

## **CUSTOMER FOCUS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Date: Thursday 25 September 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 on 01392 265425.

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

### *Membership -*

Rees (Chair), Cookson (Deputy Chair), Begley, Darling, Fullam, Holland, Hussain, Moore, Parkhouse, Payne, Pole, Read, Snow and Wardle

## **Agenda**

### **1 Apologies**

To receive apologies for absence.

### **2 Minutes**

(Pages 5 -  
12)

To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 3 July 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 any 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(s) the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant paragraph(s) of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.”

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

Details of questions should be notified to the Democratic Services Manager via the [democratic.services@exeter.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@exeter.gov.uk) email by 10am at least three working days prior to the meeting. For this meeting any questions must be submitted by 10am on Monday 22 September 2025.

Details about how to speak at Committee can be found here:

<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 are:

- Councillor Bialyk – Leader of the Council
- Councillor Asvachin – Portfolio Holder for Housing, Homelessness Prevention and Customer Services
- Councillor Vizard – Portfolio Holder for Climate, Ecological Change and Communities
- Councillor Williams – Portfolio Holder for City Management
- Councillor Wright – Deputy Leader & Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services, Community Safety and City Centre

Advance questions from Members relating to the Portfolio Holders should be notified to Democratic Services via [democratic.services@exeter.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@exeter.gov.uk)

## 7 **Anti-Social Behaviour in the City Centre**

(Pages 13  
- 30)

To receive the report of the Community Safety Partnership and hear evidence from the external organisations.

## 8 **Portfolio Holder Update - Councillor Wright (Deputy Leader & Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services, Community Safety and City Centre)**

(Pages 31  
- 36)

To receive the report of the Deputy Leader.

## 9 **Portfolio Holder Update - Councillor Vizard (Portfolio Holder for Climate, Ecological Change & Communities)**

(Pages 37  
- 44)

To receive the report of the Portfolio Holder for Climate, Ecological Change and Communities.

## 10 Scrutiny Work Plan and Proposals Received

(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:

[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 Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee will be held on **Thursday 13 November 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 on 01392 265425.**

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## CUSTOMER FOCUS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

3 July 2025

Present:

Councillor Catherine Rees (Chair)

Councillors Cookson, Begley, Darling, Fullam, Holland, Hussain, Moore, Parkhouse, Payne, Pole, Read and Snow

Apologies:

Councillor Wardle

Also present:

Strategic Director for Place, Strategic Director for Corporate Resources, Planning Solicitor, Head of Service Operations, Head of Service - City Centre and Net Zero, Head of Service - Finance and Democratic Services Officer

In attendance as Portfolio Holder:

Councillors Asvachin, Vizard and Williams R.

**64 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee held on 30 January 2025 were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record.

**65 Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made by Members.

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

There were no questions from members of the public.

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

There were no questions submitted in advance from Members.

In accordance with Standing Order No. 20 the following questions were asked of Portfolio Holders who were present.

Councillor Read asked the Portfolio Holder for City Management what action could be taken with regard to green algae which was not dangerous to dogs but could distress fish. Councillor Ruth Williams responded stating that the public could be reassured and it would be for the Environment Agency to undertake any mitigation.

In a supplementary question Councillor Read asked if the Portfolio Holder would push the Environment Agency as their response showed that they did not intend to take any action. The Portfolio Holder requested sight of the response from the Environment Agency.

Councillor Parkhouse asked the Portfolio Holder for City Management if there had been any challenges with the roll out of food waste collections particularly in more densely populated areas and HMOs. Councillor R Williams responded stating that the roll out was going well with over 50% of homes now having a food waste collection. It had been identified that annual dissemination of information regarding

collections would be needed to areas such as those with a student population or a higher turnover of residents and that some blocks of flats may require alternative solutions.

The Chair asked if it would be helpful for information to be shared in community groups which Members may be involved in and Councillor R Williams responded that it would and that food and garden waste collections were earlier than refuse and recycling collections and that fluorescent stickers had been provided for food waste bins to make them more visible. She also stated that crews would come back if a food waste bin was missed and that this could be reported immediately it was missed, there was no need to wait until the end of the day. Finally, the Portfolio Holder suggested that residents are encouraged to follow Denis the Dustcart for further tips but stressed that vape batteries must not be put in bins given a recent fire in a waste lorry within the city.

Councillor Moore asked the Portfolio Holder for City Management whether the food waste roll-out would be complete this year and Councillor Ruth Williams responded that the planned end was 2025/26 but it may be that this would stretch into 2026/27.

Councillor Moore asked the Portfolio Holder for City Management what preparation was taking place for doorstep glass collection roll-out and Councillor Ruth Williams responded that there were no plans at present as there was not funding. She added that were there to be funding for extra crews and vehicles then this would be considered and that current arrangements were doing well compared to other Devon districts and black bin comparisons were comparable to others who had doorstep glass collection.

Councillor Read asked the Portfolio Holder for Climate, Ecological Change and Communities about the wording being provided to Gatherwell regarding Exeter Community Lottery. Councillor Vizard, as Portfolio Holder stated that the wording had been agreed but invited Councillor Read to send concerns to him and he would follow up.

Councillor Moore asked the Portfolio Holder for Climate, Ecological Change and Communities if the wording regarding the Community Lottery could be changed in council press releases and the Portfolio Holder responded that he would look into this but that the wording was in line with national policy and that he did not wish to over-complicate the message.

The Chair asked the Portfolio Holder for Climate, Ecological Change and Communities if there was a way in which amendments to the council website could be more agile and the Portfolio Holder responded that there was a link to the Council website from the Gatherwell and the agreed wording would apply to both but some timescales were beyond the Council's control.

**68      Petition: Eton Walk Refuse bin (reinstatement)**

The Chair announced that there had been a development and that the report regarding this item had been withdrawn. The petitioner had been invited to the meeting but had not responded.

**69      Anti-Social Behaviour in the City Centre**

The Chair announced that the guests expected were not present due to a discussion at Chair's Briefing where it was realised that this was a wide topic and should be

given sufficient attention to gain a holistic picture and deserved more time and organisation to obtain the correct evidence.

The Head of Service - City Centre and Net Zero gave a short presentation making the following points:

- that this was a challenging and complex area;
- the High Sherriff had convened a meeting which was due to discuss the same topic including impact on the business community and Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations;
- the Strategic Director for Place was now the Chair of the Community Safety Partnership which had an annual action plan which was beginning now and did not coincide with this meeting; and
- not all types of ASB had an impact on the city centre and consideration should be given to which to focus and therefore who should be invited.

During discussion Members made the following points:

- representation from people whose voices may not be heard as readily would be desirable with suggestions such as supporters of the football club, mosque and young people; and
- inviting wider representation was welcomed and suggestions made of Inclusive Exeter, Intercom Trust and Co-lab.

Councillor Michael Mitchell was invited to the table as proposer of the item and made the following points:

- the item had been scoped at Scrutiny Programme Board and he had spoken to outside bodies who were keen to give evidence;
- this began with a resident who had spoken to Councillor Palmer following him and his daughter having suffered a knife attack;
- other reports from residents of anti-social behaviour in the city centre and the impact on vulnerable people were detailed; and
- it was unacceptable for a small group of people to cause such issues and an initial meeting was needed to consider the causes and possible solutions.

The Strategic Director for Place explained that ASB was one of five priorities of the Community Safety Partnership, which was a multi-agency, statutory partnership. A sub-group of the partnership and chaired by InExeter was reviewing and coordinating work undertaken by partners and a report would be brought in September, as part of the call for evidence.

Discussion took place upon which organisations should be invited to the September meeting in order to give evidence and consensus that this may not be a topic for a singular meeting. The possibility of scrutiny being a public space for people to come together to hear the public and community perception as well as what businesses and agencies are doing to combat ASB.

Examples of ASB in a number of wards were given by Members and discussion regarding crime logging and evidence thresholds took place with some positive outcomes cited as well as the need for education and communication to residents.

Councillor Payne shared his knowledge of the Councillor Advocate Scheme, information regarding which can be found here: <https://devonandcornwall-pcc.gov.uk/councillor-advocate-scheme>

The Chair noted that full representation was needed and listed the following groups for inclusion on an invitation list for the September meeting:

- Inclusive Exeter;
- young people (perhaps Exeter College);
- Intercom Trust LGBTQ+ community;
- Mosque;
- Co-lab;
- Safer Exeter (Exeter Community Safety Partnership);
- University of Exeter;
- St Petrock's;
- Devon & Cornwall Police
- Exeter Football Club
- Taxi driver representative; and
- Together Devon (Drug and alcohol services).

The Chair clarified that it was important to have the opportunity to hear from those who had not contributed through the CSP and directly from the community.

The Chair explained that there appeared to be two proposals, firstly that CSP and police were invited to the next meeting and secondly that the CSP plus the above list of people were invited.

Councillor Hussain stated that the mosque was not represented on the CSP and would need to be contacted directly.

Councillor Parkhouse proposed, seconded by Councillor Darling that CSP and Police be invited to the September meeting to present on ASB.

The Chair proposed an amendment to the proposal, "that the CSP and Police are invited in September and in addition – Inclusive Exeter, Exeter College (young people), Intercom Trust, Together Devon (Drug and Alcohol Service), taxi representative, Football Club and mosque representatives", which following a vote was carried.

A vote on the motion as amended was CARRIED unanimously.

The Chair explained that each attendee would be asked to present for up to five minutes on the two questions set out in the March minutes: ASB in the city centre, its causes and possible solutions.

## 70 **Quarter 4 Budget Scrutiny**

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

- all documents provided had been considered by Full Council and this was an opportunity to ask questions to better understand the financial position;
- he was currently conducting a review of how financial information was presented to Members and endeavouring to make it more user-friendly especially at the end of the year; and
- any underspend at the end of the year can be caused by late funding from government and there was a will to make the true position for each service more understandable.

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

- he would ask the museum service for performance data to give a fuller answer but the previous café owner had given notice and a trial was being undertaken with the team who run the café at St Sidwell's Point and there was a small budget for this;
- the St Sidwell's Point café staff were council employees;
- £1.1 million of the required £1.4 million had been delivered and this was the purpose of carrying reserves, to support and protect the Council should all savings not be made;
- budget savings can prove to be challenging and setting income targets was a projection and may run short as it involved a range of assumptions and central government sometimes made changes;
- a best estimate was £5.7 million savings required over the next three years;
- Government was committed to business rate reset and this was the single reason for the required reductions;
- there were some issues of staff shortage making some projects difficult to deliver and Members could ask any Head of Service why projects which had been signed off were not being delivered;
- it may have helped if the business rate retention scheme had been reset in 2018;
- some council's had found this useful in balancing changes in government grants;
- the council did not respond to the consultation but have commissioned some indicative work;
- there were pockets of deprivation but compared to other areas in the country Exeter did not score highly for deprivation;
- with Local Government reorganisation the Guildhall would no longer be suitable for office relocation and options were being considered and would be taken back to full Council at the appropriate time;
- the idea had been to fund works from the Guildhall shopping centre surplus in order to free the Civic Centre for housing;
- there was an assessment of the number of people who don't live in the city but travel in which used a formula to calculate how much funding was received;
- an amount was being paid to fund the backdated pension deficit;
- pension valuation was being undertaken and there was an improved position;
- the valuation was designed to meet an accounting standard which was calculated differently to a triennial valuation;
- it was very difficult to project pension contributions but there was a three-year agreed amount and above this the tendency was to increase slightly each year;
- information would be provided by Devon County Council as they administered local pension;
- last year Strata's pension fund broke-even and Exeter's was into the 90 percents from an accounting point of view;
- there were different types of debt and income generated through a range of sources but some debts could be quite old but would be chased if tenant was in situ as arrears and would become debt when the tenancy was ended;
- there were two processes which would be followed for debt depending on whether the tenant was existing or previous;
- there were vacancies in some areas and one was the central sundry debt team but work on resolving this was being undertaken;
- a range of techniques were used to recover debt with three areas where write-off was sought – uneconomical, low value debt, if a company or individual was declared bankrupt, had a debt order or Individual Voluntary Arrangement where

there was no means to recover the debt or where all avenues had been exhausted;

- the write-off process would depend upon the value of the debt but would always involve the Strategic Director and on occasion the Portfolio Holder where the value of the debt required;
- earmarked reserves titled Sure Start remained due to funds having been provided by Sure Start in 2005 to provide a play area and must be kept forever in order to provide interest for maintenance and stood at around £20,000;
- he would take back to the service the questions of what the difficulties in appointing a project manager and the ensuing delays in leisure enhancements and what measures were being taken;
- he would also ask the service to respond regarding which initiatives had not begun utilising CIL funds;
- Wellbeing Exeter was funded through CIL Neighbourhood funding and was reliant on the amount of CIL collected and delays to developments could cause challenges;
- there was a plan to alleviate and support temporary accommodation which related to the General Fund and a particular length of lease was required for the maximum housing benefit subsidy and this had to sit within the HRA;
- the risk that rental income wouldn't be sufficient had been considered but deemed a low risk in respect of these properties;
- HRA was self-contained and funds would need to be found elsewhere in the budget, usually by scaling back the capital programme should the repayment not be met; and
- it would not be possible for earmarked reserves to be used for murals; this would usually come from annual maintenance budgets and the one for the play area was specific.

## 71 **Medium Term Financial Plan**

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

- business rate growth reduction was huge and there had been a projection in cash terms by an expert that ECC would get back to the same point by 2031;
- the starting point was the budget as approved in February;
- the end of the new homes' bonus had been confirmed;
- district councils would suffer more than other areas of local government as the positive income streams which proved beneficial were the ones which were going;
- a spending review had been confirmed including a council tax referendum as previously;
- council tax was increasing by a similar amount to other districts in the country;
- the housing benefit administration grant was reducing year on year as the transfer to Universal Credit took place and was managed by the Department for Work and Pensions(DWP);
- there was transitional relief where bills had increased but immediate benefit could be seen;
- inflation was calculated at a high level based on an estimated pay award of 3% but aware that two unions had rejected a 3.2% offer and were considering next steps;
- calculations went down slightly as it was estimated that the workforce would reduce slightly as budget cuts were made;
- 2025/26 reflected additional funds to reflect increased National Insurance contributions;

- inflation was not provided for all budgets but was for those which were critical;
- net interest was relatively stable and it was expected that there would continue to be a reduction in cash invested;
- the council was not looking to borrow externally at this time; and
- the key risk slide showed that the DWP were exploring pension age claimants being transferred to pension credit which could reduce the council's work leaving only challenging cases which would see a reduced grant but would be resource intensive meaning officers would be required.

## 72 **Box-shifting Update**

The report on Box-shifting was taken as read and Members were advised that the council complied with legislation and was waiting for central government to assess the impact and look at anti-avoidance regulations.

The Head of Service Finance responded to Members questions making the following points:

- the Business Rates Team carried out inspections of those box-shifting to ensure compliance with legislation; and
- from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 the Government extended the re-set period for empty property relief (EPR) from 6 weeks to 13 weeks and the impact on Exeter was broadly as forecast, with only a modest reduction in the level of EPR and no significant reduction in the number of businesses that show signs of practicing 'box shifting'.

Councillor Moore proposed a motion, seconded by Councillor Holland, that the Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee request that the Executive Findings from this work are sent to government with a request that Local Authorities were given more powers when deciding when empty property rates relief can legitimately be granted.

The Councillor felt that it was a good idea to send feedback to government but not sure about giving powers to Local Authorities and proposed that the motion be amended.

In response to a Member's question, the following information was provided:

- the government planned to consult on anti-avoidance;
- the Welsh Government had concluded their consultation and proposals would take effect from April 2026;
- local powers may not be needed as banning the practice had been campaigned for nationally; and
- it was likely that the government would closely monitor what took place in Wales and may bring forward similar legislation.

Councillor Read and Councillor Moore accepted the amendment proposed by Councillor Pole and following a vote was unanimously CARRIED.

## 73 **Scrutiny Annual Report**

The Chair thanked Councillor Matthew Williams for attending and invited him, as Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Board to present the Annual Scrutiny Report.

Councillor Matthew Williams presented the report making the following points:

- he thanked the Democratic Services Officer for positive changes to the report and stated that this would continue to develop;
- the report had been brought in line with the municipal year; and
- he thanked members of the Scrutiny Programme Board, Councillors Parkhouse, Rees, Mitchell, M., and Pole for their work on the report.

During discussion Members made the following points:

- a reduction in property costs for Citizens Advice Exeter had been realised and could be listed as an impact;
- information presented to the public changed as a result of scrutiny of the community lottery could also be seen as an impact;
- outputs or outcomes might better represent what was currently listed under Impact;
- impact may not be seen within the timescale for an annual report;
- an updated Asset Management Policy had not yet been seen;
- there was a need to avoid acronyms.

The Chair moved and Councillor Cookson seconded the recommendation as set out in the report and following a vote was CARRIED unanimously.

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

The Chair sought and gained the approval of the committee to move the two items scheduled for September to the January meeting given the importance of the Anti-Social Behaviour in the City Centre item.

During discussion it was agreed that Councillor's Wright and Vizard be asked to present their Portfolio Holder updates at the September meeting and Councillor Ruth Williams in March 2026.

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

The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 8.56 pm

Chair



## REPORT TO CUSTOMER FOCUS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 25 September 2025

Report of: Strategic Director Place, Ian Collinson

Title: Update on efforts to tackle Anti-Social Behaviour in the City Centre

### Is this a Key Decision?

Scrutiny is a non-decision making committee

### Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Scrutiny is a non-decision making committee

## 1. What is the report about?

- 1.1 Key priorities in the new Corporate Plan include, a safe and thriving night-time economy and a safe and thriving city with great things to see and do for everyone. Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) is one of the ways of ensuring people feel safe and welcome, in the city centre and across neighbourhoods.
- 1.2 This work supports the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) which takes a multi-organisational approach to ASB.
- 1.3 Cllr Mitchell and Cllr Palmer submitted a proposal for the following to be considered by Customer Focus Scrutiny:
  - Address public concern about the impact of anti-social behaviour in the City Centre; its causes and possible solutions;
  - Multi agency input to understand the nature of the issues that arise, the causations and potential solutions;
  - Several organisations to be invited with the brief to provide a short statement on what they believe from their evidence are the causes and possible solutions to ASB in the city centre.
- 1.4 In relation to the proposal, comments from SMB were: Addressing Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in the City Centre (and throughout Exeter) is a City Council priority and is addressed through the Community Safety Partnership (CSP). This includes participation in an ASB sub-group of the CSP. Officers would be pleased to provide the Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee with a report, updating actions and initiatives to tackle this issue, including our Community Safety Team who work in partnership with Hot Spot policing.
- 1.5 The Chair of the Community Safety Partnership's ASB Sub-Group will provide a summary of work undertaken to address City Centre ASB.

## 2. What are the legal aspects?

- 2.1 The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime & Policing Act 2014 gives councils the authority to draft and implement Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs) in response to

issues affecting communities. On 10 June 2025, the City Council extended the City Centre PSPO for a further 3 years until 19 June 2028.

- 2.2 These powers are subject to several conditions. The first condition is that activities carried on in a public place within the authority's area have had a detrimental effect on the quality of life in the locality; or it is likely that activities will be carried on in a public place within that area and that they will have such an effect.
- 2.3 The second condition is that the effect or the likely effect of the activities;
- a) is, or is likely to be of a persistent nature;
  - b) is, or is likely to be, such as to make the activities unreasonable; and
  - c) justifies the restrictions imposed by the notice.
- 2.4 If ASB occurs within the boundary of the PSPO, it provides powers to:
- A. Surrender any intoxicating substance\* in their possession to an authorised person\*\* when requested to do so by that authorised person, if:
    - (a) They are found to be ingesting, inhaling, injecting, smoking or otherwise using an intoxicating substance or substances; or
    - (b) They are in possession of such intoxicating substance or substances with the intent of using such intoxicating substance within this area; or
    - (c) The authorised person has reasonable grounds to believe that such person is using or intends to use the intoxicating substance or substances within the said area.
  - B. Not urinate in a street or public open space.
  - C. Not carry out aggressive begging.
  - D. Not behave (either individually or in a group of two or more people) in a manner that has caused or is likely to cause a member of the public to suffer harassment, alarm or distress by that behaviour.
  - E. Person or persons within this area who breach Prohibition D shall when ordered to do so by an authorised person leave the area either immediately or by such time as may be specified and in such a manner as may be specified.
- 2.5 Also, at the disposal of designated city institutions is the ability to issue several notices, which include:
- Acceptable Behaviour Contract (ABC), which is a written agreement widely used to address ASB undertaken by young people;
  - Community Protection Warning (CPW), which is a written warning issued to individuals, businesses, or organisations to modify a pattern of behaviour that is negatively impacting the local community's quality of life;
  - When a Community Protection Warning is breached, the next stage is to issue the offending person/ business with a Community Protection Notice (CPN);
  - If persistent ASB is still occurring, the next stage is a Criminal Behaviour Order, which is issued by a court.

### **3. Report details:**

- 3.1 During 2020 an Anti-Social Behaviour Summit was held, bringing together city partners. The summit was designed and delivered, with support from the University of Exeter to develop a report, with included the following objectives:
- Objective 1: Identifying and describing changes that have taken place since the Summit, including those brought about by the COVID pandemic
  - Objective 2: Identify key themes and recommendations for short, medium and long-term actions that are both preventative and responsive
  - Objective 3: Ensuring that people with lived experience can contribute to the formation of recommendations
  - Objective 4: Prepare for a Review Summit in the autumn where delegates will be invited to set priorities; identify resources and agree action plans
- 3.2 The report, its objectives and any outstanding actions are being addressed by the Community Safety Partnership ASB Sub-Group and the ASBAT Operational Sub-Working Group.
- 3.3 During the 2024 Council restructure, the Head of City Centre & Net Zero took on the responsibility for City Centre ASB, with wider city wide ASB falling under the Head of Service Environment & Waste.
- 3.4 The following organisations have been invited to present to Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee on the causes and solutions of City centre ASB, as well as activity undertaken by their respective organisation:
- The Community Safety Partnership (Safer Exeter) ASB Operational Sub-Group
  - Inclusive Exeter
  - Exeter College
  - Intercom Trust
  - Exeter Mosque
  - Co-Lab
  - University of Exeter
  - St Petrock's
  - Exeter City Community Trust
  - Taxi Drivers
  - Together Devon
- 3.5 No one organisation can solve City Centre ASB, but collectively they can make a positive contribution. Organisations are working in partnership through the ASB Sub-Group, chaired by InExeter. The Sub-Group has led on the development of hyper local ASB action plans for Fore Street, Cathedral Green, South Street and Sidwell Street. Activity is being drawn into a City Centre ASB Action Plan.
- 3.6 Addressing City Centre ASB in partnership, supports the results of the 2024 residents survey, as safety was highlighted as an area of concern:

- Safety was the number one suggested improvement for the youngest category (16–24-year-olds)
- Respondents were asked to suggest one thing that would improve life for themselves and their family - safety was the most popular.
- Analysis of the survey showed that those living in Central wards were more likely to feel unsafe outside after dark, particularly when compared with those in the South area.
- Deprivation levels seem to be a factor in feelings of safety too, with those in areas of higher deprivation more likely to feel unsafe than those in areas of lower deprivation.
- Females were also more likely to feel unsafe outside after dark than males.
- Nine in ten respondents felt safe outside in their local area during the day and this was on a par with the national picture, with 91% reporting they felt safe during the day in the LGA residents benchmarking survey.
- Although six in ten (59%) said they felt safe outside in the local area after dark, a quarter did not, with 17% saying they felt 'fairly unsafe' and 9% 'very unsafe'. This is higher than in the LGA residents benchmarking survey, which found 16% felt unsafe in their local area after dark.

3.7 As part of the Government's Safer Streets Mission, the Prime Minister has recently announced details of the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee, aimed at restoring and strengthening local policing in every community by the end of this Parliament. A key component of the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee is restoring confidence in local communities and taking visible action tackling ASB and increasing the safety of town centres and high streets. The government has written to all Police and Crime Commissioners and Chief Constables about ensuring every area is maximising all opportunities, including taking forward immediate steps this summer, in partnership with councils, schools, health services, business, transport and community organisations.

Report Author: Head of City Centre & Net Zero

## **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 Tel: 01392 265275

# CITY CENTRE ASB

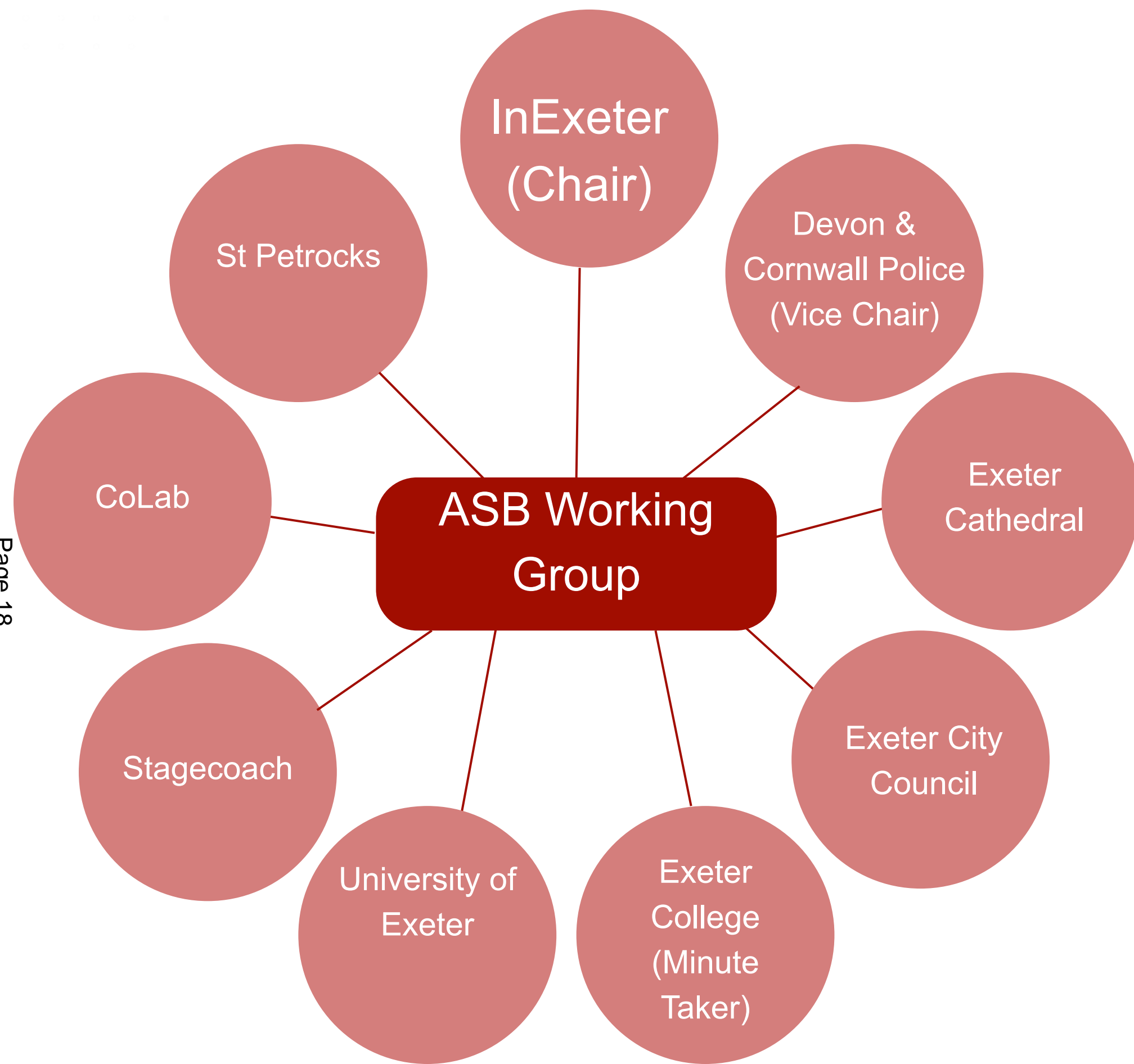
Antisocial behaviour is defined as  
'behaviour by a person which  
causes, or is likely to cause,  
harassment, alarm or distress to  
persons not of the same  
household as the person'



**SAFER  
EXETER**

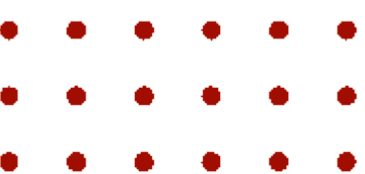
Making our city safer for all





# Our Approach

ASB sub-group of the CSP established January 2024 with representatives from across the city.



## Operational

Hyper local network of businesses and community organisations in 'hotspot' locations. Meetings facilitated by Inspector Johnson and InExeter CEO Nicola Wheeler to:

- Identify the impact of the ASB in specific locations
- Baseline perception of safety surveys
- Co-produce action plans
- Monitor progress
- Activity feeds into Safer Exeter ASB Sub-Working Group and Action Plan



# Operational – Action Plan Excerpt

Category	Action	Lead	Second lead	Progress Update	Notes
Place	Restrict access to area of Cathedral Green closest to Cathedral School currently demarcated by temporary green fencing	Cathedral		Action underway	Site visit carried out. Agreed intervention. Cost estimate received. Application from for funding submitted to OPCC Jan 2025, funding awarded - awaiting update from Cathedral on completion.
Place	Clear overgrown area near to Cathedral by heightening tree canopy and trimming ground shrubs. Maintain the Green ensuring gaps between planting and trees.	Cathedral		Action complete	Cathedral undertook works after first meeting and continue to maintain grounds.
Place	Install signage setting out rules and consequences of unacceptable behaviour.	Cathedral		Action required	Some signage in place. Cathedral to review and implement what is needed.
Place	Improve lighting at night particularly on Eastern edge of Cathedral Close going towards Southernhay.	DCC	DCP	Action required	InExeter and DCP engaged with DCC to highlight this and other dark areas. No funding as yet.
People	Deliver a programme of activation on The Green to increase positive uses. E.g. Independent Market, Book Market, Young Traders Market etc.	Cathedral		Action underway	Cathedral hosted Independent market (monthly, Apr-Sept) and the Christmas market (4 weeks Nov-Dec) as well as Craft Fair and Book Market in 2024. Programme for 2025 includes 4 x Independent Markets, RAF recruitment drive in April.
Place	Litter pick once a day, continue or increase this as required.	Cathedral		Action underway	Cathedral have a daily litter picker.
People	Work closely with young people around their behaviour and the things behind this.	Young Devon		Action underway	
Place	Work with food and beverage businesses and Exeter Cathedral to reclaim the outdoor space/pavement areas.				
Place	Understand and inform how each stakeholder could extend further out from their perimeter and cover wider communal space.	InExeter		Action Underway	Pizza Express aiming to extend their seating area. Sprout now using outside fully. Taste, Cote and Eat on the Green all making use of outdoor space.
Place	BT Phone boxes - remove or upgrade	ECC	DCC	Action underway	Enquiries made with BT and Global. Option to rationalise phone boxes and bring in street hubs subject to planning approval. Global have submitted proposals and a planning application to ECC. InExeter wrote a letter of support addressed to Head of Planning. A number of phone boxes on the city have been earmarked for removal. InExeter worked with Global to get the ones outside Monkey Suit and Waterstones deo cleaned for Britain in Bloom and to get the St George's Dross removed from the one outside the Corn Exchange.
People	Increase presence and robustness in enforcing PSPO and no alcohol zone.	DCP	ECC	Action underway	Hotspot patrols in place since May 2024. DCP recording outputs. Community Safety Team in place since July 2024. Both are funded either wholly or in part of PCC. Funding from 25/26 is now confirmed and both hotspot plicing and Community Safety Team will continue for another 12 months. ECC to take paper to committee to make CST permanent.
People	Increased visibility through hotspot policing for late afternoon /	DCP		Action underway	ENTE policing action plan and neighbourhood policing plan aligned with identified hotspots for ASB
					DCC have confirmed that they cannot resource someone to be on the CSP, ASB and ENTE sub groups. Designated a single point of contact (Phil Morgan) to direct enquiries through. InExeter and



# Key Activity

Shared Prosperity Fund - CCTV  
& Body Worn Video Cameras  
£129,78 - 2022

Safer Business Action  
Week w/c 14th October

Hotspot Policing Initiative  
- May 2024

Extension of Hotspot  
Policing Initiative - April  
2025

Community Safety  
Team pilot launched - July  
2024

Encampments Process  
Map - April 2025

Sidwell Centre Security  
Pilot - August 2024

Extension of City Centre PSPO  
for a further 3 years - July 2025





# Key Activity

City Centre Hyper Local ASB meetings

City Centre ASB Action Plan developed

Streets to Safety Strategic Forum - 9 July 2025

Shared Prosperity Fund - CCTV £105,120 August 2025

'Need Help' yellow signs installed across the City Centre - July 2025

EBAC launch new reporting tool - July 2025

EBAC rollout of new radios – September 2025

Rough Sleeping Prevention & Recovery Top-Up Grant – September 2025







**SAFER  
EXETER**  
Making our city safer for all

£133k funding from the Police & Crime Commissioner to fund hotspot policing, partner patrols and physical interventions in hot spot areas including:

- Additional CCTV on Fore Street and George Street
- Planting and wayfinding on South Street
- Planting and garden improvements at Sidwell Centre
- Ironmongery on Cathedral Green to reduce access to problem areas.

# Devon & Cornwall Police



[Exeter City Centre | Police.uk](https://www.exeter.police.uk/)

The Exeter Neighbourhood team are focused on nine priorities: Engagement, Shop theft, Counter Drugs, Serious and Organised Crime, Evening and Night Time Economy, Violence Against Women and Girls, Violence, Anti-Social Behaviour in residential areas and Anti-Social Behaviour in the city centre.

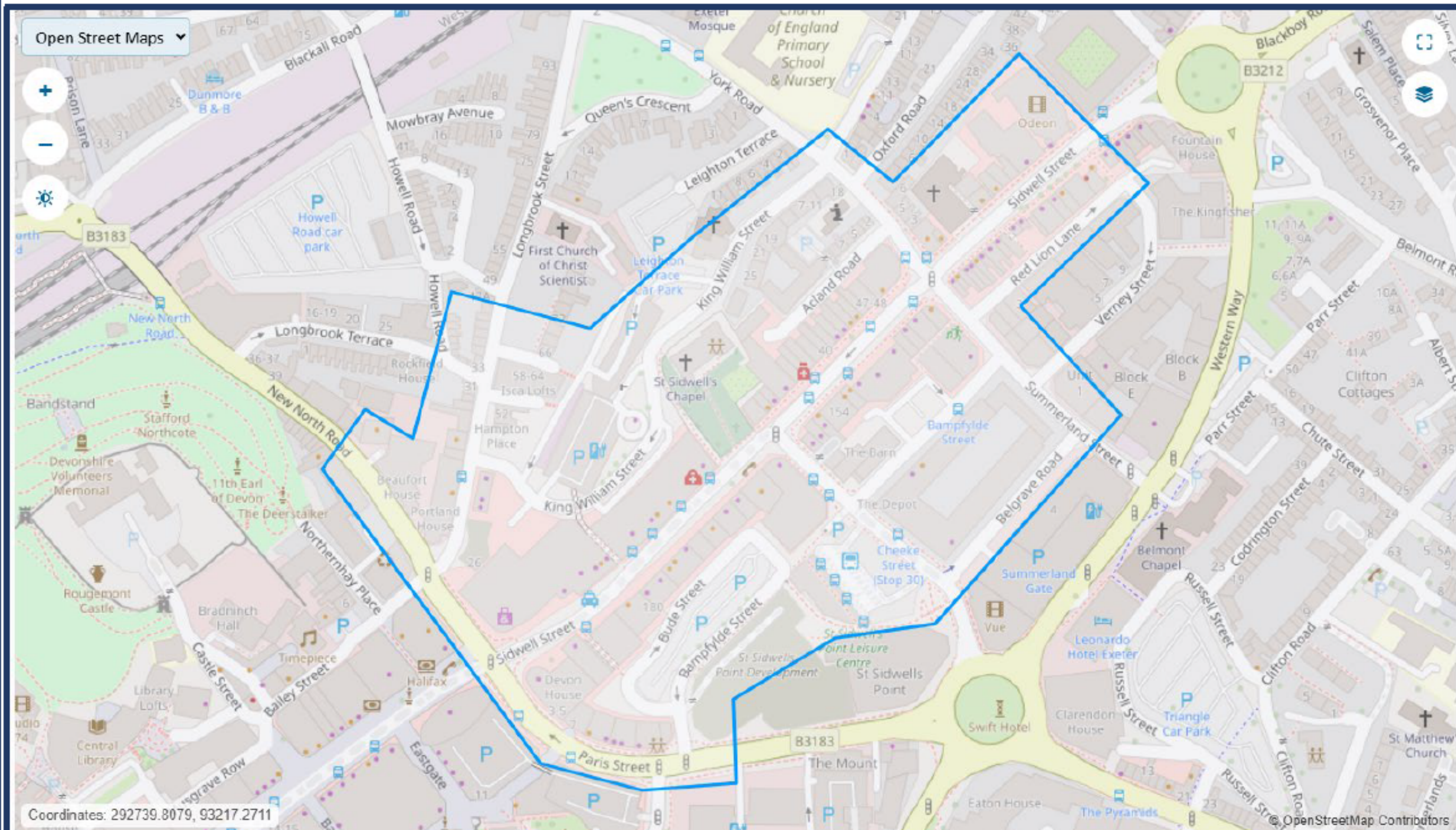
Our Strategy is focused on:

- Places – reclaim contested spaces, this could be a bench or a street,
- Partnerships – create local networks to involve statutory partners, business, residents, charities and initiatives
- People – marginalise perpetrators behaviour, which seeks to understand individuals and address behaviours.



# Exeter – Sidwell Street Hotspot

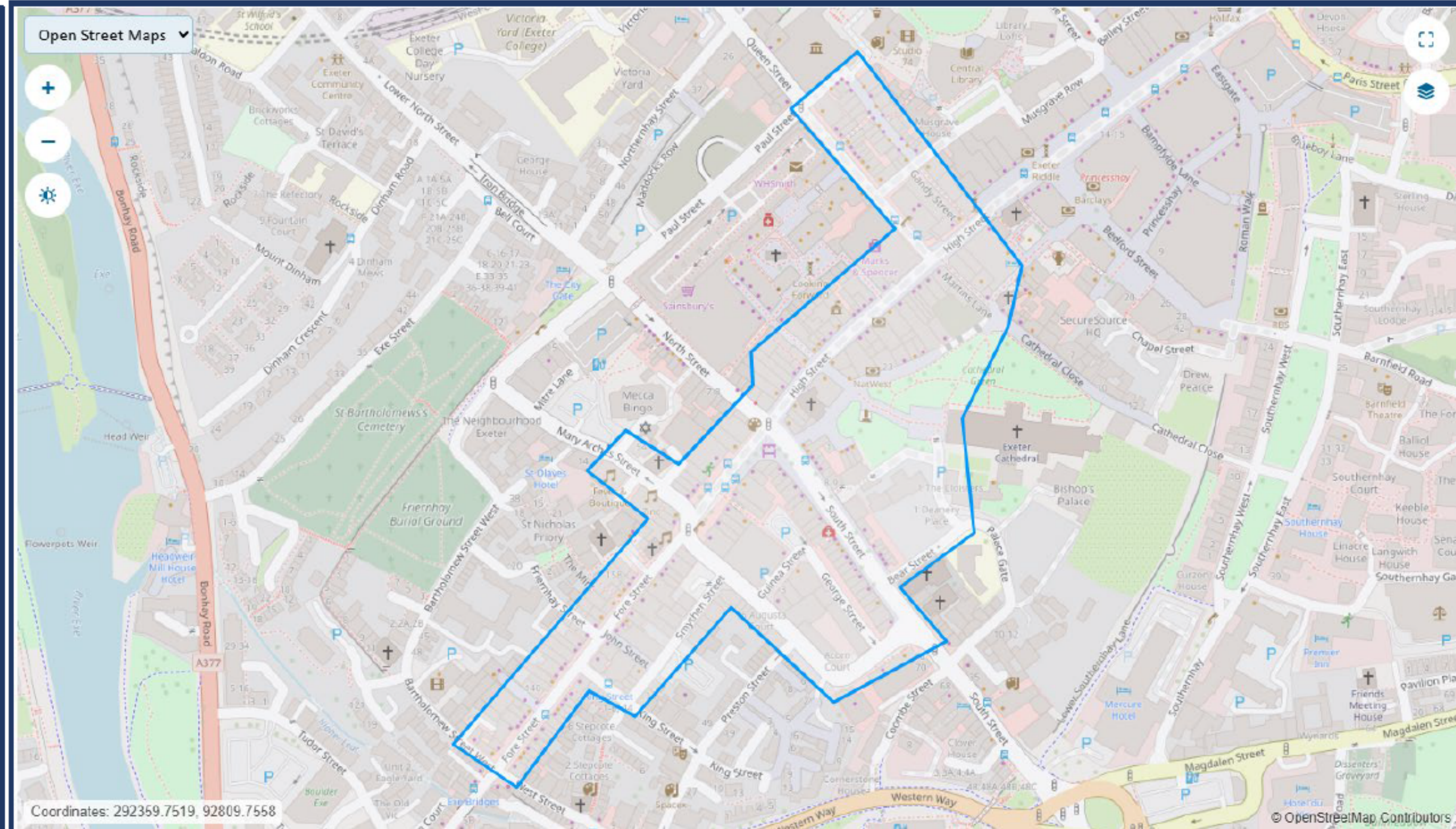
- Sidwell Street
- King William Street
- Acland Road
- York Road
- New North Road
- Paris Street
- Cheeke Street
- Bampfylde Street
- Bude Street
- Belgrave Road
- Summerland Street
- Red Lion Lane





# Exeter – South Street Hotspot

- High Street
- Queen Street
- Gandy Street
- Cathedral Green
- South Street
- Mary Arches Street
- Fore Street
- George Street
- Smythen Street
- Guinea Street







Since the Community Safety Team were provided with the power to disperse individuals from within the PSPO area (Oct 2024), they have issued 332 dispersals, ranging from 6-24hrs

Reason	No. dispersals
ASB	128
Shoplifting/Theft	29
Begging	4
Shouting	14
Fighting	10
Possession of drugs	4
Drug taking	13
Drunk & Disorderly	18
Drinking alcohol	30
Swearing	20
Breach of CPW	8
Other	54
TOTAL	332



## Additional Outputs

- Over **100** local businesses engaged
- **4x** coproduced localised action plans
- **1x** Streets to Safety Forum with the High Sherriff attended by 40 leaders
- **1x** Infographic produced by University of Exeter



# Current Focus

## Exeter Safety Charter

Opportunity to demonstrate that city partners are committed to working together on improving safety in the city during the day

## Press Event

Oct 2025 to share the work that has been undertake to date and improve public perceptions of safety in the city

## Data Dashboard

Aligning all data relating to ASB including DCP data, ECC data and EBAC data into a single dashboard to provide insight and monitor progress

## Mentoring Project

A pilot building on the outcome of the Streets to Stability Forum providing targeted and wrap around support to vulnerable individuals in the city

## Purple Flag & SWAN Charter

Working towards submitting an application for Purple Flag status and where women feel confident and safe at night.

# Next Steps

**ASB Action Plan**

Review and update ASB Action Plan

**12 Month Review**

Attend Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee September 2026 with an update on progress and activity

## PORTFOLIO HOLDER'S REPORT TO SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

### REPORT TO STRATEGIC and CUSTOMER FOCUS SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

**Date of Meetings:**

Customer Focus Scrutiny: Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2025

Strategic Scrutiny: Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2025

**Report of COUNCILLOR Laura Wright**, Lead Councillor for Corporate Services (including Digital Transformation) & City Centre Strategy.

**Council Committees:** Executive and Council

**Board member/Trustee (council appointments):** InExeter, Exeter Canal and Quay Trust, Exeter Business Centre

**Member of:** Devon and Cornwall Police & Crime Commissioner's Panel

**Member of:** Exeter Community Safety Partnership including working groups; ASB and Gender Safety

**Devon & Cornwall Police Cllr Advocate**

**Relevant training and CPD undertaken this year;**

LGA Conference, Liverpool, July 2025

**ECC online certified training;** County Lines, Domestic Abuse, Equality Diversity and Inclusion, GDPR, Introduction to Safeguarding Thematics, Misogyny and Incel subculture, Risk Assessment, Serious violence and Knife Crime, FGM.

**Other relevant training:** Level 2 Safeguarding, Prevent, ECC's EDI training.

#### **1. Delivering our strategic priorities: as per our published Corporate Plan 2025-28**

##### **1. Local Economy**

**City Centre Strategy**

The consultations involving business, elected members and members of the public have now concluded. All responses are being considered in the next stage of the development of a new vision, strategy and action plan. The action plan will be owned by key stakeholders and partners as well as ECC and will have measurable and timed outcomes.

The development of the vision and strategy is now underway and will come back to myself, the Director and Head of Service mid-November. The final vision and strategy will come to Council for adoption Spring '26.

There is a business, economy and growth sub-group of the Exeter Partnership which will sense check draft documents as and when received.

I continue to sit on the board of InExeter which provides feedback from city centre businesses and their priorities.

As the strategy work progresses, we will be in a strong position to work at national and regional levels to bring forward investment and encourage economic growth to Exeter.

**People** *A safe and thriving city with great things to do for everyone*

### **Community Safety & Anti-Social behaviour**

The Exeter City Centre PSPO was renewed this year and includes the St Thomas area of the Exe Bridges retail park and Cowick Street precinct. This Order gives police powers to remove alcohol from anyone displaying anti-social behaviours. Specific powers have also now been given to the Community Safety Team following their CSAS training and accreditation.

The 4 Community Safety Team (CST) officers (jointly funded by ECC, InExeter and the Police & Crime Commissioner) patrol the city centre and PSPO area, supporting D&C Police in their hotspot policing initiative and undertaking various other duties. The team also cover city parks and green spaces, as well as dealing with stray dogs.

The main purpose of the CST is to contribute to community safety and to combat crime and disorder, public nuisance and other forms of antisocial behaviour in co-operation with the police.

Data from the CST, the Police and InExeter is currently being collated to form one central data portal to log, assess and ascertain the effectiveness of all aspects of targeted action against ASB in the city. This work to form a data portal is being undertaken by Exeter College.

The areas covered by the hotspot policing include; Sidwell Street, High Street, Cathedral Yard, Queen Street, South Street and Mary Arches Street.

### **CCTV and Control Room**

Following a member of the control room staff being awarded a commendation from the Police & Crime Commissioner earlier this year, the team have made further crucial identifications of wanted criminals and been able to assist the police in their work. As I have seen myself when visiting the control room at night, the team also play a crucial role in spotting behaviours and vulnerabilities to which they can then alert security staff, the police or the Community Safety Team.

The City Council have 311 City Centre CCTV cameras. The total number of offline cameras currently represents around 3% of our entire portfolio. The 11 CCTV Cameras offline are due to:

Scaffolding being located on the Corn Exchange. We are working with our Corporate Property team to get the CCTV camera relocated, so it has clear sight once again. This work will be completed by the end of the month.

Some cameras are intermittently offline due to city dressing. Officers are in communication with external organisations to remove city dressing to ensure the link can be reinstated and the CCTV cameras are back online.

Additional budget has been allocated to replace any remaining old analogue CCTV Cameras across the City Centre and within car parks. Any surplus budget will be used to buy and install new CCTV Cameras in any areas of concern. Officers are working with D&C Police and InExeter to identify these locations. The team are working with procurement to purchase the CCTV cameras and should be installed this autumn. This has been funded by UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

A new camera has been installed in South Street.

The CCTV Control Room is open 24hrs a day, 7 days a week.

New yellow 'Do you need help' signs with the phone number to the control room, have been installed over the summer. 140 are installed to date, with a further 24 to be installed when the additional new CCTV cameras are installed this autumn.

The City Council are working with InExeter, under the Safer Exeter Community Safety Partnership, to raise awareness of the work undertaken by partners to address ASB within the city centre. A press event is being organised for October, where information on the CCTV network, the yellow help signs and the Community Safety Team will form part of the press event. The press event will also include work undertaken by partners in addressing ASB, , including InExeter, the City Council and Devon & Cornwall Police.

## **Community Safety Partnership**

The review of this partnership, its priorities and Operation Sub-Working Groups and potential outcomes is ongoing. The work of the partnership so far has been to bring key stakeholders together to share information, create specific focus groups to bring forward objectives, and to facilitate bids for relevant Home Office Funding for community safety.

The work of the Sub-Working Groups is having a positive impact on the city.

## **2. Sustainable environment**

Recent input through the Exeter Partnership has highlighted the need to include sustainability and environment in our work on the City Centre Vision and Strategy, as a golden thread. Parks and biodiversity within the city centre will be a focus as will working with business to reduce carbon footprint and take advantage of potential joint ventures to improve sustainability.

## **3. A well-run council**

### **1. Leading a well-run council**

***Effective investment and maintenance programme for the assets that underpin our business***

#### ***Open and transparent decision making***

Work is underway to modernise and clarify our democratic processes and our Constitution. A cross-party sounding board and regular communications with group leaders has informed, shaped and checked the work in this area. So far, sections of the constitution referring to the Planning Committee and Full Council have been adopted and further work on Scrutiny and the Executive committees is underway.

The reduction of committees to 11 places has been approved by the Audit & Governance committee and member places and substitutes coming to full council in due course.

Cllr training and development continues to receive good feedback and is ongoing throughout the year. Specific briefings in addition to training have been welcomed by members many who have feedback that this aids their decision making.

Members are encouraged to undertake any specific individual training that they identify, and a recent email has shown the process for applying to do this.

The move to reduce the number of reports that come to Executive for noting before going to full council for debate and decision making has started to streamline and clarify accountability.

It has been decided by the Councillor Development Steering Group to continue with the online training platform available to members and work is ongoing to improve the take-up of this certified training.

### **IT & Digital**

Work is ongoing to digitise paper records held in Planning through the City Development Transformation project.

An audit of the iTrent system and subsequent work to utilise previously underused strands of the software to enable better efficiency and data management for staff and HR is ongoing. This has saved a previously considered financial outlay for additional software.

Rapid Impact teams within staff areas are undertaking and promoting work to improve customer/staff interactions and digital record keeping. This is being rolled out across departments.

Upgrading and facilitation of committee room digital infrastructure is now complete, resulting in vastly improved audio and visual performance which in turn has improved accessibility and transparency for committee members and for members of the public.

The roll out of My Exeter has been very successful with over 13, 000 residents signed up so far.

The move to start migrating the council systems from the data centres in the civic centre to the Cloud system is due to be completed by March 2026.

Updating of the ECC website -due to start this month.

**Legal Services:** A review is underway to look at the processes currently used to address Traveller and non-Traveller encampments and incursions. This will be in conjunction with the Homelessness prevention team, Estates, Parks and Open Spaces, the Police and the Community Safety partnership.

### **Corporate Health & Safety:**

Bespoke, onsite accredited Health and Safety at Work training is underway.

## **2. Update or commentary on any major ongoing programmes of work**

1. All covered in the sections above

## **3. Issues that may impact services delivery/financial performance/future budget requirements**

### **CCTV**

A tender is being developed to procure a new maintenance contract for the extensive CCTV network. Additional budget was allocated this financial year to pay for a new maintenance contract.

A new commercial income generating contract has been signed, for the Control Room to monitor an external CCTV network. Additional commercial contracts are in negotiation.

**Homecall** is starting to show an increase in customer numbers following a two-year slow decline.

<b>4. Potential changes to services/provisions being considered</b>
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- |    |
|----|
| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |
|    |

<b>5. Other matters the Portfolio Holder wishes to raise with the Scrutiny Committee</b>
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- |  |
|--|
| 1. <b>Devon &amp; Cornwall Police and Crime Commissioner Panel</b><br>A report on the last two meetings will come out with the next scrutiny bulletin. |
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END
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## REPORT TO STRATEGIC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 11 September 2025

## PORTFOLIO HOLDER'S REPORT TO SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

Councillor Matt Vizard – Portfolio Holder Climate, Ecological Change and Communities

### 1. Issues relating to achieving the Council's published priorities

#### Local Economy

A new City Centre Vision & Strategy is being developed, which primarily sits with Cllr Laura Wright. The new Vision & Strategy will have a focus on connectivity, supporting active and sustainable transport to the City Centre; enabling residents, shoppers, visitors and workers to access the city sustainably. It will also have a focus on city centre living, supporting new homes in the city centre, reducing the dependency on car ownership.

#### People

- Intended Outcomes:
  - Communities will be more resilient
  - A safe and thriving city with great things to see and do for everyone

The Net Zero team attend the Devon, Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Climate Impacts Group, where adaptation measures and progress are discussed. The Net Zero Risk Register has been expanded to cover adaptation measures to support service delivery and to protect our communities in Exeter.

#### Homes

- Intended Outcomes
  - Better quality, energy efficient and more affordable homes to buy or rent
  - New housing developments that are well integrated into existing communities
  - Fewer people will be homeless or in temporary housing
  - The number of people on the social housing waiting list will reduce

The City Council continues to focus on retrofitting our homes, with 920 homes retrofitted to date. The new 3 year Retrofit Contract to be signed shortly will continue to target the achievement of the government 2030/2035 targets for Energy Performance in our properties, whilst also identifying properties that have historic issues with damp and mould along with components that have exceeded their lifecycle regardless of the current EPC to maximise all opportunities to proactively reduce the risk of damp and mould and reduce the carbon footprint of our assets.

The Draft Exeter Plan and its housing related policies [The New Local Plan – the Exeter Plan - About the Exeter Plan - Exeter City Council](#) have a focus on large, brownfield sites located close to the city centre and key transport hubs.

#### Sustainable Environment

- Intended Outcomes
  - A city taking action to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change
  - A Net Zero Carbon City
  - Well-maintained parks, open spaces and biodiversity across the city

A comprehensive update is provided below in Section 2.

## **2. Update or commentary on any major ongoing programmes of work**

### **Making Exeter City Council operations Net Zero by 2030**

#### *Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS)*

As previously reported to Strategic Scrutiny, a £3.5M bid for the PSDS Phase 4 fund was successful for the Riverside Leisure Centre. The three-year project includes replacement of the outdated boiler and heating system with air-source heat pumps, a heat recovery system, and upgraded roof deck to boost thermal efficiency whilst accommodating the new roof-mounted heat pumps. The project represents the greatest potential for decarbonisation of any of the Council's Leisure sites and will provide a long term sustainable and efficient building for years to come. Work underway includes a full detailed design before procurement of the installation and building work in 2026.

#### *South West Energy and Environment Group (SWEEG)*

The City Council continues to be a full member of the SWEEG. SWEEG is a collaborative research partnership of South West public organisations and provides the City Council access to detailed technical work by academics from the University of Exeter's Centre for Energy and Environment. Numerous studies have supported the Planning team, with studies and research in developing the draft Exeter Plan. SWEEG provide the annual GHG inventory for Exeter, the City Council, and more recently a full study to establish the financial cost of achieving Net Zero for the City Council by 2030.

#### *Costed Organisation Carbon Footprint Report*

The Costed Organisational Carbon Footprint Projections report provides three scenarios to establish the financial cost of reducing GHG emissions across five sectors of the City Council's operations. The Study was reported to Executive July 2024 and is to be presented at September's Strategic Scrutiny Committee, together with a presentation by Andrew Rowson, a Senior Research Fellow at SWEEG. Following Strategic Scrutiny, a further report will be considered at Executive to identify options for how carbon reduction measures can be incorporated into Annual Service Plans to enable prioritisation of service led GHG emission reduction measures.

#### *Photo Voltaic (PV) Feasibility Study*

The City Council secured £100k from the South West Net Zero Hub, which was created to support South West Local Authorities to support net zero opportunities, unlock barriers and get stalled projects moving. The City Council utilised the fund to carry out a full PV feasibility exercise to evaluate solar opportunities across suitable City Council buildings. The final business case for sites where solar PV is viable will be presented to SMB. New PV installations will support decarbonisation of City Council owned buildings, provide protection against energy price increases and long-term savings.

### *PV Solar*

The City Council's solar estate of 3.4MW is a sizable solar estate, located on the roofs of key [City Council sites](#). Work has been ongoing to implement increased maintenance and cleansing to address the needs of an ageing solar installation. This has involved working with industry experts to find solutions, the council being an early adopter of Solar PV.

### *Regional Energy Strategic Plan*

The Net Zero team and Planning Officers recently facilitated a visit to the innovative and pioneering Water Lane Smart Grid and Storage Project by the Regional Energy Strategic Plan (RESP). RESP will deliver accountability and coordination for strategic planning of the distribution system, as part of the independent National Energy System Operator (NESO). They will convene regional stakeholders around a common view of how the energy system will develop to support local planning and development priorities (the Exeter Plan) as well as delivering national goals. During the visit the team were able to share hurdles the City Council had to overcome to make the Water Lane project happen. The Net Zero team highlighted that there is a need for a more joined up approach to network and infrastructure planning so that projects are able to connect in a timely fashion.

### *Carbon Literacy*

The Net Zero Team have delivered Carbon Literacy training to 307 members of staff, including members of the Strategic Management Board, Organisational Management Board and Councillors. 154 Councillors and staff are certified as being Carbon Literate, which secures Carbon Literate Organisational Bronze Status for the City Council. The team have a rolling programme of monthly training courses planned for the next 6 months, which staff can sign up to via a Microsoft booking form on the intranet.

There is a plan to offer Carbon Literacy training to external organisations, this will require additional officers with the Net Zero team to be certified to deliver the training due to the Net Zero Data Officer recently leaving the organisation. A Business Case was approved by SMB to deliver Carbon Literacy training externally, to outside organisations, community groups and residents. After the recruitment and training of the post of Net Zero Support Officer, this will be progressed with and promoted locally.

### *Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) funding*

The City Council is currently working with Devon County Council and other Devon District Councils to secure Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) funding. The fund from government was allocated Devon County Council to support the expansion of on street residential and off street electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure. The City Council has provided a full schedule of sites to install new EV charging facilities on City Council owned car parks (off-street) in line with the Council's EV Infrastructure Plan, which was reported in the Councillors Information Bulletin April 2025.

### *Housing warm home grants*

The new Housing Warm Home grants scheme is to be distributed by Devon CC and will be open from autumn 2025 and run for three years.

Healthy Homes grants are also administered by ECC for occupants that qualify, and the Private Sector Housing Team work alongside Exeter Community Energy (ECOE).

Exeter City Council administer Warm Up grants; this is a top up grant and last year ECC paid out £12,000 to help people improve the warmth of their homes.

### **Working across the City to implement the Net Zero Road Map 2030**

**A Climate and Nature Group has been established as part of The Exeter Partnership**, bringing together representatives from organisations, businesses and community groups, to work collaboratively together to deliver the Exeter Net Zero 2030 Plan. This group meets virtually on a quarterly basis with a rotating chair. Members of this group represent organisations, businesses and communities across the city. The first meeting of Climate and Nature Group took place in March 2025 with a focus on attendees introducing themselves and their organisations, followed by a discussion to explore priorities, challenges and areas/themes for this group to address at future meetings. The second meeting took place in June 2025 with a focus on sustainable travel as transport emissions were the source of 23% of Exeter's greenhouse gas emissions in 2022.

**CUA Sustainability Advisory Group** continues to meet to discuss areas of joint opportunities, activities and collaboration, group is chaired by Exeter City Council. The group has had a focus on sustainable transport and active travel and agreed to set up a CUA Sustainable Travel Group to focus on sharing travel plans, travel to work approaches/learning, data and best practice.

**GWR/Green Circle project:** Thanks to a successful bid for funding by the City Council from the GWR Customer and Community Improvement Fund, this project (with additional funding from DCC and the University of Exeter) is connecting and promoting city centre train stations and their proximity to Exeter's Green Circle walking route.

**Nature Towns and Cities accreditation** is a new scheme (from the National Trust, Natural England, and the Heritage Lottery Fund) that Exeter City Council together with partners and communities across the city could apply for. Further discussions are taking place internally and with external partners in the coming months to ascertain whether to apply for accreditation

### **Promoting support across the city in combating the ecological & climate change**

A number of multi-stakeholder groups convene around habitat mitigation, SANG's, biodiversity and green infrastructure management, which sit under City Development.

### **Transport**

#### *City Council Travel Survey*

The 2025 Staff Travel Survey has recently closed. Data from the survey will be analysed and compared to data from the 2024 survey (first year undertaken).

The City Council's Green Travel Plan is currently being reviewed by the Strategic Director for People and will be presented to the next Transport Working Group. Data from 2024 &

2025 Staff Travel Survey will inform the revised Green Travel Plan. Once reviewed, delivery of the Green Travel Plan will form part of the work of the Net Zero team.

### *Transport Working Group*

Members of the Net Zero team attend the quarterly Transport Working Group, chaired by Cllr Vizard. The Transport Working Group uses levers available to the Council to support a positive change across the city, including planning, City Council Green Travel Plan, influencing Devon County Council as the Transport & Highway Authority, lobby public transport providers and government, apply for relevant funding where appropriate.

Recent presentations have included Stagecoach and Devon County Council, focusing on the bus network across the city and the electrification of the fleet.

The Net Zero team are working on a number of projects and business cases that have a transport element to them, including the GWR/Green Circle project (mentioned above) and how we support staff and residents to travel across the city by Bike.

### *Newtown Community Active Travel Project*

After extensive engagement with the residents and stakeholders, a scheme to make it easier and safer to get around and improve access to green spaces for everyone, has been recently approved by ECC and DCC HATOC. The project will commence this year and will:

- Make green spaces more useful and attractive for residents – for instance, by creating small parks and increasing the amount of green space
- Making it easier and safer for people to walk, wheel and cycle around and through Newtown
- Make it easier for people walking, wheeling and cycling to find their way around in Newtown and to destinations beyond

### **District Heating Networks**

The proposed Energy Centre for the city centre District Heat Network has been approved by the Planning Committee. The Strategic Director for Place is the Senior Responsible Officer for City Council touchpoints with 1Energy, with the Head of Service for City Centre & Net Zero supporting the Director. An open space disposal consultation has commenced and officers anticipate securing authority to dispose of part of Grace Road Fields at Executive November 2025.

An internal officer working group is held once a month to discuss touchpoints, with an additional meeting held with 1Energy representatives to update on the energy centre and the development of the district heat network. 1Energy are undertaking groundwork investigations on Grace Road site, with the necessary licences being sought from the City Council. 1Energy continue to work closely with Devon County Council, as the Highway Authority, in finalising the route across the city, minimising works on the public highway.

The University of Exeter, Exeter College, the Royal Devon University Hospital and Devon Partnership Trust have all received PSDS 4 grant funding to connect to the DHN to decarbonise buildings. Global City Futures has been supporting these four City Institutions in developing their outline and final business case.

## Community Engagement

Part of my Portfolio Holder covers Communities, i attend Safer Exeter, the Community Safety Partnership, Executive meetings. Data to develop the 2026 annual Action Plan will shortly be received from Safer Devon, which will enable priorities and Operational Sub-Groups to be re-evaluated.

### 3. Issues that may impact service delivery/financial performance/future budget requirements

Government recently announced there will be no further rounds of PSDS funding, which supports the decarbonisation of public sector buildings. The City Council awaits further announcements on grant opportunities to decarbonise buildings owned and occupied by the City Council.

Over the next 12 months, the City Council will be reviewing which buildings to connect to the City Centre District Heat Network.

As highlighted in Section 2, the Net Zero team have been working across the organisation on a *PV Feasibility Study*. *For buildings that are viable, there would be a future ask*

The revenue budget for the delivery of net zero for both City Council and city wide activity continues to be funded from earmarked reserves.

### 4. Potential changes to services/provisions being considered

Three roles within the Net Zero Team were temporary, and from next year will be funded from car park income; the posts have recently been made permanent. Net Zero budget that would have previously been earmarked to cover salaries will now be directed towards projects, research and delivery of activity.

The Net Zero Data Officer recently left the Council in July to take promotion at another Local Authority in the South West. This role is an integral part of the team in supporting services to reduce GHG emissions, they also deliver the City Council's Carbon Literacy training programme. The role has recently been advertised, with significant interest received which will provide for a positive recruitment process.

Over the next 12 months, the City Council will be reviewing which buildings to connect to the City Centre District Heat Network.

### 5. Other matters the Portfolio Holder wishes to raise with the Scrutiny Committee

From the work to reduce GHG emissions both within the City Council and across the wider city, there are additional wider societal benefits including:

- reduced pollution
- healthier homes and buildings that are cheaper to heat and run
- cleaner working practices for officers

- biodiversity enhancement
- local green jobs
- innovation
- local leadership

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**WORK PLAN FOR CUSTOMER FOCUS SCRUTINY ITEMS 2024/25***Working Draft for September 2025*

Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee	Item	Director	Portfolio Holder	Origin of Business	Status
25 September 2025	Portfolio Holder's Report (Cllrs Wright & Vizard)		Deputy Leader & Portfolio Holder for Climate, Ecological Change & Communities		
25 September 2025	Anti-Social Behaviour in the City Centre – its causes and possible solutions	Strategic Director – People and Communities (JY)	Corporate Services & City Centre (Deputy Leader, Cllr Wright)	Scrutiny proposal Cllr Mitchell	
25 September 2025	Eton Walk Refuse bin – Petition	Strategic Director for Operations (AP)	City Management (Cllr R Williams)	Petition	Deferred
13 November 2025	Portfolio Holder's Report (Cllr Asvachin)	Strategic Director for People and Communities	Portfolio Holder for Housing, Homelessness Prevention & Support Services		
13 November 2025	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	

13 November 2025	Quarter 2 Budget Scrutiny	Strategic Director for Corporate Resources (DH)	Leader (Cllr Bialyk)	Scrutiny proposal – Cllr Parkhouse	
22 January 2026	Portfolio Holder's Report (Cllr Foale)		Portfolio Holder for Arts, Culture & Tourism		
22 January 2026	Key People Activity Across the Council	Strategic Director – People and Communities (JY)	Corporate Services & City Centre (Deputy Leader, Cllr Wright)	Scrutiny proposal Cllr Palmer	
22 January 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	
19 March 2026	Portfolio Holder's Report (Cllr Williams R.)	Strategic Director for Operations (AP)	Portfolio Holder for City Management		
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 timetabled on 28 July 2025 subject to proforma being submitted [see October 3 minutes]:

- **Budget proposal from Cllr Moore**