

## STRATEGIC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date: Thursday 5 June 2025

Time: 5.30 pm

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

Members are invited to attend the above meeting.

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

Entry to the Civic Centre can be gained through the Customer Service Centre, Paris Street.

### *Membership -*

Pole (Chair), Mitchell, K (Deputy Chair), Atkinson, Haigh, Harding, Hussain, Ketchin, Miller-Boam, Knott, Palmer, Rolstone, Wetenhall and Williams, M

## Agenda

### 1 **Apologies**

To receive apologies for absence.

### 2 **Minutes**

(Pages 5 -  
12)

To approve and sign the minutes of the Strategic Scrutiny Committee held on 3 April 2025.

### 3 **Declarations of Interest**

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

### 4 **Local Government Act 1972 - Exclusion of Press and Public**

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

**"RESOLVED** that, under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the

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

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

Details of questions should be notified to the Democratic Services Manager via the [committee.services@exeter.gov.uk](mailto:committee.services@exeter.gov.uk) email by 10.00am at least three working days prior to the meeting. For this meeting any questions must be submitted by 10.00am on Monday 2 June 2025.

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

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

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

Councillor Bialyk\* - Leader  
Councillor Patrick - Portfolio Holder City Development  
Councillor Vizard\* - Portfolio Holder Climate and Ecological Change and Communities  
Councillor Wood - Portfolio Holder Leisure Services and Physical Activity  
Councillor Wright\* - Portfolio Holder, Culture and City Centre Strategy

\*Please note that some Portfolio Holders report to both scrutiny committees.

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

## **7 Progress Report Shared Prosperity Fund - Update** (Pages 13 - 24)

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

## **8 Markets & Street Trading in Exeter** (Pages 25 - 28)

To receive the report of the Strategic Director for Place.

## **9 Scrutiny Annual Report** (Pages 29 - 44)

To receive the report of the Scrutiny Programme Board.

## **10 Forward Plan of Business and Scrutiny Work Plan** (Pages 45 - 46)

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

agenda items:

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

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

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

### **Date of Next Meeting**

The next scheduled meeting of the Strategic Scrutiny Committee will be held on **Thursday 17 July 2025** at 5.30 pm in the Civic Centre.

**Individual reports on this agenda can be produced in other formats on request to Democratic Services (Committees) on 01392 265425.**

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## **STRATEGIC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

3 April 2025

### Present:

Councillor Councillor Liz Pole (Chair)

Councillors Mitchell, M, Atkinson, Haigh, Hughes, Jobson, Knott, Moore, Palmer, Rees, Rolstone, Snow and Williams, M

### Also present:

Strategic Director for Place, Head of Legal and Democratic Services & Monitoring Officer, Legal Advisor, Place Partnership (Sport England) Manager and Democratic Services Officer (LS)

### In attendance as Portfolio Holder:

Councillors Bialyk, Foale, Williams, R and Wood

#### **61 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2025 were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair as correct.

#### **62 Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made by Members.

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

There were no questions submitted by the public.

#### **64 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 Wetenhall in relation to the Portfolio of Councillor Wood who attended the meeting. The question was circulated at the meeting to Members of the Committee. The response of the Portfolio Holder for Leisure Service and Healthy Living is set out below:

##### **Question**

“Agreeing final measures for Newtown Live and Move project

The report to this committee on the above project states that *“The results [of the public consultation] are currently being analysed with a view to sharing with SMB and members before a proposal going to DCC HATOC in July 2025. The scheme is on track for delivery in September.”*

But Devon County Council are advertising the draft orders on April 3rd, with public consultation on them running to April 28th. In other words, it appears that decisions have already been taken about the measures ahead of any consideration of the public consultation results or input from SMB or ward Councillors.

Can the Portfolio Holder confirm explain how this has happened and what he suggests happens to reconcile what DCC and ECC are doing?”

##### **Response**

Councillor Wood stated that at the joint Devon County Council and Exeter City Council Members Briefing on 15 October it was proposed and agreed that the

scheme would progress to consultation and there would be two elements to this, the survey and public engagement events and the formal Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) consultation. It was the understanding at that time that both elements would take place concurrently to form the complete consultation for onward analysis, proposals and decision making. Operationally, the two elements had to run back-to-back. The advertising of the formal TRO consultation did not preclude further advertisements or adjustments but without taking this forward, it would have required a further decision gateway. The TRO consultation was part of the proposal and decision making which was required to be considered for this scheme to be delivered.

The work was underway to present findings of the public engagement and would also summarise the TRO consultation during May. This would enable decisions to be proposed and made through the ECC SMB and DCC HATOC decision-making processes to enable the scheme to progress to construction in the autumn.

In a supplementary question Councillor Wetenhall asked if the Portfolio Holder could confirm detail of when SMB, ward Members and the Portfolio Holder would see, discuss and approve this. Councillor Wood responded stating that it would be good to deliver this as there had been previous consultations and that the officer would present to scrutiny today and would likely include an answer.

In accordance with Standing Order No. 20, the following question was submitted by Councillor Moore in relation to the Portfolio of Councillor Wood who attended the meeting. The question was circulated at the meeting to Members of the Committee. The response of the Portfolio Holder for Leisure Services and Healthy Living is set out below:

#### **Question**

“Please can the following figures be presented to the scrutiny committee in relation to Northbrook Pool.

Cost of planned and responsive maintenance requirements for the next three years.  
Expenditure, Maintenance Costs & Projected Increase in Future Repairs”

#### **Response**

Councillor Wood stated that looking back over the last three years, maintenance costs were £66,845, approximately £22,000 per annum. Looking forward, after considering the financial sustainability and consultation report, if the Council decided to keep the pool open significant capital works would be required. These would include, works to improve sustainability, reducing energy use and carbon emissions at approximately £850,000. £700,000 would be required to bring the centre up to a reliable and efficient operational industry standard and approximately £450,000 cost to comply with accessibility requirements. Collectively these works would extensively update the building therefore the historic trend of £22,000 per annum maintenance costs may be reduced.

In accordance with Standing Order No. 20, the following question was submitted by Councillor Moore in relation to the Portfolio of Councillor Wood who attended the meeting. The question was circulated at the meeting to Members of the Committee. The response of the Portfolio Holder for Leisure Service and Healthy Living is set out below:

#### **Question**

“What costs would be incurred by the Council to cover its closure (redundancy, security while closed etc)”

**Response**

Cost for decommissioning Northbrook:

Pools - £1000

Gas and domestic water services - £1000

Electrics - £500

Trade waste - £750

Boarding up of reception and office windows - £260

Total = £3510

Staff relocation would be considered following the usual process.

In a supplementary question Councillor Moore asked if these costs had been shared with the community and any interested community groups and whether funding from government had been considered. In response Councillor Wood stated that this information would be included in the minutes of this meeting and swimming pools fund had been approached twice but a commitment to remain open for 15 years was necessary, which was not possible at the time.

In accordance with Standing Order No. 20, the following question was submitted by Councillor Moore in relation to the Portfolio of Councillor Wood who attended the meeting. The question was circulated at the meeting to Members of the Committee. The response of the Portfolio Holder for Leisure Service and Healthy Living is set out below:

**Question**

"What advice from Sport England or others has been sought to improve viability?"

**Answer**

In July 2023, Stage 1 of Sport England Swimming Pool Fund bid of £91,193 was requested to support with the prevention of closure due to rising utility costs which was unsuccessful.

In October 2023, Stage 2 of Sport England Swimming Pool Fund bid of £894,400 was requested to support with the installation of PV panels, LED lighting, replace the gas boiler, triple glaze the pool hall, wall upgrade and repair roof and roof lights which was unsuccessful due to 15-year commitment to keep the building open.

In a supplementary question Councillor Moore asked why consultation with the community was only happening now and not two years ago, after the budget decision had been made. Councillor Wood responded that there was a potential decision to be made to make significant savings across the council and so consultation on the impact on users and the community was required at this point. There wasn't an intention to close the pool until the building of this budget. No community group had approached the Council formally and the building belonged to the Northbrook Trust so any group wishing to take it on would need to consider all implications of doing so.

**Questions to the Portfolio Holder for Leisure Services and Healthy Living**

Councillor Palmer asked if the pool were to close could the Portfolio Holder give reassurance that schools which use the pool for swimming lessons would not be disadvantaged and that costs wouldn't increase.

Councillor Wood responded stating that it would be Council who made any decision and schools had been approached. The consultation was available online and paper-based and over 200 hundred responses had been received to date. The consultation was formal, appropriate and in-depth and it would be wrong to predict the results which would inform decision making.

Councillor Atkinson asked how many political parties had responded with an alternative solution and what services funds would come from to enable this.

Councillor Wood responded stating that no plans had been received from any group, political or otherwise and the centre was operating at a loss of £220,000 per year.

Councillor Mitchell stated that the alternative budget proposed no cuts in leisure.

65 **Portfolio Holder report - Portfolio Holder for Leisure Services & Healthy Living (Councillor Wood)**

Councillor Wood presented his report which was taken as read and highlighted that the dashboard showed key indicators of how the service was performing.

The Portfolio Holder responded to questions from Members in the following terms:

- the intention was to approach leisure being cost-neutral as it was a discretionary service;
- the enhanced model for Wellbeing Exeter did not necessarily mean additional wards, it could include communities of interest which may not be geographical as was the case with the current enhanced provision;
- the work of the Wellbeing Exeter project was effective with the core model focussed on communities in the greatest need and some not traditionally viewed as in need but disrupted by development. The biggest impact was new communities and those who struggle to engage in a new area. Inclusive Exeter had already carried out some work including with a BAME community in Pinhoe and it may be possible to negotiate with some developers to contribute to Wellbeing Exeter;
- officers were working closely with Sport England with regard to the package of funding required as Sport England were not able to fully fund projects. The process was not one of application and decision-making but rather a negotiated process;
- NHS staff were present during referral sessions and most were paid for by the NHS and evaluation was carried out across the country with the local service almost breaking even. Anecdotal feedback was positive with one volunteer having been through the sessions and reporting that this had helped their recovery, gave them confidence in their body again and so they became a leisure member and volunteer. Formal evaluation would be undertaken by the NHS;
- governance models for the Wonford centre were being considered and a written answer would be provided outside the committee with regard to how a decision would be made about governance; and
- work was being undertaken with a partner regarding Exeter Arena and this was different to Northbrook pool as the Arena was a Grade B facility of national standard. How to run the Arena in a more cost-effective way was being investigated with the support of a partner and there was no indication of closure.

Councillor Hughes withdrew their question following comment by the Chair.

66 **Portfolio Holder Report - Portfolio Holder for Arts, Culture & Tourism (Councillor Foale)**

Councillor Foale presented the report on his Portfolio for Arts, Culture and Tourism highlighting the following:



- it had been a pleasure to have the chance to work with the creative and dynamic people of Exeter and to build positive relationships with over five National Portfolio Organisations (NPO);
- a celebration had been held at the Barnfield Theatre;
- there was a plan in conjunction with Exeter Partnership; and
- there had been a dig event in Princesshay with the RAMM.

The Portfolio Holder and Strategic Director for Place responded to questions from Members in the following terms:

- different models of governance would be investigated by the consultant;
- it would be an excellent idea for other service areas to replicate the supported placements scheme which the RAMM had successfully implemented;
- it was of note that the RAMM reached out to special schools and other vulnerable young people;
- there was a plan for a review of cultural services and subsequent restructure within which learning would be shared from the leisure review. An example was given of the café from St Sidwell's Point now being open in the RAMM;
- the draft cultural strategy had been updated;
- all five NPO were keen to repeat the celebration evening annually; and
- ensuring that transport options were clear on the Visit Exeter site could be looked in to.

## 67 **Live and Move Programme Update**

The Place Partnership Manager presented the report of the Live and Move Programme Update and gave a presentation making the following points:

- that there was a new element in tracking what facilities were used;
- residents said that Valley Parks and playing fields were most popular as opposed to indoor activities;
- it was easier to obtain information from those using indoor facilities; and
- Newtown update had been added to support.

The Place Partnership Manager and the Strategic Director for Place responded to Members questions in the following terms:

- he was unsure of the exact questions asked about gender but would investigate and provide details outside the meeting;
- gender inequality hadn't been a focus in the past but rather ethnic diversity. He was willing to work with Members and colleagues to gain insight into what could be done in future;
- Ebrington Road remained a focus along with Merrivale, Redhills and Exwick;
- It was exciting that This Girl Can campaign had been brought to the city as well as the Women's Rugby World Cup and the programme would celebrate all that was available in the area;
- access to Valley Parks was constantly being looked at and there may be opportunities with the Water Lane development. There was a desire to improve routes and access to get people safely and sustainably into the Valley Park;
- the dashboard was available publicly and there was a local community of practice held quarterly and shared through Exeter Partnership. The information gathered would be used in future funding bids;
- Exeter was known nationally for best practice in utilising this data which was also given to Sport England to share and had been featured a number of times in place-based newsletters with case studies and learning also on the website;

- the language was complicated regarding reduction in inactivity but this was part of a national survey used for benchmarking;
- there were qualitative reports which could be shared;
- there was data regarding the barriers to walking and cycling which could be shared;
- much of the programme's work with those with disabilities was one-to-one rather than groups. Recommendations from Members of groups to speak to, such as the suggested Pelican Project, would be welcome and it would be possible to investigate what else could be done;
- individuals could be referred to Wellbeing Exeter; and
- Sport England did not include heavy housework as activity but people were asked about things which raised their heartrate, so residents may have included this; and
- the Chief Medical Officer had a view on what was and was not included in the activity list.

Following a vote the report on the Live and Move Programme Update was noted.

## 68 **Forward Plan of Business and Scrutiny Work Plan**

The Chair stated that there had been one request for scrutiny under Standing Order No. 18 from Councillors Mitchell, Jobson and Moore which had followed a discussion at Chair's Briefing and the Chair having made contact with the Chief Executive and Leader. There was also one item allocated to the committee via the Scrutiny Programme Board.

Councillor Mitchell presented the request that the Strategic Scrutiny Committee consider in conjunction with the Council Leader and the Chief Executive, an appropriate date for the committee to consider the Final Business Case regarding Exeter City Councils submission to government in respect of Local Government Reorganisation.

Councillor Mitchell explained that they understood that there was a lot of work to be done and they did not wish to hinder that but wanted to ensure that all parties remained involved and supported the case when it came to Executive and Council in a united fashion.

Councillor Moore seconded the proposal.

Members spoke in favour making the following points:

- that the Leader and Chief Executive could expand on their work and seek the support of the committee;
- Devon County Council and other leaders could be invited to hear the Council's thinking;
- this would be a formal process to reassure residents;
- scrutiny was an important element;
- it was unknown how many other submissions would include Exeter and whether they would have been scrutinised therefore scrutiny could strengthen the Council's case;
- it was important to note that scrutiny in public would show accountability and residents would be pleased that Members were talking to one another and in agreement; and
- there was concern that the county council proposal may be successful.

Members spoke against the proposal making the following points:

- they were not sure that value could be added or what could be achieved as they would work with their group leader; and
- report deadlines for scrutiny could potentially hinder progress.

The Strategic Director for Place made the following points:

- the Strategic Management Board(SMB) were committed to cross-party engagement as the full business case was developed;
- there would be detailed discussions between SMB and each group leader forming active work to develop the final case;
- there would be consultation and engagement with a wide range of stakeholders;
- there would be a public consultation and engagement process;
- there were six aspects, to which the Leader had alluded, and a number were beyond the knowledge of the Council therefore specialist consultants would be required to develop the case; and
- that it could be helpful for scrutiny to look at the proposals of other Councils, especially those which included the city council boundaries.

The Chair invited Councillor Bialyk, the Leader, who was present, to speak on the matter. The Leader made the following points:

- he understood that this was a major issue and he wanted to get it right;
- there was an aspiration to be unitary;
- there was size and geography to work through;
- there were six areas to be covered;
- Members would have input into the submission;
- that he wanted to work with opposition leaders and independent Members as well as his own group;
- much detail would come after the 28 November submission;
- information would be shared as and when it could be and questions would be answered; and
- he would look at the timetable with the Chief Executive and meet with Leaders before 21 November.

The Chair read the response she had received from the Chief Executive stating that due process for determining items on the scrutiny work programme be followed.

The Monitoring Officer explained that the Chief Executive was unable to attend this meeting and acknowledged that she ought to be consulted.

Councillor Atkinson proposed an amendment in the following terms:

“to defer the decision to consider the matter until the next scrutiny meeting in order to seek the views of the Chief Executive in discussion with party leaders including independents” and following a vote was NOT CARRIED.

Following a vote on the substantive proposal was NOT CARRIED.

The Chair explained that there had been an item regarding Stagecoach which had previously been allocated to Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee and following the Scrutiny Programme Board had now been allocated to this committee. The Chair stated that during discussion at Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee it had been suggested that the Portfolio Holder report on the information shared by Stagecoach and Devon County Council at Exeter Transport Member Working Group.

During discussion a Member asked that the scope of this proposal be expanded as currently it stated difficulties with the 'P' route. The Chair stated that this could be determined at the scoping stage.

Following a unanimous vote it was **AGREED** that this item be added to the work plan.

Councillor Moore raised that an item on Citywide action on Climate Change had fallen off the work plan agenda and it was agreed that Democratic Services would investigate and the Chair would work with Councillor Moore on this issue. The Chair agreed to update the committee, via email, the outcome of discussions with officers.

Following a vote the plan, as amended, was **AGREED**.

The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 8.40 pm

Chair

## REPORT TO STRATEGIC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 5 June 2025

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

Title: Progress Report Shared Prosperity Fund – Update 6

### Is this a Key Decision?

No

### Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Executive

### 1. What is the report about?

1.1 This report updates members on the impact of Exeter's Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) allocation for 2022-2025, the evaluation of funded projects, as well as transition funding for 2025-26.

### 2. Recommendations:

2.1 Members note the impact of UKSPF in Exeter and the plans for transition funding for 2025-26.

2.2 The Head of Service City Centre & Net Zero to provide a further update to Strategic Scrutiny on the delivery and management of the UKSPF transition funding, the next being January and June 2026, when UKSPF has come to an end.

### 3. Reasons for the recommendation:

3.1 Members are provided with an overview of the projects funded through UKSPF and its impact.

3.2 Members can scrutinise projects funded by UKSPF during 2022-25 and through the transition funding for 2025-26.

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

4.1 Management of UKSPF Exeter is currently overseen by the Head of Service City Centre & Net Zero. The Project Manager was on a fixed term contract until 31 May 2025, and no longer works for the City Council.

4.2 Of the £1,403,877 of UKSPF Exeter allocation, 100% of this was spent during the 3-year term. The table below highlights the 3-year allocation.

| 2022/2023      |            | 2023/2024      |          | 2024/2025      |            | Total      |
|----------------|------------|----------------|----------|----------------|------------|------------|
| Capital        | Revenue    | Capital        | Revenue  | Capital        | Revenue    |            |
| 10%            | 90%        | 18%            | 82%      | 20%            | 80%        |            |
| £17,037.3      | £153,335.7 | £63,540        | £277,207 | £178,551.4     | £714,205.6 |            |
| Total £170,373 |            | Total £340,747 |          | Total £892,757 |            | £1,403,877 |

- 4.3 Transition funding of £363,862 is being passported from the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority (CCA), of which £279,066 is revenue and £84,796 is capital, to the City Council for distribution to some of the existing projects. Exeter's capital allocation can be increased but cannot reduce below our allocation.
- 4.4 Funding is expected to be received once the transition funding grant agreement has been signed by the City Council and the CCA, likely to be early June 2025. A second instalment is due to arrive 30 October 2025.
- 4.5 One project, Prosper, has underspent this financial year which equals £82,353.71.

## 5. What are the legal aspects?

- 5.1 The original Exeter Investment Plan was signed off by DLUHC January 2023, with the original budget listed above. In relation to the transition funding, there are no plans to make any changes to the original Exeter UKSPF Investment Plan, which would require sign off from DLUHC.
- 5.2 A UK Shared Prosperity Fund Grant Agreement has been received from Devon County Council, which passports Exeter's allocation to the City Council for distribution to projects.
- 5.3 The Grant Funding Agreement reflects the terms of the UK Government grant agreement with Devon County Council, including that each partner deliver their schemes, monitor and provide the required information back to the County Council for cumulative monitoring and reporting back to MHCLG each 6-months. Devon County Council will carry out the overall financial monitoring.
- 5.4 For projects being funded through the transition funding for 2025-56, a one-year contract extension will be issued.

## 6. Exeter UKSPF Update 6

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

| Year 1 Exeter UKSPF Projects                            |  | Capital   |          | Revenue   |        | Rolled Forward |
|---|--|-----------|----------|-----------|--------|----------------|
| Intervention  | Project  | Projected | Actual   | Projected | Actual |                |
| Community & Place                                       |  |           |          |           |        |                |
| E5 - Built & Landscaped environment to design out crime | Replace old city centre CCTV cameras & provide Body Worn Cameras for enforcement | £130,373  | £129,778 | £0        | £0     | £595           |
| Supporting Local Businesses                             |  |           |          |           |        |                |
| E31 – Support relevant feasibility studies              | Study  | £0        | £0       | £33,186   | £0     | £33,186        |

|                                |                     |                 |                 |                |               |                |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| 4% Management & Administration | Salary contribution | £0              | £0              | £6,814         | £6,804        | £10            |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                   |                     | <b>£130,373</b> | <b>£129,778</b> | <b>£40,000</b> | <b>£6,804</b> | <b>£33,791</b> |

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

| Year 3 Exeter UKSPF projects                               |                      | Capital   |         | Revenue   |         |
|--|----------------------|-----------|---------|-----------|---------|
| Intervention   | Project              | Projected | Actual  | Projected | Actual  |
| <b>Community &amp; Place</b>                               |                      |           |         |           |         |
| E6 – Local arts, culture, heritage and creative activities | Creative Arc         | £37,440   | £37,440 | £92,160   | £92,160 |
| E13 – Community measures to reduce the                     | Exeter Energy Grants | £30,000   | £26,618 | £0        | £0      |

|  |                                    |                 |                 |                 |                 |
|--|------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| cost of living, including through measures to improve energy efficiency  |                                    |                 |                 |                 |                 |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   |                                    | <b>£67,440</b>  | <b>£64,058</b>  | <b>£92,160</b>  | <b>£92,160</b>  |
| <b>Supporting Local Businesses</b>   |                                    |                 |                 |                 |                 |
| E23 – Strengthen local entrepreneurial ecosystems  | Innovation Hub                     | £0              | £0              | £104,250        | £89,367         |
| E23 – Strengthen local entrepreneurial ecosystems  | Building Greater Exeter            | £0              | £0              | £20,000         | £20,000         |
| E26 – Growing the local social economy   | Prosper                            | £0              | £0              | £118,182        | £35,829         |
| E31 Support relevant feasibility studies   | Study (rolled forward from year 2) | £0              | £0              | £30,717         | £47,087         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   |                                    | <b>£0</b>       | <b>£0</b>       | <b>£273,149</b> | <b>£192,283</b> |
| <b>People &amp; Skills</b>   |                                    |                 |                 |                 |                 |
| E33 – Employment support for economically inactive people  | Urban Learning Academy             | £0              | £0              | £172,800        | £172,800        |
| E33 – Employment support for economically inactive people. Priority given to supporting residents aged 16-24 and 50+           | Exeter Youth Hub                   | £0              | £0              | £100,000        | £100,000        |
| E34 – Courses including basic skills provision for people who are unable to access training through the adult education budget | Retrofit Academy                   | £142,000        | £142,000        | £49,575         | £49,575         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   |                                    | <b>£142,000</b> | <b>£142,000</b> | <b>£322,375</b> | <b>£322,375</b> |
| 4% Management & Administration   | Salary contribution                | £0              | £0              | £26,521         | £25,034         |
| <b>GRAND TOTAL</b>   |                                    | <b>£209,440</b> | <b>£206,058</b> | <b>£714,205</b> | <b>£631,852</b> |

6.2 After submitting our final return to UK Government in May 2025, of the £1,403,877 original grant received, £1,320,628 has been spent. The £83,249 will be handed by to Uk Government. It was too late to re-distribute the underspend from Prosper.

6.3 Most of the year 3 projects received their UKSPF grant in two tranches, April and September 2024.

6.4 The Project Manager has undertaken a review and evaluation of projects funded via UKSPF to determine their impact on the city, its communities and how projects link back Building Pride in Place and Increasing Life Chances.

6.5 Updates on each of the UKSPF projects are highlighted below, which includes impact and evaluation.

### 6.5.1 Community & Place

#### 6.5.1.1 E2 Community & neighbourhood infrastructure - Exeter Parklets

Project closed.



The Fore Street parklet has been moved to Queen Street, due to demand for more seating, as there is high student footfall on this particular street. There was also some low level anti-social behaviour associated with the Fore Street Parklet. The cost of the relocation was covered by InExeter. The second parklet is located on Musgrave Row and remains there and is an opportunity to further enhance this area, subject to external funding applications.

#### **6.5.1.2 E3 Creation of and improvements to local green spaces - Rougemont Garden**

Project closed.

This project restored the circular footpath within Rougemont Garden, which is adjacent to the city wall and Exeter Castle. The footpath is fully open for use by residents, visitors and the Red Coat Guides. Some additional maintenance issues were also addressed in Rougemont Garden as part of the project.

#### **6.5.1.3 E5 Built & Landscaped environment to design out crime, CCTV & Body Worn Video Cameras**

Project will continue with transition funding 2025/26.

58 additional CCTV cameras were installed in 27 locations across the city centre and in some multi-storey car parks, to replace old analogue and damaged cameras. Body Worn Cameras are now used by the new Community Safety Team to enable evidence to be collected to address and reduce anti-social behaviour in the city centre. This project has supported the feeling of safe within the City Centre and enables the Control Room to provide better coverage and evidence in tackling crime and anti-social behaviour.

#### **6.5.1.4 E6 Local arts, cultural, heritage & creative activities, Creative Arc**

Project will continue with transition funding 2025/26.

A Creative Arc Programme Manager is employed by the University of Exeter and has been in post since July 2025. The Programme Manager has led on working with communities and cultural providers to facilitate connections between practitioners, community groups and researchers, and explore the ways in which creative activity can contribute to 'pride in place' – a core element of UKSPF. More information on Creative Arc can be found <https://www.creativearc.co.uk/> Commissions are within 3 categories, with 14 commissions to date:

- **Health & Wellbeing**
  - Honeyscribe – Plant Prescription
  - All Soul's Day St Thomas
  - Burn the Curtain – Spring Parade
  - Art Work Exeter – River Radio
  - Bookbag – Fore Street Stories
- **Environmental Sustainability**
  - Hannah Mumby & Hannah Hayes – Flood Risk & Topsham
  - Exeter Seed Bank
  - Documental Theatre – Sign & Sign and Newsicals
  - Exeter Northcott Theatre – The Commotion Choir
  - Natalie McGrath – Pink Plates & Shipwrecks

- **People & Place Shaping**
  - Lightbear Lane – Proud to Be
  - Yellow Mouse Studios – Exeter Animation Academy
  - Almanac Theatre – The Cultivate Sessions
  - Positive Light Projects – The Pelican Press

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

Project closed.

Grants of up to £1,000 were made available to residents to pay for upgrades to their homes to improve energy efficiency, reduce energy bills, carbon emissions and levels of fuel poverty. The grant has contributed to loft insulation, the replacement drafty windows and doors and new and improved heating. There were 53 grant applications, with 34 grants being awarded, with an average grant of £824 per household.

### **6.5.2 Supporting Local Businesses**

#### **6.5.2.1 E23 Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems – Innovation Hub**

Project closed.

The Innovation Hub has proven to be an effective mechanism in bringing together key local partners and providing accessible, visible support for businesses in the Exeter area. The range of interactions and level of engagement exceeded initial expectations, contributing directly to the vitality of the local innovation ecosystem. The Innovation Hub will continue to trade until July 2025, when the University of Exeter will decide on its long-term future.

#### **6.5.2.2 E23 Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems – Building Greater Exeter**

Project will continue with transition funding 2025/26.

The management of Building Greater Exeter has been transferred to Exeter College. The Building Greater Relaunch has been a transformative initiative aimed at inspiring new candidates of all ages into the Built Environment, fostering business innovation and growth. Through engaging panel discussions, real-time feedback, and networking, it has provided valuable insights that directly contributed to achieving key targets.

#### **6.5.2.3 E23 Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems – Prosper**

Project will continue with transition funding 2025/26.

Prosper covers Exeter, as well as Mid Devon and East Devon providing free support for businesses.

111 beneficiaries were supported overall. Of these beneficiaries, 53 achieved further project outcomes, including over delivery in the jobs created. The cost per business supported is well within the expected costs for a programme like this and as such the programme did provide good value for money.

One area of additionality was from the outcome Jobs created, where the suppliers successfully delivered over target for Exeter. The project also delivered 4 large events alongside the procured support delivery;

- February 2024 – “Net Zero and Sustainability Workshop”
- June 2024 – “Achieving Net Zero with AI”
- January 2025 – “People Planet Profit: Packaging and Waste Solutions” packaging laws.
- March 2025 – “Mastering Bid Writing Workshop”

Exeter’s output & outcome achievements struggled for Prosper. Exeter’s business support offers focused on Green/Net Zero and had a lower level of interest from businesses than initially anticipated. The supplier, Devon County Council and the City Council tried on multiple occasions to attract businesses to participate, with limited success. Going forward business support will be focused on starting a new business, recruitment and for those that need support through times of stress.

#### **6.5.2.4 E31 Support relevant feasibility studies – Exeter City Centre**

Project will continue.

Consultants were appointed to review and develop a new Vision, Strategy and Action Plan for the City Centre to ensure the City Centre is responsive to creating a growing and vibrant economy, addressing changes within the retail and hospitality market. 4 business workshops and a member workshop were delivered. A wider public consultation will form part of the 2025 Exeter Residents Survey. From this, consultants will develop the new Vision, Strategy & Action Plan is due to be consulted on in early 2026.

#### **6.5.3 People & Skills**

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

Project will continue with transition funding 2025/26.

The project has been highly effective in achieving its core objectives, notably the successful installation of six green skills training bays. Funding allowed Exeter College to deliver project aims proficiently, exceeding the initial target of 98 learners, with 107 individuals benefitting from the new facility within just six weeks of its installation. Feedback from participants and prospective employers highlights a marked improvement in employability and skill levels, demonstrating strong alignment with our original success criteria.

##### **6.5.3.2 E33 – Employment support for economically inactive people, Urban Learning Academy, Urban Learning Academy**

Project will continue with transition funding 2025/26.

Funding has enabled learning providers to come together to connect and collaborate on learning and meaningful activities to enhance people’s lives, to focus on people and skills in Exeter, reduce isolation, increase community connection and cohesion and be an excellent reliable adult and community learning offer in the city that has become well recognised and utilised by many. A selection of outputs include:

Number of economically inactive people engaging with services: 696

Number of people supported to access basic skill course: 334

Number of people gaining a qualification or completing a course following support: 31

Number of active or sustained participants in community groups because of support: 441

#### **6.5.3.3 E33 – Employment support for economically inactive people, Exeter Youth Hub**

Project will continue with transition funding 2025/26.

Led by Devon County Council the Hub has been an agile, responsive, place-based approach to support communities, that do not currently engage.

The Exeter Employment & Youth Hub managed to surpass ten out of eleven SPF outcome targets. Notably, the hub supported 25 people who were out of work prior to support, into paid work, with the target set at 12. Meanwhile, it also exceeded targets relating to education and training, including economically inactive people engaged with mainstream education, people gaining a qualification or completing a course following support, and people in education/training following support.

13 people were supported with basic skills against a target of 25. This is below target due to people already being aware of basic skills opportunities in Exeter, so don't visit the hub for basic skills support. To resolve this, Learn Devon was present in the hub, to support people in signposting.

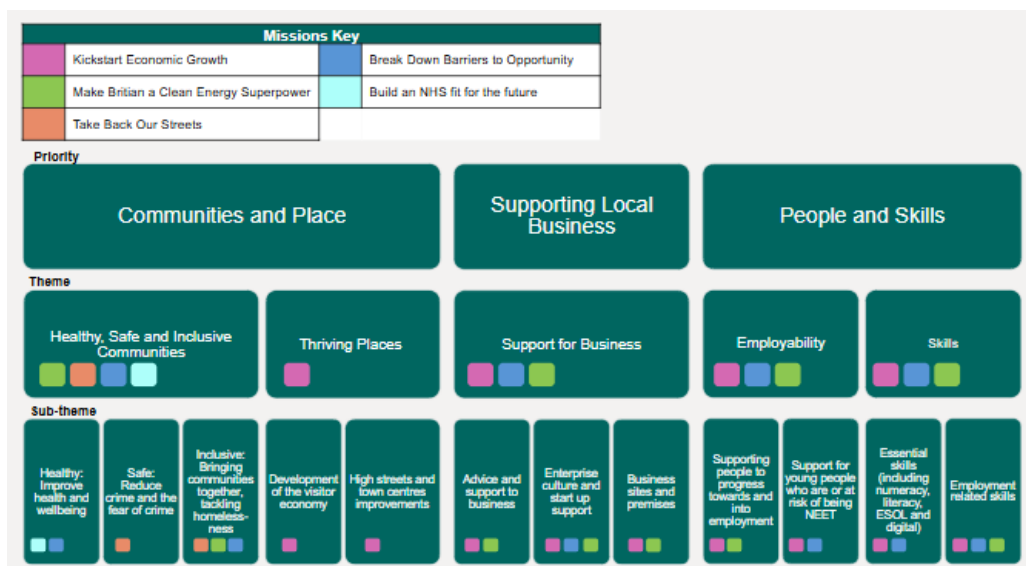
The hub managed to support 112 people to increase their employability through the development of interpersonal skills against the target of 25. One of the key strengths of the hub service has been getting to know the people being supported and taking the time to support them with aspects such as confidence and communication skills.

## **7. UKSPF Transition Funding**

7.1 The UK government's Autumn Budget announced further funding for local investment by March 2026. All areas of the UK are receiving a further allocation of UKSPF and where a County Combined Authority is in place, funding would be channelled through that body. The aim of the UKSPF extension year is to provide a smooth transition from the existing UKSPF programme to a new, future funding framework.

7.2 Lead local authorities, which in Exeter's case is the Devon & Torbay County Combined Authority, were strongly encouraged to engage with and seek support from local partners to deliver the 2025/26 transition funding. District Council's across Devon have been working collaboratively with the County Combined Authority. There was a collaborative decision to continue funding existing projects, rather than procure new projects, as the funding is transition funding.

7.3 The UK government mapped existing interventions into Mission-led themes across the three priority areas: Communities and Place; Support for Local Business; and People and Skills (see diagram below).



7.4 Lead local authorities continue to have flexibility to invest across a range of activities that represent the right solutions for their areas.

7.5 Of the £363,862 transition funding for Exeter, the following projects have been informed of funding for 2025/26. This is a reduction on previous years funding due to a significant reduction in overall funding from previous years:

| Project  | Capital        | Revenue         | TOTAL           |
|--|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| <b>Community &amp; Place</b>                         |                |                 |                 |
| Replace broken and analogue City Centre CCTV cameras | £85,112        | £20,000         | <b>£105,112</b> |
| Creative Arc   |                | £41,750         | <b>£41,750</b>  |
| <b>Supporting Local Businesses</b>                   |                |                 |                 |
| Building Greater Exeter                              |                | £13,000         | <b>£13,000</b>  |
| Prosper Business Support                             |                | £28,000         | <b>£28,000</b>  |
| <b>People &amp; Skills</b>                           |                |                 |                 |
| Building Green Skills                                |                | £58,000         | <b>£58,000</b>  |
| Urban Learning Academy                               |                | £68,000         | <b>£68,000</b>  |
| Exeter Youth & Employment Hub                        |                | £50,000         | <b>£50,000</b>  |
|  | <b>£85,112</b> | <b>£278,750</b> | <b>£363,862</b> |

7.6 Projects that applied for transition funding, but were unsuccessful, included:

- Exeter Innovation Hub – This project was led by the University of Exeter and whilst achieving many of its original aims does not sufficiently address social challenges, people and business funded projects, supporting residents into training and/or work; and business with current trading challenges.
- Two new projects, Wellbeing for Study led by Exeter College and South West Tourism Data Hub, led by South West Destination Management Organisations, were unsuccessful because transition funding is to support existing projects.

7.7 A Grant Agreement has been received from Devon County Council, so funds can be received. Once received, this funding will be passported to each funded project, with an accompanying Service Agreement, which extends the funded project for a further 12 months.

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

8.1 UKSPF links directly to the Exeter Vision and several Priorities within the new City Council Corporate Plan.

|                |                                   |  |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Corporate Plan | Local Economy                     | Several interventions support businesses to grow and prosper, as well as supporting individuals to start their own business.   |
|                | Homes                             | Interventions support businesses and people within the construction sector, to grow skills and to support the sector to innovate.  |
|                | Sustainable Environment           | Interventions support business and residents to reduce their carbon emissions  |
|                | People                            | Several interventions support people who live in the city to start the journey into learning, training and or employment. There is an emphasis on those furthest from the jobs market. One intervention supports the feeling of safe in the City Centre. |
| Exeter Vision  | Innovative & Analytical City      | Interventions support businesses to grow and prosper. Skills and learning interventions will be developed to support residents to improve their learning opportunities.  |
|                | Accessible world class educations | Interventions support residents to access city educational institutions.   |
|                | Liveable & connected              | Interventions support a thriving and safe city centre.   |
|                | A leading sustainable city        | One intervention will support the delivery of the Exeter Net Zero 2030 Plan.   |
|                | Culture                           | Interventions support cultural activity through Liveable Exeter.   |

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

9.1 As the City Council no longer employ a Project Manager to manage and oversee Exeter funded projects, this will now sit with the Head of Service for City Centre & Net Zero.

9.2 Support will be called upon through Devon County Council officers to support in overseeing Exeter funded projects and gaining outputs and outcomes on projects funded.

## **10. Equality Act 2010 (The Act)**

10.1 No potential impact has been identified on people with protected characteristics as determined by the Act because the report is for noting only.

## **11. Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:**

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

## **12. Are there any other options?**

12.1 Not accepting the transition funding from the CCA and allocating the funding. This would have resulted in:

- CCA having to start a new procurement process to distribute funds, resulting in a delay of funds being distributed and projects having a significant gap in funding
- Projects that employ officers, having no certainty of funds for 2025-26
- The City Council not being involved in the decision-making process in which projects receiving transition funds for 2025-26

Director: Strategic Director Place

Author: Head of Service City Centre & Net Zero

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

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

12 September 2024, progress Report Shared Prosperity Fund – Update 5

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

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

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

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

5 July 2022, UK Shared Prosperity Fund, Exeter allocation

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## REPORT TO STRATEGIC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 5 June 2025

Report of: Helen Coombes, Matford Centre Manager

Title: Exeter Markets Update

### Is this a Key Decision?

No

### Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Executive

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

An update on markets and street trading in Exeter, including the Council's functions and responsibilities and how markets/street trading are supported.

#### 2. Recommendation:

To note.

#### 3. Reasons for the recommendation:

Well run and commercially viable markets can make a valuable contribution to the City Council's corporate priorities on the local economy, a healthy and active city, net zero and culture.

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

There is a limited capacity to organise markets. City Council Markets aim to run at no cost to Exeter residents. The expenditure incurred in making markets available is offset by stall fees, consent income and the hiring out of market equipment. In recent years, the Council has moved towards issuing Consents to others to organise markets and providing advice.

Staff from the Matford Centre and Corn Exchange support the Fore Street market on Thursday's, including setting up and taking down the stalls.

The City Council has not identified a budget to develop a strategic approach to markets, and there is no budget to support delivery of new markets.

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

Streets in Exeter are designated for Street Trading, (for the selling of or offering to sell things on the street), as follows:

- Consent Streets – These are controlled by a licence
- Prohibited Streets – Trading is not allowed on prohibited streets at any time.
- Licenced Streets – Trading granted by Markets team.

Pedlar's certificates for trading in Exeter are applied for via Devon & Cornwall Police and comply with the Pedlars Act.

The definition of a market is a gathering of five or more traders selling items.

## **6. Report details:**

The City Council operates a successful Livestock Market at the Matford Centre. A weekly Farmers Market operates at the top of Fore Steet, which is also very popular, but there is a lack of demand from any traders to fill this space.

The City Council has identified one area at the Fore Street/South Street junction in which it can organise markets (Licenced Street). This is subject to business rates. It is used for the weekly farmers market and other occasional markets such as visiting markets, craft markets, and previously Christmas markets. A limited number of daily traders can trade from this area, but casual traders selling food for immediate consumption or produce (and which would compete with the farmers market) are not allowed.

In the past, the Council has accommodated visiting markets and introduced anchor points to reduce the risk of markets having to be cancelled because of extreme weather conditions. A dedicated electricity supply at the Fore Street/South Street location, has also been installed.

The Council ceased operating the Sidwell Street market area in 2024. Sidwell Street was used for a daily pannier market for which stallholders applied for a licence for a period of 3, 6 or 12 months allowing them to trade daily. The Council has in the past also sited visiting markets in this area. The Council worked with and supported InExeter who took on the market and regenerated the area to launch Eastgate market but unfortunately found the recruitment of traders to the area difficult mainly due to the poor footfall.

The Council has previously organised a small Christmas market in Castle Street adjoining the High Street from the start of December until Christmas. This market reduced in size as a response to complaints received from independent retailers in Castle Street who felt that its existence adversely affected their turnover because of visibility issues. The same was true of the Fore Street Christmas Market, with complaints received from independent retailers in the Fore Street area, which resulted in fewer applications being received for the market. Traders felt that the scale of the smaller market didn't work for them, meaning that it is now no longer held, and support for the market was no longer received. The viability of the smaller Christmas market in Fore Street was also affected by the introduction of the Cathedral Christmas Market, and other Christmas Markets in and around the city with other opportunities now available for those looking to trade at a market.

The Council also operate a Sunday market and car boot sale at the Matford Centre (livestock centre) in Marsh Barton and that market is now externally organised. This is an open market with no restrictions other than 'ready-to-eat' food which is provided by the Matford Centre caterer as part of their lease/catering agreement, the current caterer has declined the option to cater at the market currently.

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

Priority: Local economy, a Healthy and Active City, Net Zero and Culture.

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

The key risk is that Exeter is unable to fulfil its potential to operate and support markets, and this could have a detrimental impact on the local economy. One option could be to attract a commercial market provider. This could be considered as part of the emerging City Centre Strategy.

## **9. 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 consider 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 No potential impact has been identified on people with protected characteristics as determined by the Act because the report is for noting only

## **10. Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:**

No direct carbon/environmental impacts arising from the recommendation.

## **11. Are there any other options?**

N/A

Director: Ian Collinson, Strategic Director, Place

Report Author: Helen Coombes

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

No Background papers.

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## **REPORT TO CUSTOMER FOCUS AND STRATEGIC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Date of Meeting: 3 July 2025 and 5 June 2025

Report of: The Scrutiny Programme Board

Title: Annual Scrutiny Report 2024-25

### **Is this a Key Decision?**

Scrutiny is non decision-making.

### **Is this an Executive or Council Function?**

Council

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

1.1 To provide an annual update in respect of the Scrutiny work achieved during the municipal year 2024-25.

### **2. Recommendations:**

2.1 The Annual Scrutiny Report 2024-25 is noted by the Strategic Scrutiny Committee and the Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee; and

2.2 The Executive note and recommend that Council approve the Annual Scrutiny Report 2023-24.

### **3. Reasons for the recommendation:**

3.1 The Annual Scrutiny Report provides the Scrutiny Committees with an opportunity to:

- a. monitor the progress of the scrutiny function at Exeter City Council;
- b. comment upon the progress and direction of scrutiny over the past year and into the future;
- c. ensure that the Scrutiny Committees are kept fully up to date as to any Task and Finish Group work and what they have achieved;
- d. illustrate how effective scrutiny can contribute towards an accountable, transparent and democratic process.

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

4.1 Resources are limited to capacity within the Democratic Services Team. There is no dedicated Scrutiny Officer.

### **5. What are the legal aspects?**

None identified.

### **6. Report details:**

6.1 This update provides Members with an overview of the work and achievements of scrutiny during 2024-25 and is set out in detail at Appendix A attached to this report.

6.2 The report brings annual reporting into line with the municipal year.

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

7.1 Good governance contributes to the Council's purpose of "Leading a well-run Council".

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

None identified

## **9. 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 No potential impact has been identified on people with protected characteristics as determined by the Act because the report is for noting only

## **10. Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:**

12.1 Important to complete this section in light of the Council declaring a Climate Emergency. Consider whether the recommendations you are making in the report will help, hinder or have no direct impact on delivering our carbon reduction target (carbon neutral by 2030).

12.2 You should think about things like:-

- Travel (and, if travel is unavoidable, whether lower carbon options will be pursued e.g. walking, public transport, electric car);
- Infrastructure (e.g. LED lighting, energy efficient heating/hot water, solar panels, electric car charging points);
- Waste (e.g. recycling, composting, reducing non-recyclable waste); and
- Any other specific carbon reduction initiatives.

12.3 If there are no direct carbon/environmental implications for the decision please state:

No direct carbon/environmental impacts arising from the recommendations.

## **11. Are there any other options?**

None identified.

Director: Strategic Director for Corporate Resources

Report Author: Scrutiny Programme Board

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

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

None

Contact for enquires:  
Democratic Services (Committees)  
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**SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25**

**EXETER CITY COUNCIL**

**(May 2024 – April 2025)**

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## **Foreword from the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Board**

The role of Scrutiny is to provide support, challenge and to maximise the effectiveness of Exeter City Council and its working relationships with its partners across the local and wider communities it serves.

The two Scrutiny Committees have continued to take a proactive approach to matters concerning the Council and its residents, to support the Council in making a positive contribution to work in the city. The Scrutiny Programme Board supported by the Democratic Services Team have overseen much change during this year including new scrutiny committee Chairs, new Democratic Officers, a senior leadership restructure all of which have seen improved efficiency and smooth running of scrutiny.

The Scrutiny Programme Board was set up to meet on a bi-annual basis but have continued to meet quarterly to provide oversight and direction on the work of scrutiny. The meetings are attended by the Chairs and Deputy Chairs with the aim of developing a future programme of work, reviewing any Scrutiny Proposals submitted by Members on our pro-forma and support best practice for both of the scrutiny committees.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all Scrutiny Committee Members, and our partners for their continued support in contributing to the scrutiny process as well as officers and the Democratic Services team in facilitating the operation of the Board and the Committees. Grateful thanks also to the external trainer for sharing her expertise which set both committees up with skills to achieve their responsibilities as laid out in our constitution.

I hope you can see a difference in this report as we have aimed to demonstrate the impact of scrutiny over the last year and I look forward to seeing this develop further over the coming year.

**Councillor Matthew Williams,  
Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Board (2024/25)**

**April 2025**

## Introduction

The Annual Scrutiny Report for Exeter City Council provides an overview of the work undertaken by the Strategic Scrutiny Committee and Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee during the 2022/23 year, July 2023 to April 2024.

Scrutiny is a key tool for promoting the best interests and wellbeing of the area and seeks to ensure that local people receive high quality services that meet their needs. The two Scrutiny Committees act as a critical friend to the Executive, hold it to account and provide challenge where deemed necessary. Scrutiny has a vital role in reviewing policy development and advising the Executive of areas for potential improvements. The work of the two Scrutiny Committees supports the Council in the work undertaken to achieve the aims of the Council's corporate objectives.

The aims of the Scrutiny process are to:-

- add value to Council business and decision-making;
- hold the Executive to account;
- to monitor the budget and performance of services;
- assist the Council in the development of policy and review the effectiveness of the implementation of Council policy; and
- to review relevant Government policy development and legislation to assess the impact on the City and make recommendations to Executive.

The two Scrutiny Committees of Strategic Scrutiny and Customer Focus discharge the functions conferred by Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 or regulations under section 32 of the Local Government Act 2000.

Continuing to highlight the role of scrutiny:

- A page on the Councillor Hub devoted to scrutiny providing Members with supporting information and guidance to assist them in good scrutiny practice;
- Committee Members who are not Members of the largest political group of the Council are encouraged to submit requests for consideration of scrutiny to the Scrutiny Programme Board using the Scrutiny Proposal Form as it is important that Scrutiny Committees are led by Members and are responsible for setting their own work programme and taking into account the views of all Members;
- Appointing Deputy Chairs of Scrutiny Committees to Chair any Task and Finish Groups or Spotlight Reviews, as and when established;
- A template for Portfolio Holder Reports to update Members on activities within their portfolio; and
- Face to face training with an external provider took place on 16 May 2024.

The Council's Scrutiny Committees continue to have an important role in relation to the development of the Council's budget and policy framework, as well as to make recommendations to the Executive on matters within their terms of reference. Members have access to the [Council's Forward Plan](#) and where there is a need for Scrutiny consideration following an Executive decision to bring the matter to Committee first via the Call-In process.

This report serves as a reminder to Members of their responsibilities and powers re-iterates the importance of Scrutiny being Member-led. The Terms of Reference for the Scrutiny Programme Board can be found on Page 257 of the [Constitution](#).

## Scrutiny Programme Board

The Scrutiny Programme Board is formed of the Chairs and Deputy Chairs of the two Scrutiny Committees:



**Chair – Councillor Matthew Williams**

### **Strategic Scrutiny Committee**



**Chair – Councillor Liz Pole**



**Deputy Chair – Councillor Michael Mitchell**

### **Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee**



**Chair – Councillor Josie Parkhouse**



**Deputy Chair – Councillor Catherine Rees**

## **Year in Review: Strategic Scrutiny Committee 2024-2025**

The Strategic Scrutiny Committee has met on six occasions during the municipal year 2024/25.

There were no call-in requests during this period.

## **Year in Review: Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee 2024-2025**

The Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee has met on five occasions during the municipal year 2024/25.

No call-in requests were received during this period.

## **Year in Review: Combined Scrutiny Committee 2024-2025**

The Combined Scrutiny Committee meets to discuss joint issues and also met to discuss the Council budget. The Chair rotates between the Chairs of the respective Scrutiny Committees.

The Combined Scrutiny Committee met twice in the municipal year 2024/25.

## **Looking Ahead to 2025/26**

The Scrutiny Programme Board agrees the format and content of the work programme held Scrutiny Work Schedule, a working document which is reported on at each Board meeting.

A copy of the Scrutiny Work Schedule is attached to each Scrutiny Committee agenda.

The coming year brings the following items already scheduled to be heard before scrutiny committees:

Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee – regular Budget scrutiny, ASB in the city centre and Key People Activity Across the Council and a petition.

Strategic Scrutiny Committee – regular Live & Move programme updates, Markets & Street Trading, Citywide Net Zero alongside Working Towards Net Zero.

The Forward Plan is circulated to Members and is available on the [Council Website](#)



# Scrutiny Annual Report 2024/25

**Exeter City Council**  
**(May 2024 - April 2025)**



# What Scrutiny has meant to us over the last year





# Strategic Scrutiny

Responsibility for:

- Relevant policies in the Exeter Plan
- Corporate Health & Safety
- Response to Central Government's Policy Making
- Climate change and sustainability
- Council wide/strategic matters
- Hear call-ins relevant to the role of the committee

| TOPIC                           | IMPACT  |
|---------------------------------|---|
| LEISURE SERVICE UPDATE          | Family Membership suggestion given to officers  |
| LIVE AND MOVE UPDATE            | Councillors were better informed has helped with bids for additional funding in partnership with community groups   |
| COMMERCIAL PROPERTY             | Recommendation made to the Executive: <i>that the Executive Committee consider a review of the current Asset Management Policy in relation to commercial property.</i>  |
| NET ZERO                        | Active travel for those with a disability referred to Exeter Transport Working Group for further information and investigation  |
| SHARED PROSPERITY FUND          | Feasibility study outcomes will be subject to further scrutiny  |
| EXETER PLAN PUBLICATION PROCESS | There was scrutiny consensus that the plan timings would be beneficial to Exeter and its residents  |
| AIR QUALITY PERFORMANCE         | Informed Members of the scope and work being undertaken, partnership working and Government-set timeline for  |
| PORTFOLIO HOLDER UPDATES        | Suggestion made to Deputy Leader regarding positive publicity of the CCTV scheme as a reflection from interactions with residents. Members able to reassure residents that the city centre is a safe place to be with understanding |

# Customer Focus

Responsibility for:

- Corporate Performance Monitoring
- Financial Performance Monitoring
- Annual Budget Setting Process
- Service specific/operational matters
- Hear call-ins relevant to the role of the committee

## TOPIC

### VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN & GIRLS

## IMPACT

Improved Councillor understanding

### RELOCATION OF SERVICES

Councillors agreed with the steps set out

### BOX-SHIFTING

Further report requested by the committee in order to scrutinise

### CITIZENS ADVICE EXETER

Recommendation made to the Executive: *that the Executive Committee revisit options for Citizens Advice Exeter to reduce their premises expenses with Exeter City Council.*

### BUDGET

Scrutiny of the quarterly budget introduced by this committee.

### COMMUNITY LOTTERY

Suggestion made to officers of services as prizes which will be considered to celebrate two years of the lottery

### STREET CLEANSING

Councillors more confident advising residents about littering/fly-tipping and will now encourage to use the online reporting tool

### HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

Embedded scrutiny of this area into regular practice to ensure councillors are aware of current situation

# Case Study

**30 Sept  
2024**

Proposal submitted for scrutiny.

**3 Oct  
2024**

CFSC unanimously voted to add CA Exeter to the Agenda for November meeting and to delegate scoping of the item to SPB.

**16 Oct  
2024**

SPB scoped the item.

**28 Nov  
2024**

Item scrutinised at CFSC.  
Recommendation to Executive created.

**14 Jan  
2025**

Recommendation heard by Executive.

## Outcome

### Minute No. 24 Commercial Property Review

*The Executive considered the recommendations of the Strategic Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 6 June 2024.*

*The Leader advised that officers had been asked to review of the current asset management policy in relation to the commercial property, which would be presented to Executive Committee in due course.*

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

*RESOLVED that the Executive Committee agreed to a review of the current Asset Management Policy in relation to commercial property.*

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

| Strategic Scrutiny Committee | Item  | Strategic Director  | Portfolio Holder   | Origin of Business  | Status   |
|------------------------------|---|---|--|---|--|
| 5 June 2025                  | Progress Report Shared Prosperity Fund - Update   | Strategic Director for Place (IC) Service Lead Net Zero & Business (VH)             | Portfolio Holder Climate & Ecological Crisis (Cllr Vizard)     | Report from Strategic Scrutiny Committee 29 September 2022 half yearly report |  |
| 5 June 2025                  | Markets & Street Trading in Exeter – Briefing Note  | Strategic Director for Place (IC) & Strategic Director for Corporate Resources (DH) | Portfolio Holder tbc   | Proposal from Cllr Wetenhall received Dec 2024                                |  |
| 5 June 2025                  | Scrutiny Annual Report of the Scrutiny Programme Board  | Strategic Director Corporate Resources (DH)   | Portfolio Holder   | Yearly report   |  |
| 11 September 2025            | Portfolio Holder Update (TBC)   |   |  |   |  |
| 11 September 2025            | Live and Move Programme Update  | Chief Executive   | Portfolio Holder Leisure Services & Healthy Living (Cllr Wood) | Report from Strategic Scrutiny Committee 16 March 2023 half yearly            |  |
| 11 September 2025            | Working Towards Net Zero - Exeter City Council's Corporate Carbon Footprint Report and Carbon Reduction Action Plan Progress Report | Strategic Director for Place (IC), Service Lead Net Zero & Business (VH)            | Portfolio Holder Climate & Ecological Crisis (Cllr Vizard)     | Report from Strategic Scrutiny Committee 29 September 2022 half yearly report | Moved 4 March as being presented to Executive in June. |
| 11 September 2025            | City Wide Net Zero - Programme of work and update on delivery   | Strategic Director for Place (IC)   | Portfolio Holder Climate, Ecological Change and                |   |  |

| Strategic Scrutiny Committee | Item  | Strategic Director   | Portfolio Holder  | Origin of Business  | Status |
|------------------------------|---|--|---|---|--------|
|                              |   | Service Lead Net Zero & Business (VH)                                      | Communities (Cllr Vizard)   |   |        |
| 15 January 2026              | Progress Report Shared Prosperity Fund - Update               | Strategic Director for Place (IC)<br>Service Lead Net Zero & Business (VH) | Portfolio Holder Climate & Ecological Crisis (Cllr Vizard)                | Report from Strategic Scrutiny Committee 29 September 2022 half yearly report |        |
| 12 March 2026                | City Wide Net Zero - Programme of work and update on delivery | Strategic Director for Place (IC)<br>Service Lead Net Zero & Business (VH) | Portfolio Holder Climate, Ecological Change and Communities (Cllr Vizard) |   |        |
| 12 March 2026                | Live and Move Programme Update                                | Chief Executive  | Portfolio Holder Leisure Services & Healthy Living (Cllr Wood)            | Report from Strategic Scrutiny Committee 16 March 2023 half yearly            |        |

*Items to be timetabled and scoped 5 June 2025:*

|  |   |                                   |                           |  |  |
|--|---|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|--|--|
|  | Performance and Service Provided to Customers and Stakeholders of Stagecoach South West in Exeter | Strategic Director for Place (IC) | Communities (Cllr Vizard) | Scrutiny proposal Cllrs Snow, Parkhouse and Hughes |  |
|--|---|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|--|--|