves to:

- Request that the Leader of the Council write to Devon County Council urging them to reconsider its proposed severe reduction in branch library opening hours that adversely affect Exeter's residents, especially given the recently-announced county council multi-year settlement.
- Now that the survey consultation has closed, request that Devon County Council consult directly with the staff at Exeter's branch libraries, before any decisions are made, to explore more modest changes to opening hours based on firsthand knowledge of the way the libraries are used.
- Encourage Devon County Council to explore options to protect and/or enhance library access and services, for example, by drawing on existing case studies such as those published by Independent Mind<sup>iv</sup>. This should also involve an exploration of collaborative opportunities with existing public services, such as the arrangement St Thomas Library has with Theatre Alibi.
- Request that DCC provide a full Equalities Impact Assessment to decision makers before the decision is made to cut this key public service. It is not enough to simply ask for views on the proposed changes, as stated in the introduction to the consultation.

Mover: Cllr Deborah Darling

Seconded: Cllr James Cookson

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<sup>i</sup> Hawkins, B. et al (2019). *Unlimited Value: Leading Practice in Unlimited Value Creation*. Available at: <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Unlimited-Value-Report.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> University of East Anglia (2023). *England's public libraries generate value every year*. Available at: <https://www.uea.ac.uk/about/news/article/englands-public-libraries-generate-value-every-year>.

<sup>iii</sup> Libraries Unlimited (2025). *Devon Libraries at the Heart of Communities*. Available at: <https://www.librariesunlimited.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Devon-Libraries-at-the-Heart-of-Communities-1.pdf>

<sup>iv</sup> Independent Mind (2025). *Libraries loan review - case studies*. Available at: <https://www.librariesconnected.org.uk/news/libraries-connected-publishes-new-report-library-loan-trends>

**SEATING IN THE GUILDHALL**

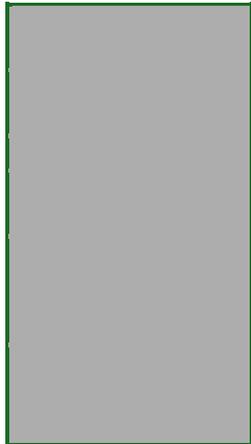
Chaplain	S151 Officer	<b>Deputy Lord Mayor Councillor Rolstone (L)</b>	<b>Lord Mayor Councillor Jobson (C)</b>	Chief Executive	Monitoring Officer	Democratic Services
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Democratic Services



Strategic Directors

<u>Councillors</u>	<u>Councillors</u>	<u>Councillors</u>
Darling (L)	Miller-Boam (L)	Bialyk (L)
Atkinson (L)	Snow (L)	Wright (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>	<u>Councillors</u>
Moore (G)	Holland (C)
Banyard (G)	Mitchell, M (LD)
Read (G)	Palmer (LD)
Rees (G)	Fullam (LD)
Wetenhall (G)	Mitchell, K (LD)
Bennett (G)	Ketchin (G)

Begley (L)	Wardle (L)	Patrick (L)
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Asvachin (L)	Sheridan (R)	Payne (R)
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	Haigh (I) **	Hughes (I) **
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<b>L:</b>	<b>Labour:</b>	<b>22</b>	<b><u>Portfolio Holders</u></b>	<b>Portfolio Holder for</b>
<b>G:</b>	<b>Green:</b>	<b>7</b>	Bialyk:	Leader
<b>LD:</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat</b>	<b>4</b>	Wright	Deputy Leader and Corporate Services, Community & City Centre
<b>C:</b>	<b>Conservative:</b>	<b>2</b>	Vizard	Climate, Ecological Change and Communities
<b>I:</b>	<b>Independent</b>	<b>2 **</b>	Williams, R	City Management
<b>R:</b>	<b>Reform</b>	<b>2</b>	Asvachin	Housing, Homelessness Prevention and Customer Services
			Wood	Leisure Services & Healthy Living
			Foale	Arts, Culture & Tourism
			Patrick	City Development
<b>**</b>	<b>Known as the Equity Independent Group</b>			

<b><u>Member Champions</u></b>	<b>Member Champion for</b>
Miller-Boam	Community Safety & Engagement
Darling	Culture & City Centre