

STRATEGIC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date: Thursday 2 April 2026

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 Manager on 01392 265425.

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

Membership -

Pole (Chair), Mitchell, K (Deputy Chair), Atkinson, Haigh, Harding, Miller-Boam, Moore, Payne, Rolstone, Wetenhall and Williams, M

Agenda

1 Apologies

To receive apologies for absence.

2 Minutes of meeting Thursday 12 March 2026 of Strategic Scrutiny Committee (Pages 5 - 8)

To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2026.

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 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 30 March 2026.

For further details about how to speaking at meetings, 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, Ecological Change and Communities
Councillor Wood -	Portfolio Holder Leisure Services and Physical Activity
Councillor Wright -	Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder Corporate Services and City Centre
Councillor Foale -	Portfolio Holder Arts, Culture and Tourism

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

7 Performance and Service Provided to Customers and Stakeholders of Stagecoach South West in Exeter (Verbal Report)

To receive evidence from bus service user groups.

Supplementary information may become available if received from the user groups, prior to the meeting.

8 Live and Move Programme Update (Verbal Report)

To receive the report of the Place Partnership (Sport England) Manager.

To consider proposals submitted by Members following allocation by Scrutiny Programme Board.

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 4 June 2026** 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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STRATEGIC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

12 March 2026

Present:

Councillor Liz Pole (Chair)

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

Apologies:

Councillors Williams, M

Also present:

Head of Service - City Centre and Net Zero, Programme Manager City Wide - Net Zero and Democratic Services Manager

In attendance as Portfolio Holder:

Councillors Vizard, Wood and Williams, R.

36 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2026 were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair as correct.

Queries were raised regarding follow-up not yet received to supplementary questions on Minute No. 30. The Democratic Services Manager agreed to follow this up. The Chair clarified that the person offering a response would be responsible for providing such.

37 **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made by Members.

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

There were no questions submitted by the public.

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

There were no questions submitted by Members of the Council.

40 **Portfolio Holder report - Councillor Wood**

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure Services and Healthy Living, Councillor Wood, presented his report drawing attention to the following points:

- statistics showed that leisure services were delivering to expectations; and
- indications of the sort of work being carried out and wider projects being delivered were contained within the report, including extending active travel opportunities.

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

- the live link to Live and Move gave further detail and there were filter options on the landing page where data could be interrogated by area as well as other factors;

- physical activity hadn't recovered from the pandemic drop;
- the number of visits to St Sidwell's Point was 1.8million since it opened and 200,000 transactions in the cafe;
- he agreed that there was an error on page 19 in that the path in Newtown *would* be altered as there would be a change of desire line with new buildings planned;
- the City Sisters project was related to the This Girl Can national programme which recognised girls as statistically a group who required to be engaged with around physical activity and this was based at the Wonford centre but could be spread across other projects as demand had outstripped capacity;
- with regard to the timeline for Riverside solar panel installations, it was necessary to manage impact on users of works being carried out. The building was in three modules with two parts having already had roofs replaced and this work would complete the project. Careful plans were being put in place to minimise impact on centre users;
- work on Governance arrangements for the Wonford Hub were ongoing but he was not involved directly. There had been discussions regarding involvement of the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector as well as community leadership and associated capacity. Regarding clarity around the commitment required for the Wonford Hub the councillor could email him and he would raise with the appropriate officer. Planning permission had been gained and more detail would be available in due course;
- his understanding was that once capital spend was committed it would continue through the LGR process. There wasn't a contractor on-site at Wonford yet as funding wasn't entirely secured. The project may not be completed whilst Exeter City Council existed but it would be underway;
- recruitment was challenging but rates of pay and terms and conditions were favourable at the council but there was a limited pool of staff and often students took on roles and they may not remain in the city once their studies were complete;
- the steering group for King George V had the football foundation involved who had presented explanations of the difficulties with some types of infill;
- Exeter City Community Trust(ECCT) would be taking on the Council's role of managing the site, overseeing current use and managing use during the works;
- ECCT would not have sole use, licensing of the space meant that teams would know what would be available to them when they booked;
- Playzones were Football Foundation funded programmes which provided new and outdoor mini-pitches for football and outdoor multi-use areas for activities;
- statistics had been collected when Northbrook was open and all of the user organisations had been successfully moved into either St Sidwell's Point or Riverside.

The Chair clarified that the Live and Move report coming to the committee in June would be better placed to give details of the timeline and fundraising situation for the Wonford Hub and that this was a high-level Portfolio Holder report rather than a detailed operational report.

The moved, seconded by Councillor Miller-Boam, that the committee note the report which following a unanimous vote was **CARRIED**.

41 **City Wide Net Zero**

The Head of Service City Centre and Net Zero and Programme Manager City Wide - Net Zero presented the report drawing attention to:

- the greenhouse gas inventory from the university which was appended;
- the Programme Manager City Wide - Net Zero had undertaken stakeholder engagement across the city which focussed on nature and biodiversity as well as energy. There would be further engagement later in the month, focussing on circular economy, waste and recycling;
- an application had been submitted for Nature Towns and Cities accreditation;
- a survey called Wild Exeter was live and she encouraged members' to share this widely;
- GWR funding had supported travel by train and use of the Green Circle;
- there was ongoing work with Exeter Community Energy;
- she was the main contact for heat network;
- the staff travel survey had consistent questions in order to benchmark in future;
- work was ongoing with Devon County Council on residential EV charging;
- Stagecoach electric buses would be rolled out soon as the infrastructure was installed; and
- there was a focus on three main emissions sectors for carbon reduction, buildings, transport and power.

The Head of Service City Centre and Net Zero and Programme Manager City Wide - Net Zero responded to Members' questions in the following terms:

- grid decarbonisation had the biggest impact nationally which was not the Council's input;
- the biggest impact would be in changes around transport and buildings;
- she would speak to Devon County Council about what other activities they had planned;
- the 6 solar sites were not included as they were corporate, which would be discussed at Executive next week;
- some of the planned sites required enabling works such as resurfacing of a car park;
- had met Exeter Community Energy (ECO) and brainstormed, further information would be included in the next report;
- the Civic University Agreement was a university-led group therefore the university would need to be approached with the request for minutes;
- the council now had direct officer links to the national grid to discuss capacity. there were continued discussion about what improvements were required and there had been no issues connecting recently; and
- residents should use the email on social media with regard to the Great British Spring Clean.

The Portfolio Holder Climate, Ecological Change & Communities responded to Members' question in the following terms:

- the department for Transport had announced a £73.2million across the UK for electrification of buses and £7.53million would come to Devon and 100% would be buses in Exeter;
- HATOC was the best place to feed in information from residents and he invited the Chair to put information in writing and he would take to the Devon Bus Forum which he sat on;
- at Water Lane, for example, a district heat network was a possibility;
- discussions had taken place about doughnut economics and he was open to hearing more but had no particular expectation at present;
- from a tour of the Viridor plant run by Devon County Council showed keenness; and

- the district heat network was not a city council-led scheme but there was a further planning application to come forward for redesign of the energy centre but any concerns could be sent to him to discuss with officers.

The Portfolio Holder for City Management, Councillor Ruth Williams, was invited to the table by the Chair to respond to questions regarding waste, greenhouse gas emission and the incinerator.

Councillor Williams responded making the following points:

- DCC was the responsible waste disposal authority;
- the incinerator had a community liaison group where she had asked what plans there were for carbon capture;
- when separating recycling a proportion was lost and “leave loose” education continued to be given;
- investment in a new plant would increase efficiency in capture and acceptance meaning less incinerating in future;
- Denis was excellent and the envy of other districts but there was more could be done. Food waste had now been rolled out;
- there was a contamination issue with separate on-street litter bins but these would be trialled at the Quay;
- Viridor seemed positive at a previous Strategic Waste Committee meeting.

The Chair moved the recommendations as set out in the report, seconded by Councillor Payne, and it was agreed that the words “and officers note discussion this evening and request that further detail on impact and outcomes be considered” be added and following a unanimous vote was **CARRIED**.

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

Members commented on the work plan.

The Chair stated that the Air Quality item would be added to the plan for June 2026.

Members noted the Council’s Forward Plan and draft Scrutiny Work Plan.

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

The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 7.15 pm

Chair

Proforma Guidance Notes

These guidance notes also include the proforma to be used to submit your proposed items for review by Scrutiny.

A check list will be used to assist the Scrutiny Programme Board to ensure a consistent approach is taken in determining whether or not to proceed with a suggested proposal or item of business, review of suggested topic or area of work. Their deliberations will also include taking account of the current and future work priorities and the Board will also liaise with the Strategic Management Board.

Important considerations

When Members are considering whether to put forward a proposal for review, it is important that they are aware of the following:

- a) The existing, agreed work priorities for Scrutiny. Members must take into account the capacity of Members and Officers to support the proposed work needed to do the review well;
- b) The Scrutiny Programme Board will wish to consider and prioritise those proposals which have the best chance of securing real improvement or local benefit or can make a positive change in line with the Council's agreed objectives and priorities.
- c) The Member who proposes the item, will be invited to take part in the Task and Finish Group/Spotlight Review to consider the matter.
- d) If it is decided not to proceed with the proposer's idea for review, full reasons will be given.

If a Member(s) wishes to put forward a request to Scrutiny to consider a specific topic or area of work, they must complete the following proforma.

Once completed, it should be emailed to the Corporate Manager, Democratic & Civic Support. Once the views of the Strategic Management Board have been sought, the request will be presented, together with any other supporting information provided, to the Scrutiny Programme Board for consideration and the proposer(s) will be advised of the outcome.

SCRUTINY
Consideration of an Item at Scrutiny Committee

Please complete this form to provide information about your proposal for consideration by the Scrutiny Programme Board or request for a review to be undertaken on a topic or issue of concern. You may attach any other supporting information you feel might help the Board in considering your proposal. The Strategic Management Board will be advised of any proposal, to help advise on the timetable and any resource implications.

Please complete the following form which will be presented to the Scrutiny Programme Board (SPB)

Issue to be Considered	<i>Ways in which ECC might support or work with Community Land Trusts to promote protection of green space, creation and maintenance of community facilities and the delivery of affordable local housing.</i>
Proposer (s)	<i>Cllr Lynn Wetenhall</i>
Scrutiny Committee (to be determined by the SPB)	
Lead Portfolio Holder	<i>Covers affordable housing, green spaces, community facilities</i>
Identification of Lead Officer	<i>Head of Service - Customer & Communities</i>

Areas for consideration:
<p>1. What is the specific topic area you want considered/reviewed?</p> <p>To explore how Community Land Trusts (CLT) have the potential to offer significant benefits to Exeter, in the delivery of affordable homes, nature recovery and the provision of community facilities. CLTs are vehicles for each of these different areas; any one CLT can deliver across one or more of these areas of operation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Social Housing CLTs – deliver genuinely affordable homes, ensuring permanent affordability for local people. ● Nature-Recovery CLTs – acquire or manage land to restore habitats, enhance biodiversity, create new woodlands, wetlands or wildflower areas, and support community-led climate and nature action.

- **Community-Development CLTs** – secure land for shared facilities such as community hubs, workspaces, food-growing sites, play areas, cultural spaces and other projects that strengthen local wellbeing and cohesion.

With ever-increasing pressure on green space, council finances and the failure of the market to deliver realistic affordable housing, CLTs are something that could deliver innovative solutions for this and the future Unitary Authority that includes Exeter.

2. What are the main issues you feel need to be addressed?

There has been no exploration of this topic to date by the Council or by other third sector organisations. The review would take a first scoping consideration of whether ECC and other landowners hold land which has the potential to deliver benefits and some idea of the scale of these benefits, risks and approximate costs involved.

Council's can take a number of actions to promote and support CLTs ie this is a legitimate area of operation for a local authority. Areas of influence and action include asset transfers, planning policy, integration with relevant policies, financial and technical support and acting as a broker, facilitating and building support and interest in communities and training.

In the first instance a review would examine the Council's land and asset holdings with a view to assessing disposal via community asset transfer for the purposes of setting up a CLT.

Should the review find that there is merit in proceeding to support CLTs, the community asset transfer process would be advertised to the community and engagement by community organisations and supporting organisations in the setting up of a CLT(s) encouraged. This process would align with any disposal programme associated with Local Government Reorganisation and enable ECC to ensure its assets were to be used for community benefit.

3. Please identify which of the Council's key priorities your topic relates to? (If any)

From the Corporate Plan.

People:

- Health inequalities will reduce.
- Communities will be more resilient.
- More residents, including those from our priority neighbourhoods and communities, will be participating in leisure and cultural events and activities.
- A safe and thriving city with great things to see and do for everyone.

To achieve this our strategic efforts will focus on partnership work alongside our priority neighbourhoods and communities. We will work to ensure the provision of sustainable cultural, leisure and enrichment opportunities.

Homes

- 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.

Sustainable Environment

- A city taking action to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.
- A carbon-neutral city.
- Well-maintained parks, open spaces and biodiversity across the city.

CLTs relating to green space could also play a useful role in Exeter's Local Nature Recovery work.

What outcome are you aiming to achieve with this consideration/review?

The City Council can have confidence in knowing that CLTs could be, or are not worthy, of further investigation as a policy and delivery vehicle, including an initial scoping of areas of potential synergy where CLTs mesh most strongly with ECC policies and actions. The exercise would align with any asset disposal programme as part of LGR in order to secure long term community benefits.

5. Do you consider this review urgent and if so why?

This is urgent since ECC will be considering the disposal of assets as part of LGR and by taking an active approach to securing social and environmental value over the next year, will lock in long term community and environmental benefits .The following are examples of where action via CLTs could help deliver on pressing issues:

- The considerable pressure on Exeter's green spaces and the need to enhance biodiversity on existing green spaces are areas where CLTs could add real value.
- The shortage of truly affordable housing in Exeter is a critical element driving homelessness and crisis levels of poverty. Again, CLTs could contribute to increasing the city's stock of protected affordable housing
- There are at least two current 'on the drawing board' community facility projects - the Pinhoe Hub and the Wonford community and sports centre. Both of these initiatives could benefit from a CLT-focused approach.

Date of Request

23rd Dec 2025

Please note that the Programme Board will consider the following matters (if relevant) when determining the request. *Please tick any that are appropriate.*-

Potential Criteria for Selecting Topic (NB This is not an exhaustive list)	Please tick
The issue has potential impact on one or more sections of the local population	✓
The issue is strategic and/or significant	✓
Scrutiny of this matter will add value to the Council's and/or its partners' overall performance	✓
The review will lead to effective outcomes	✓
This will improve service outputs	✓
The issue is of concern to partners and stakeholders	✓
The issue is a key issue for the public (as identified through contact with constituents or meetings of local organisations)	
This will be of benefit to the community	✓
Poor performing service (evidenced from performance indicators)	
Service/issue ranked as important by the Council's community (via market surveys/annual residents' survey/consultation with tenants, local business community)	
High level of user/general public dissatisfaction with service (via market surveys/complaints)	
Public interest issue (e.g. covered by local media)	
High level of budgetary commitment to the service or policy area	✓
Pattern of budgetary overspends	
Council key priority area	✓
Central Government priority area	

Issue poses significant or potential risk to the Council (can be financial, reputational or other risk)	✓
Issue raised by external auditor	
Issue raised by Council or one of its Committees	
Issue arises from new legislation or Government guidance	
Key reports or new evidence (provided by external organisations on key issue)	✓

FOR SCRUTINY PROGRAMME BOARD USE ONLY

The following will be used if the Proposal/Topic is rejected	Please tick
The timing of this review is inappropriate	
The review will duplicate other work within the Council or elsewhere	
The issue is already under examination by Council	
The issue is already under examination by an Officer Group and changes are imminent	
Issue being examined as part of a service review	
New legislation/guidance expected within a year	
There is an alternative, more effective, route the Member can take to address the issue	
The issue is outside the scope of the Scrutiny Committee	
The issue would not bring about any sustainable and on-going revenue savings	
The issue does not meet any of the Council's corporate priorities	

Comments from SMB	<p>Community Housing Trusts are an important approach to housing and community spaces development where there is community appetite and capability for them.</p> <p>The landscape on this issue is currently unknown to the Council: officers are unaware of any Community Land Trusts in the City interested in any specific project to promote protection of green space, creation and maintenance of community</p>
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	<p>facilities or the delivery of affordable local housing. Whilst the member has proposed a first step is to review the Council's land and asset holdings with a view to assessing disposal via community asset transfer for the purposes of setting up a CLT this would be a resource intensive project that may lead to nothing if there is no appetite from Community Land Trusts in the City.</p> <p>We already have a Community Asset Transfer policy and a process to facilitate any interest expressed by a community group in the transfer of council assets which is kept under regular review. Alongside this we also maintain an Asset of Community Value (ACV) list as required under the Localism Act which enables local groups to nominate assets that further community social well-being or interests which then gives community groups the change to bid if the owner sells. We propose that a first step would be to reach out to communities as try to identify any Community Land Trusts in existence or development and any appetite for their formation. Once we have a better understanding of need/interest we can then consider what further action to take.</p> <p>This project will be built into the 26/27 workplan of the Customer and Communities team in the People and Communities Directorate.</p>
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Overall recommendation of Scrutiny Programme Board Please tick relevant box)	Review Supported	Review not supported
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Confirm approval of review by Committee	Yes/No <i>(Delete as appropriate)</i> Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee or Strategic Scrutiny Committee
Date	

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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
4 June 2026	Working Towards Net Zero - Exeter City Council's Corporate Carbon Footprint Report and Carbon Reduction Action Plan Progress Report	Strategic Director for Place (IC) Net Zero Project Manager (JP)	Portfolio Holder Climate, ecological Change & Communities		
4 June 2026	Live and Move Programme Update	Chief Executive	Portfolio Holder Leisure Services & Healthy Living	Report from Strategic Scrutiny Committee 16 March 2023 half yearly	
4 June 2026	Annual Scrutiny Report	Scrutiny Programme Board	Deputy Leader & Portfolio Holder for Corporate Resources & City Centre		
4 June 2026	Air Quality	Strategic Director for Operations	Portfolio Holder City Management	Result of Air Quality item in November 2025	
4 June 2026	Bike Parking	Strategic Director for Place	Portfolio Holder Climate, Ecological Change and Communities	Proposal from Cllr Wetenhall (Dec 2025)	
10 September 2026	Progress Report Shared Prosperity Fund - Update	Strategic Director for Place (IC) Service Lead Net Zero & Business (VH)	Portfolio Holder Climate, Ecological Change & Communities	Report from Strategic Scrutiny Committee 29 September 2022 half yearly report	
10 September 2026	Residential Management Companies	Strategic Director for Place	Portfolio Holder City Development	Monitoring of Motion from Council 9 December 2025	

Strategic Scrutiny Committee	Item	Strategic Director	Portfolio Holder	Origin of Business	Status
10 September 2026	City Wide Net Zero - Programme of work and update on delivery	Strategic Director for Place (IC) Service Lead Net Zero & Business (VH)	Portfolio Holder Climate, Ecological Change and Communities		
19 November 2026					
14 January 2027					
11 March 2027	Working Towards Net Zero - Exeter City Council's Corporate Carbon Footprint Report and Carbon Reduction Action Plan Progress Report	Strategic Director for Place (IC) Net Zero Project Manager (JP)	Portfolio Holder Climate, ecological Change & Communities		
11 March 2027	City Wide Net Zero - Programme of work and update on delivery	Strategic Director for Place (IC) Service Lead Net Zero & Business (VH)	Portfolio Holder Climate, Ecological Change and Communities		

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Items to be considered 2 April 2026:

Community Land Trusts proposal			SMB suggest November for an update.
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Updated 19 March 2026 working draft

Items to be timetabled 12 March 2026:

Portfolio Holder Update – City Development	Cllr Patrick			
Rivers Transparency Template	Strategic Director for Operations (AP)	City Management (Cllr R Williams)	Motion referred from Council 2 September 2025	Invite South West Water to attend and give evidence.

Items to be scoped 2 April 2026

Bike Parking	Proforma from Cllr Wetenhall		
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