

## EXECUTIVE

Date: Monday 22 June 2026

Time: 5.30 pm

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

Members are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business.

If you have an enquiry regarding any items on this agenda, please contact Liz Smith, Democratic Services Manager - [democratic.services@exeter.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@exeter.gov.uk)

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

### *Membership -*

Councillors Bialyk (Chair), Williams, R (Deputy Chair), Atkinson, Findlay MBE, Patrick, Pole and Wood

## Agenda

### 1 **Apologies**

To receive apologies for absence from Committee members.

### 2 **Minutes**

To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 28 April 2026.

(Pages 5 -  
12)

### 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 consideration of any of the items on the agenda, but if it should wish to do so, the following resolution should be passed:-

**RECOMMENDED** that, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the consideration of the particular item(s) on the grounds that it (they) involve(s) the likely disclosure

of exempt information as defined in the relevant paragraphs of Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Act

Or

**RESOLVED** that, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of items XX and XX on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4 of Part I, Schedule 12A of the Act.

**5 Questions from the Public Under Standing order No. 19**

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

Details of questions should be notified to the Democratic Services Manager by 10am at least three clear working days prior to the meeting. Further information about speaking at a committee can be found here: [Speaking at a Committee](#)

**6 Matters referred by Scrutiny Committees**

To consider recommendations made to the Executive from Scrutiny Committees.

**7 Citizens Advice Exeter Grant**

To receive the report of the Chief Executive.

(Pages 13  
- 34)

**8 Parking Places Order**

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

(Pages 35  
- 38)

**9 Corporate Debt Management Policy**

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

(Pages 39  
- 106)

**10 Corporate Plan Annual Progress Report**

To consider the report of the Chief Executive.

(Pages  
107 - 144)

**Date of Next Meeting**

The next scheduled meeting of the Executive will be held on **Monday 17 August 2026** at 5.30 pm in the Civic Centre.

**A statement of the executive decisions taken at this meeting will be produced and published on the Council website as soon as reasonably practicable.**

Find out more about Exeter City Council services by looking at our web site <http://www.exeter.gov.uk>. This will give you the dates of all future Committee meetings and tell you how you can ask a question at a Scrutiny Committee meeting. Alternatively, contact Democratic Services at [democratic.services@exeter.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@exeter.gov.uk)

**Individual reports on this agenda can be produced in large print on request to Democratic Services [democratic.services@exeter.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@exeter.gov.uk)**

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## EXECUTIVE

Tuesday 28 April 2026

Present:

Councillor Bialyk (Chair)

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

Also present:

Councillor Hughes (as an opposition group Co-Leader);

Councillor Haigh (as an opposition group Co-Leader);

Councillor Holland (as an opposition group Leader);

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

Councillor Payne (as an opposition group Leader).

Also present:

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

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### MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2026, were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

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### DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests were made.

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

No questions from members of the public were received.

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### MATTERS REFERRED BY SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

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

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### EXETER CITY CENTRE VISION AND STRATEGY 2026 – 2031 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The Executive received the report on the draft City Centre Strategy 2026 - 2031, entitled 'Exeter: Our City Centre', which was in the final stages of its development and that feedback was being sought from residents and the business community. As such the report was seeking authorisation from the Executive to go out to public consultation from 18 May 2026 for six weeks.

The Strategic Director for Place in presenting the report made the following points:

- the report was presented in conjunction with the Exeter Cultural Strategy 2026 – 2031, seeking approval to proceed to public consultation and neither strategy documents had been published at this time;
- both strategies had been developed through extensive prior engagement with key stakeholders, supported by research and evidence gathering;
- both documents followed a consistent structure: a clear vision, key themes, and supporting strategic actions;

- subject to Executive approval, the documents would then be published for public consultation, with a view to reporting back to Executive to recommend Council approval in September 2026;
- each strategy will develop more detailed action plans, which would be co-produced with stakeholders and partners, ensuring shared ownership while the Council provided leadership to bring them forward;
- delivery would be supported by theme-based groups drawing on specialist expertise to help prepare the Council for future local government reorganisation, aligning with approaches already adopted in unitary authorities elsewhere;
- a preview of the draft City Centre Strategy was provided and it was re-iterated that the final document had not yet been shared publicly;
- the strategy was framed as a Council-led approach, setting new policy direction for the city centre;
- work had commenced before the Covid pandemic, but had been paused, and since been re-shaped to reflect the changed economic conditions and high street challenges, with a focus on long-term resilience and placemaking;
- engagement during 2024 included facilitated workshops with local businesses, community groups, and elected Members from both Devon County Council and Exeter City Council;
- workshop discussions had explored challenges, opportunities, and priorities for the city centre, with feedback and anonymised quotes forming the strategy;
- a resident survey findings highlighted the strong links between the city centre and culture, reinforcing the alignment between the strategies;
- a soft city centre boundary was defined for the strategic purpose, which was rooted in historic geography, four key gateways, movement routes, and key assets (parks, heritage buildings, connections);
- the strategy also set out a clear, accessible, and ambitious vision, reflecting stakeholder feedback;
- six key themes had been identified during the process, which was based on engagement and evidence, and would be delivered through the detailed action plan;
- the next steps, following Executive approval was to proceed to a six week public consultation, after the forthcoming local elections;
- the consultation outcomes would be reported back to Executive, with any proposed amendments and recommendations for Full Council for adoption;
- a detailed action plan, including outcomes, outputs, responsibilities, costs, and partner contributions would also be developed at the same time; and
- all actions would be embedded within Council service plans, ensuring a corporate and cross-council approach to delivery.

The Strategic Director for Place further confirmed that while the report could not be published or formally consulted upon during the pre-election period, preparatory work could continue. The strategy had been in development for several years and was now at a stage where Member consideration was needed.

The report was being brought to Executive to enable consultation to begin promptly once the pre-election period ends, ensuring sufficient time for adoption and the commencement of action planning ahead of anticipated organisational change.

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

- it was enquired whether sufficient time would be allowed to revise the strategy prior to adoption, should the consultation raise significant comments or concerns;
- noting the short timetable, it was queried whether the consultation materials were already prepared, what form the consultation would take, and whether the relevant Portfolio Holder would have sight of the consultation questions and format;
- it was enquired whether Portfolio Holders were restricted from providing further input into the strategies prior to consultation during the pre-election period, noting that Portfolio Holders had already seen the final draft;
- clarification was sought on whether Members were being asked to endorse the overall direction, timescales and scope of consultation, subject to pre-election restrictions, and whether Portfolio Holders would continue to be involved in fine-tuning the document before publication; and
- further detail on the consultation approach was sought, specifically on how the Council intended to reach harder-to-reach groups given that the consultation would be conducted online.

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

- there was sufficient time built into the timetable to collate, analyse and assess consultation responses and to make revisions to the strategy document if required prior to adoption;
- the strategies had been drafted in a future-proofed way, drawing heavily on extensive prior engagement, and therefore significant unexpected issues were not anticipated;
- a full consultation report would be prepared and presented alongside the final strategy;
- the consultation would be undertaken primarily through an online survey and questions were in the process of being developed. They would be broadly consistent with those used during the 2024 workshops, with some refinements based on learning from that engagement;
- the consultation would be hosted on the Council's engagement platform and prepared in advance to ensure it was ready to launch promptly;
- the document was still in draft form and remained under full editorial control, with scope for further minor adjustments and changes could continue to be made until the document was finalised and uploaded to the consultation platform, at which point it would not be amended again until after consultation;
- the consultation would be widely publicised to ensure that businesses, residents and other stakeholders were made aware of it, and able to access the online survey;
- no further workshops, events or exhibitions were planned, as extensive face-to-face engagement had already been undertaken earlier in the process;
- support would be available in line with the Council's consultation charter to assist individuals who may need help accessing the online platform or documents;
- alternative methods of response, including written submissions, would be accepted and encouraged;
- partner organisations would also be encouraged to use their networks to promote the consultation and to submit their own collective views; and
- all feedback received through those channels would be collated and considered as part of the overall analysis.

Opposition group leaders raised the following points and questions:

- would the strategy document include proposals for physical redevelopment in the city centre, and how it related to previous strategic documents, particularly in distinguishing between minor public realm improvements and larger future redevelopment opportunities;
- clarification was sought on how the strategy aligned with the Exeter Local Plan and whether there were any implications for that process;
- had formal input been received from Devon County Council and whether their views would be reflected in the strategy;
- had the authority responsible for public transport, been given the opportunity to input into the strategy following the transfer of powers in April;
- what was the legal status of the strategy once adopted by Exeter City Council, particularly in the context of the interim period leading to the creation of a new unitary authority;
- it was requested that the Equality Impact section (page 24) be amended so that the commentary on potential barriers to engaging with an online consultation, currently referenced under race, also be included under the protected characteristics of gender reassignment and sexual orientation; and
- it was noted that these groups may similarly experience difficulties engaging with the consultation, particularly given wider global circumstances affecting feelings of safety and confidence in participation.

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

- the Equality Impact Assessment would be updated to include commentary on barriers to engagement under the protected characteristics of gender reassignment and sexual orientation;
- the strategy was not a statutory planning, highways or Combined Authority document and carried no formal legal status beyond being a consultation document;
- the strategy did not allocate land or propose specific development and was not a land use plan, but it aligned with the emerging Local Plan, the Corporate Plan and other related strategies;
- the strategy was described as a strategic, non-statutory framework intended to bring partners and stakeholders together to develop collaborative actions and investment opportunities; and
- it did not place legal obligations on any organisation, unlike formal plans such as the Local Plan or transport strategies.

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

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1) the publication of the draft City Centre Strategy 2026 – 2031 be approved for public consultation from 18 May 2026 for six weeks; and
- 2) delegated authority be granted to the Strategic Director for Place, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder, to change the consultation date if required.

The Executive received the report on the Cultural Strategy, which was in the final stages of its development and that feedback was being sought from residents and

the cultural sector. As such the report was seeking authorisation from the Executive to go out to public consultation from 18 May 2026 for six weeks.

The Strategic Director for Place in presenting the report made the following points:

- a team of consultants had been appointed primarily to lead on engagement and undertake detailed research, bringing together the extensive existing evidence on culture in Exeter into a comprehensive baseline resource document to support consultation;
- engagement had taken place over a six month period and involved over 600 residents, individual artists and cultural organisations, with a strong and positive level of participation;
- the engagement process included multiple stages, culminating in a stakeholder summit at Exeter College;
- further targeted workshops and in-person engagements were also held to explore outstanding issues and ensure views were fully captured;
- consultant work was now complete and that the draft strategy had been refined internally, working with the Portfolio Holder, ahead of consultation;
- subject to approval, the strategy would be published for online consultation from 18 May, in line with the City Centre Strategy timetable;
- the draft vision focusing on creative confidence, inclusion and connection to culture, environment and heritage, supported by the headline: 'Exeter: a City of Creative Confidence';
- the strategy was structured around the four key themes as outlined in the report;
- the next steps included the consultation running from 18 May, with consultation outcomes being reported to Executive in August, to recommend adoption by Full Council in September; and
- the action planning would be developed alongside the Exeter Partnership and the Connected Culture group, with an emphasis on sector ownership, collaboration and strengthening the collective voice of Exeter's cultural sector to attract investment and funding.

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

- the Cultural Strategy and its ambition were welcomed, particularly the links between environment and culture;
- it was enquired as to how the consultation would reach residents who felt culture was not for them, noting concerns that an open, predominantly online consultation might not engage those groups, and how breadth and inclusivity of feedback would be ensured;
- the importance of both the City Centre and Cultural Strategy consultations was highlighted, but their parallel timing and overlapping audiences was noted;
- it was asked how officers intended to present and manage the two consultations to avoid any consultation fatigue and maximise participation across both;
- clarification was sought on the composition of the group that would help deliver the Cultural Strategy action plan, including their composition, how members had been selected, and how the group had been convened; and
- the wording of Theme 2 (connecting the ecosystem), was unclear and it was suggested that explicitly referencing "grassroots" culture within the theme would make its intent clearer and more accessible to readers;

The Portfolio Holder for Arts, Culture & Tourism reflected on the resident survey findings, which showed an overall high satisfaction with cultural provision, but emphasised the importance of the action plan in addressing those who still experienced barriers. He highlighted specific groups such as young people, individual artists, creative practitioners and ethnic minority communities, and questioned whether governance structures of key cultural institutions were sufficiently representative.

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

- work would continue in proactively reaching all relevant sectors during consultation, and working closely with engagement colleagues to ensure an inclusive outreach;
- the consultation survey included questions aimed at identifying and addressing barriers to participation;
- a shared digital landing page would be used to allow participants to clearly see both strategies and choose which consultation to complete, with the option to return and complete the second, ensuring neither consultation was missed;
- all theme groups operated through the Exeter Partnership and membership was self-selected from partner organisations, rather than appointed by the City Council;
- the groups were supported by the Council through meeting coordination and secretariat support and Members volunteered their time;
- the groups met quarterly, and arrangements remained flexible to allow movement and additional participation; and
- the suggestion regarding clearer wording for Theme 2 was welcomed. It was confirmed that the theme title would be revised to explicitly reference “grassroots” culture, to improve clarity and accessibility of the strategy language.

An opposition group leader requested that the same amendment previously discussed, also be applied to page 39 of the Equality Impact Assessment. They also sought clarification regarding the engagement approach for protected characteristics, noting that page 39 confirmed consultation links would be shared with groups supporting gender reassignment and race, but that a similar reference was absent under sexual orientation on page 40. The Member asked for reassurance that appropriate outreach would also be undertaken for that protected characteristic.

In response to questions raised by opposition Members, the Strategic Director for Place confirmed that the Equality Impact Assessment would be updated.

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

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1) the publication of the draft Cultural Strategy 2026 - 2031 be approved for public consultation from 18 May 2026 for six weeks; and
- 2) delegated authority be granted to the Strategic Director for Place, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder, to agree a change to the consultation date if required.

The Chair thanked Members and officers at the final Executive meeting of the municipal year, recognising all the individual contributions and hard work across all the portfolios including finance, planning, culture, climate change, housing, homelessness, communities and city development. Appreciation was expressed to the Executive Members for their commitment, expertise and support over the year.

Special thanks were also given to Councillor Bob Foale for his service as Portfolio Holder, noting his decision to stand down.

The Chair also acknowledged the support and guidance provided by the Chief Executive, Strategic Directors and Legal Services, recognising the challenges faced and the positive direction of the Council's work.

Thanks, and best wishes were extended to the Democratic Services Officer, noting his departure and starting in his new role. Recognition was given to his dedicated support to all councillors and his contribution to effective democratic processes at the Council.

The Chair concluded by wishing all Members and candidates well for the upcoming elections and expressed his hope for a continued future cross-party working in the best interests of Exeter.

(The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 6.24 pm)

Chair

**The decisions indicated will normally come into force 5 working days after publication of the Statement of Decisions unless called in by a Scrutiny Committee. Where the matter in question is urgent, the decision will come into force immediately. Decisions regarding the policy framework or corporate objectives or otherwise outside the remit of the Executive will be considered by Council on 16 June 2026.**

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## REPORT TO EXECUTIVE

Date of Meeting: 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2026

Report of: Chief Executive

Title: Citizens Advice Exeter Grant

### Is this a Key Decision?

No

### Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Executive

## 1. What is the report about?

1.1 This report requests that Executive agree to award a grant of £75,000 to Citizens Advice Exeter in 2026/27 and £75,000 in 2027/28, subject to grant agreement, subsidy control compliance and satisfaction of monitoring requirements under the Council's General Grants Policy (Appendix A).

## 2. Recommendations:

2.1 It is recommended that Executive approve the award of a grant of £150,000 (one-hundred and fifty thousand pounds) to Citizens' Advice Exeter to be awarded in two tranches, namely the sum of £75,000 for the financial year 2026 to 2027 and the sum of £75,000 for the financial year 2027 to 2028.

## 3. Reasons for the recommendation:

3.1 The Council's General Grants Policy provides a clear and transparent route for awarding grant funding where this will contribute to Council priorities and respond to need in the city. The policy also makes clear that recipients should provide monitoring and impact reporting.

3.2 Citizens Advice Exeter's published information shows that it provides a broad local general advice offer, with residents able to access support online, by telephone and face to face.

3.3 The decision supports the continuation of a service that brings together a range of advice needs in one place for Exeter residents, whilst also supporting the volunteering opportunities that help Citizens Advice Exeter meet demand in the city. Citizens Advice Exeter's volunteers are central to delivery and that support is needed to train and supervise them.

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

4.1 The decision commits to funding of £75,000 in 2026/27 and £75,000 in 2027/28.

4.2 Officer time will be required to put in place the grant agreement, oversee monitoring and review reporting, consistent with the General Grants Policy requirement for evidence of spend and impact. However, this can be delivered within current resourcing.

## **5. Section 151 Officer comments:**

5.1 The decision is subject to Council approving the proposed budget after these papers are published. Subject to that approval there are no further financial issues. If approved the funding requirement will be built into next year's budget and at present do not cause any further challenges in delivering a balanced budget.

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

6.1 In awarding grant funding, the authority must determine whether the grant funding constitutes a subsidy for the purposes of the Subsidy Control Act 2022 ('the Act').

6.2 Officers have carried out a subsidy control assessment which confirms that the proposed grant funding is a subsidy covered by the Act. To comply with the provisions of the Act and lawfully grant the proposed sum of £150,000 over two years, the subsidy will need to be recorded on the subsidy database, which is maintained by the Department for Business and Trade. Where a subsidy award is divided into smaller tranches of payments which each fall below the statutory threshold of £100,000, the relevant amount to be recorded remains the total amount of the subsidy award, in this case £150,000. An internal subsidy control report must be prepared by officers setting out how the proposed subsidy meets the statutory test under the Act.

6.3 A formal agreement between the Council and the recipient of grant funding should be completed to ensure the funds are allocated in accordance with the agreed purpose of the grant. It is usually the case that any unspent funds are returned to the Council. The agreement should also include appropriate reporting and record-keeping obligations.

## **7. Monitoring Officer's comments:**

7.1 Members will note the legal aspects of this matter at paragraph 6 of this report. The Monitoring Officer has no additional comments.

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

8.1 The report seeks a decision on a proposed grant award. Continued access to general advice services may particularly affect residents with protected characteristics. For example, Citizens Advice Exeter's year-end report (Appendix B) states that 64% of clients in 2025/26 had a disability or long-term health condition. This should be taken into account in considering the impact of the decision

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

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

## **10. Report details:**

10.1 The grant is intended to support the continuation of Citizens Advice Exeter's general advice service for Exeter residents, providing access in one place to general advice and

information across a range of issues. Citizens Advice Exeter provides free, independent, confidential and impartial advice, with support available online, by telephone and face to face.

10.2 The grant is also intended to support Citizens Advice Exeter's contribution to volunteering opportunities in the city, including the recruitment, training, support and supervision of volunteers who help deliver that advice service. Volunteers are central to its work and this grant will support training and supervision of volunteers.

10.3 The grant is being awarded under the Council's General Grants Policy, which provides a clear route for grant funding outside the Community Grants Programme and requires monitoring of how funding has been used and what impact it has had.

10.4 In line with that policy, the grant agreement should set out the purpose of the award, reporting requirements and evidence of benefit to Exeter residents. The policy also states that grant awards should show that at least 75% of people benefiting from the project live in Exeter.

10.5 The level of grant reflects previous requests from Citizens Advice Exeter, to maintain their advisory services, as well as the level of grants previously given.

10.6 The proposed award is a one-off, time-limited grant for 2026/27 and 2027/28. The grant agreement will define the approved purposes for which the funding may be used and will require the recipient to maintain records sufficient to demonstrate that expenditure has been applied only to those approved purposes.

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

11.1 The decision supports the Council's Corporate Plan 2025–2028, particularly the People priority, by helping residents access support to improve wellbeing, resilience and inclusion. It also supports the Homes priority where advice can help residents address housing-related problems at an earlier stage.

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

12.1 There is a risk that the Council cannot clearly demonstrate what the grant has achieved. This can be reduced through clear reporting requirements linked to the purpose of the grant and evidence of how it has supported Exeter residents, in line with the General Grants Policy.

12.2 There is a risk that demand for advice continues to exceed available capacity. The decision responds to that by supporting continuation of the service and the volunteering capacity needed to help meet need in the city. Citizens Advice Exeter's website notes both the role of volunteers and the need for support to sustain delivery

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

13.1 The alternative option would have been not to make the grant award or make a lower award. This would create a risk to broad local advice services in the city.

**Chief Executive:** Bindu Arjoon

**Author:** Stephen Clayton

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

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

List of Appendices:

Appendix A - General Grants Policy

Appendix B - Citizens Advice 2026/27 Annual Report

## 1. Context

1.1 As one of the fastest growing cities in the country with high employment within a high tech, high knowledge and high wage economy in a fantastic location, and encouraging bounce back from the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic, we have much to celebrate. Our city brand: *Exeter Live Better, the brilliant alternative* sums this up, however we are not complacent. Not everyone has benefited from growth: small pockets of the city are among the most deprived areas in the country with life expectancy varying in different parts of the City and these are communities that will have taken the biggest hit from the pandemic and increasing cost of living. Ensuring that all residents benefit from our success and that we achieve our goals for the future are clear priorities for the Council as set out in the *2022/25 Corporate Plan*.

## 2. Why do we need a General Grants Policy?

2.1 The scale of change required to sustain the city for the future is huge and from time to time we will need to be agile and move at pace, working with partners in a living lab model, testing out ideas and innovations, learning (and failing) fast, identifying ways to solve problems that could be scaled up to offer sustainable city-wide solutions. This policy describes how the Council may, from time to time, award grants to organisations to fund activities and tests of change that will contribute to the achievement of priorities set out in the Corporate Plan.

2.2 This **General Grants** policy will work alongside **Exeter Community Grants Programme (2019)** which aims to support community groups and organisations to address the demands that development places on the city. The **Exeter Community Grants Programme** is supported by the **Exeter Grants Fund** initially created from a combination of Neighbourhood Portion of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and New Homes Bonus funding.

2.3 This policy works alongside the Councils Procurement Policy.

2.4 There is no particular funding attached to the **General Grants Policy**, and the establishment of this policy is not a call for bids. This policy is to ensure that should the Council wish to award grants over and above those within the Community Grants Programme, it has clear and transparent decision-making process through which to identify opportunities, allocate funds and award grants. The policy will be applied in response to an approach by a 3<sup>rd</sup> party with a request for grant funding and the funds are available to do so; or when a particular issue has been identified which is best delivered through a General Grant and the funds are available to do so.

## 3. General Grant Policy Aims

3.1 The **General Grants Policy** will support organisations or projects with grant funding that will contribute to city transformation by:

- Contributing to the Exeter Vision and help deliver Corporate Plan Strategic Priorities;
- Testing out or expanding new ideas or innovations that could potentially be rolled out across the city;
- Connecting people and organisations across sectors to enable collaboration within a whole systems approach, or

- Enhancing existing Council plans to improve public realm/assets through wider partnership working.

#### **4. Grant Terms and Conditions**

4.1 A simple set of rules and conditions will apply to all grants and these will be published on the Council website and based on those set out in appendix 1. All grant recipients will be expected to provide an impact report within 1 month of their project completing and a simple framework for this is set out in appendix 2.

#### **5. Governance**

5.1 Proposals for grants to be awarded under this policy will be reported to the Executive Committee for decision making in line with Council constitution and financial regulations. This enables the Executive to maintain oversight of General Grants and to ensure that grant award recommendations are made in line with Council priorities and requirements. The Leader will be accountable for ensuring that decisions and recommendations made by the Committee are fair and transparent and that the underpinning system and processes are proportionate to the funding required/awarded.

## Appendix 1: Draft Rules and Conditions for General Grant Awards

All grant applications/awards will:

- Only be made/accepted from non for profit constituted bodies with bank accounts in the name of the organisation.
- Supported by copies of appropriate policies if required for example Safeguarding Policy.
- Show that the project ties in with one or more of our corporate priorities and how it meets the challenge of City transformation.
- Show that at least 75% of people benefiting from the project live in Exeter
- Show how the outcomes of the project will contribute to the Exeter Vision and the City Council's Corporate Priorities.
- Be required to provide feedback about how the grant has been used supplying proof of how fund monies have been spent in the form of invoices, photos and a simple project summary and impact template within 1 month of project completion.
- Acknowledge Exeter City Council support in project publicity material by using the logo provided.
- Give Exeter City Council the right to share information provided in public reports and publicity material.

All grant applicants/recipients will need to confirm that they understand:

- Funds must only be spent as detailed in the project application/agreement.
- Funds cannot be allocated to individuals or private/for profit enterprises.
- Funds cannot be allocated retrospectively.
- Funds not spent must be returned to Exeter City Council.
- Repayment of the fund can be required at the sole discretion of Exeter City Council if you supply false information or you do not spend funds within 12 months.
- Repeat funding will only be awarded when there is a compelling business case proving transition to sustainability.
- Repayment of the grant can be required at the sole discretion of Exeter City Council if funds are not spent within 12 months

## Appendix 2: Impacts Evaluation Framework for Grant Applications

Provide 6 monthly interim and final end of project report, using the template below, setting out what you have learnt and how your project has impacted on the city.

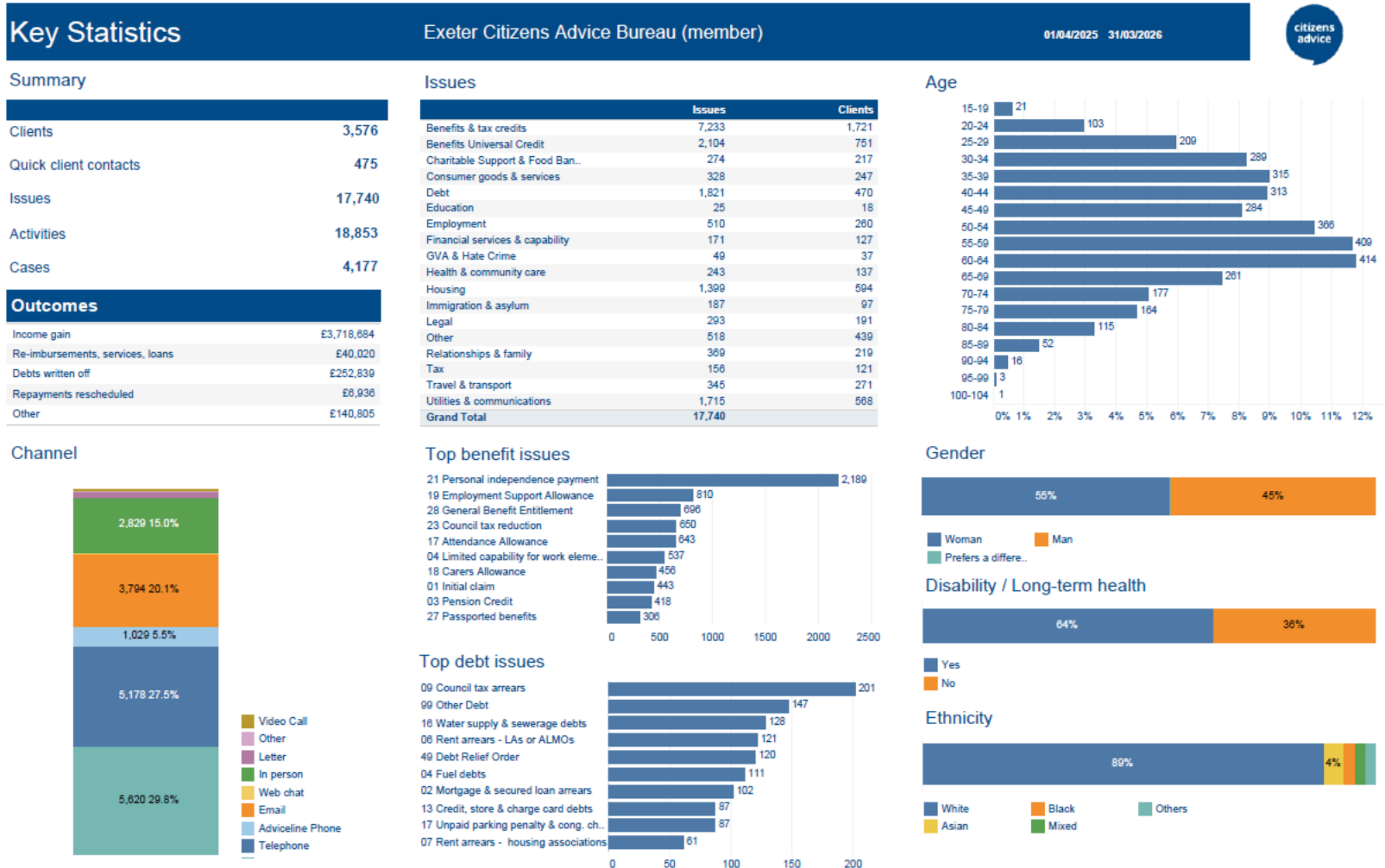
<b>What needs/needed to change and why: how has/did the project contribute to city transformation?</b>	Who was affected? What issues are they/you facing? What opportunities do you see? Which council priorities did this change address?
<b>What will/did you do to make this change?</b>	What will/did you do? Who will/did you work with? When and at what point/how many people will/did you work with?
<b>How do you know this will/did create the change you want?</b>	What evidence do you have that this will/did work? Or what evidence makes you think this will/did work?
<b>What will/did you look at and measure to see if your change has worked?</b>	What 3 outcomes will/did you see if your change is successful? How would/did you measure them?
<b>How will/did the outcomes of your project contribute to the Exeter Vision and the City Council's Corporate Priorities?</b>	How do your outcomes contribute to the Exeter Vision and the City Council's Corporate Priorities?

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## Key Statistics

The dashboard report below provides key statistics for the year 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026 for clients accessing the Exeter Citizens Advice service:

### All clients



**Comparison quarter by quarter**

	2025-26	2024-25
<b>Clients</b>	3,576	4,307
<b>Quick clients</b>	475	763
<b>Issues</b>	17,740	18,578
<b>Income gain</b>	£3,718,664	£4,077,636
<b>Debts written off</b>	£252,839	£371,106
<b>Top issues</b>	Benefits and Tax Credits Benefits Universal Credit Debt	Benefits and Tax Credits Debt Utilities and Communications
<b>Top benefits issue</b>	Personal independence payment	Personal Independence Payment
<b>Top debt issue</b>	Council tax arrears	Council tax arrears
<b>Disability/Long term health condition</b>	64%	63% disabled/long term health condition
<b>Ethnicity</b>	89% white British/English/Scottish	91% white British/English/Scottish

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**2025–26 Performance Summary**

**Comparison with 2024–25**

**Overall activity**

In **2025–26**, we supported **3,576 clients with 17,740 advice issues**, compared with **4,307 clients and 18,578 issues in 2024–25**

This represents:

- A **17% reduction in client numbers**
- A smaller **5% reduction in total issues**, indicating higher complexity per case

The fall in activity is **expected and capacity-led**, not demand-led, and reflects a significant service change during the year:

- The reduction of advice provision from **5 days per week to 3 days per week**
- The loss of Exeter City Council funding from April 2025

Despite fewer clients being seen, the relatively modest reduction in issues suggests advisers are working on **more complex problems per client**.

**Quick advice and early intervention**

In 2025–26, **quick advice clients fell to 475**, compared with **763 in 2024–25** — a **38% reduction**

This reflects:

- Reduced opening days
- Less capacity for short, early-intervention contacts

The scale of this reduction is important, as fewer quick advice contacts mean:

- Fewer opportunities to resolve problems early
- Greater risk of issues escalating into crisis and requiring full casework

## Financial outcomes

In **2025–26**, we achieved **£3,718,664 in income gains**, compared with **£4,077,636 in 2024–25**

While total income gains are lower overall (reflecting fewer clients), the **reduction in income gained (9%) is significantly smaller than the reduction in clients (17%)**, indicating stronger outcomes per client.

**Debt written off totalled £252,839 in 2025–26**, compared with **£371,106 in 2024–25**

This reduction largely reflects reduced capacity rather than reduced effectiveness, with debt casework remaining focused on high-impact cases.

## What this tells us about impact

- We are supporting **fewer clients**, primarily due to reduced service days
- **Financial outcomes remain strong relative to capacity**
- Advisers are dealing with **more complex and higher-value cases**
- Impact per client has increased, even as overall reach has reduced

This demonstrates that the service remains highly effective, but its **reach is constrained by funding and staffing capacity**.

## Client needs and profile

Client needs and demographics remain **consistent year-on-year**, demonstrating ongoing structural demand:

- **Benefits and Tax Credits** remain the top issue area in both years
- In 2025–26, **Universal Credit** features more prominently, reflecting continued system complexity
- **Personal Independence Payment (PIP)** remains the top individual benefits issue in both years
- **Council Tax arrears** remains the leading debt issue across both years
- **64% of clients** in 2025–26 have a disability or long-term health condition, broadly unchanged from 63% in 2024–25

This consistency shows that reduced numbers do not reflect reduced need — the same vulnerable groups continue to require support.

## Key messages

- Demand for advice remains **high and consistent**, particularly around benefits and Council Tax arrears
- Reduced funding and service days have led to **fewer people being helped**, especially at an early stage
- Outcomes per client remain strong, demonstrating **good value and adviser effectiveness**
- The sharp fall in quick advice is a warning sign for **future escalation and system pressure**

## Strategic implications

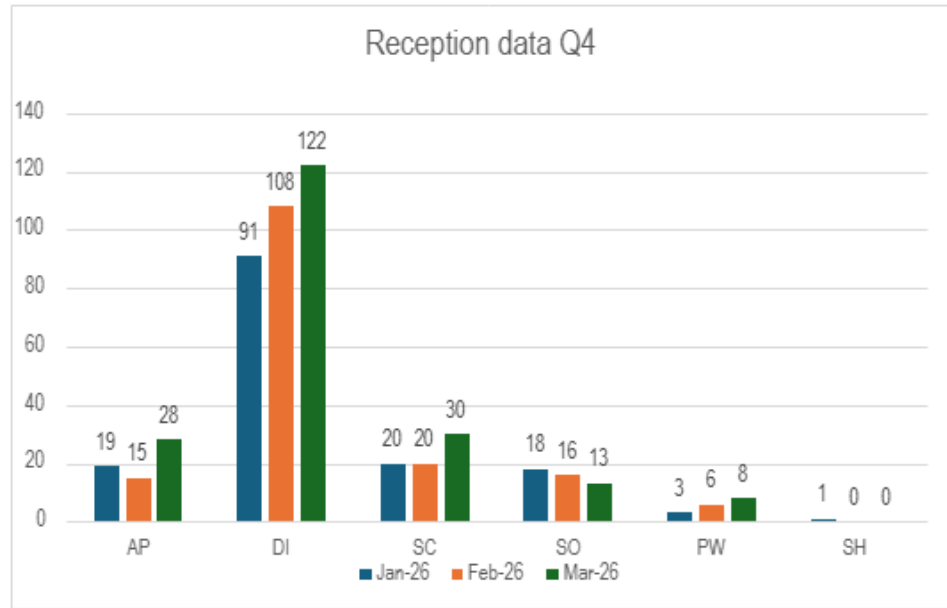
The 2025–26 data shows a service that is:

- **Highly effective**, but
- **Operating below optimal capacity**

Restoring or targeting funding would allow the service to:

- Increase early intervention
- Help more residents before problems escalate
- Maximise financial gains and debt solutions for the local community

***Reception Statistics***



**Key**

<b>AP</b>	Seen - appointment
<b>DI</b>	Seen - drop in
<b>SC</b>	Turned Away - signpost CA
<b>SO</b>	Turned Away - signpost other
<b>PW</b>	Paperwork - collected or dropped off
<b>SH</b>	Self Help, kiosk or telephone

## Total clients seen in Reception: 518

This is a decrease from Q3, when we saw 430 clients.

### **Unmet demand**

We are aware that a significant number of people come to our premises when our doors are closed to the public. We have installed a CCTV camera to measure the unmet need. Since 23<sup>rd</sup> June, **325** people have come to our front door and walked away because we were closed. The camera is intermittent and there have been periods during this time when it has been online, so in reality, this figure is higher.

We will continue to monitor these figures.

### **Court Repossession Desk**

The renters reform act is just around the corner now. We have had several training sessions for our staff and volunteers in April, and we will keep a close eye on the roll out of the new rules, which are fairly complex, particularly at the point of transition between the old and the new rules. There are lots of landlords and tenants who are already presenting us with different scenarios, many of which are last minute attempts at possession action before the 1<sup>st</sup> May deadline. Many landlords remain nervous about the prospect of getting their properties back from tenants who are in breach of their tenancy (antisocial behaviour or rent arrears etc), but the new rules clearly allow for repossession under these circumstances.

It remains to be seen how prepared (or not) the courts will be at the point of transition.

We continue to provide a court team to assist defendants in housing cases on Tuesdays.

Our policy remains to offer all defendants who seek our help at court a pre-arranged phone call (usually the next day) to try to help them with the underlying reasons and issues which have led to the potential homelessness situation they are facing. This will often result in the client being assisted by our core service to gain better control of their finances and assistance with other issues they face.

Numbers of cases listed for hearing:

	Mortgage	Local Authority	Housing association	Private rented	Total
Q4 2025/26	31	33	26	28	118
Q3 2025/26	21	38	25	36	120

Q2 2025/26	44	27	28	18	117
Q1 2025/26	32	48	20	33	133

The grant funding we received to fund the court service ended in March 2025.

***Client Experiences – Outcomes (take from PQF) – Q4 2025-26***

**SURVEY QUESTION**

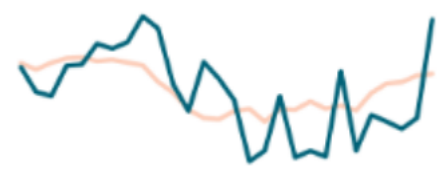
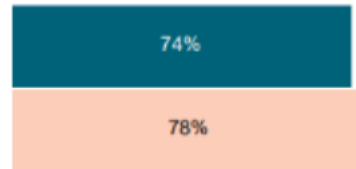
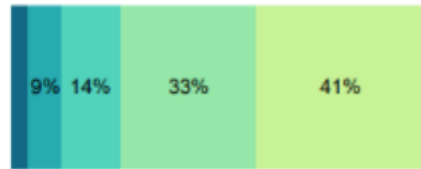
**% ALL RESPONSES YOUR LCA ①**

**% POSITIVE RESPONSES YOUR LCA VS. NATIONAL ①**

**% POSITIVE RESPONSES BY QTR YOUR LCA VS. NATIONAL ①**

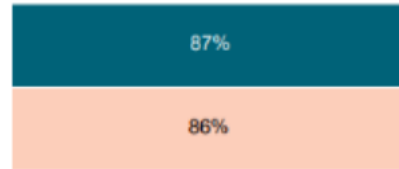
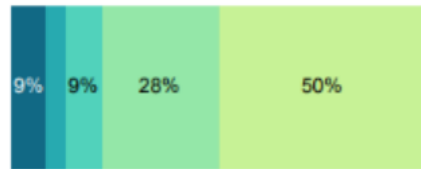
**EASE OF ACCESS**

“How easy or difficult did you find it to access the service?”



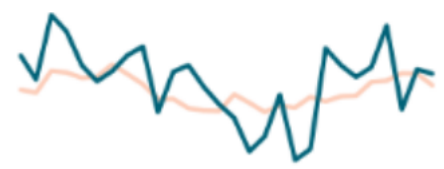
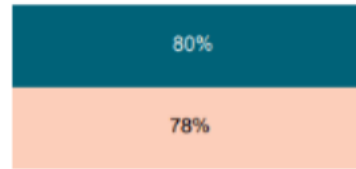
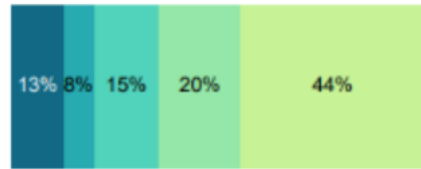
**WAY FORWARD**

“To what extent did the service help you to find a way forward?”



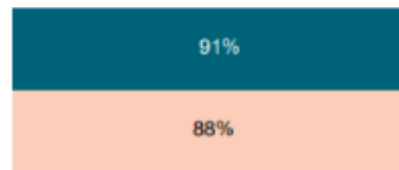
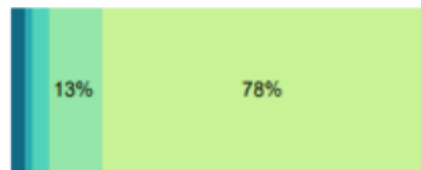
**PROBLEM RESOLVED**

“To what extent is your problem now resolved?”



**RECOMMEND**

“How likely would you be to recommend the service?”



# *BIG Thank you*

Follow us online:



*Extremely good professional patient help I could not have managed without her.*

*The advisor I spoke with was incredibly efficient and knowledgeable .His advice and support has been invaluable.*

*Following the advice received from Citizens Advice I felt relieved and very grateful for the help I received.*

*Thank you*

*Citizens advice helped me with some funds towards my winter bill .They provided an electric blanket and hand warmer .This meant I would not go cold I appreciate all the help they gave me.*

*Welcoming visit very informative helpful and knowledgeable.The lady I spoke to put me at ease and made me feel confident that this problem could be resolved I felt extremely supported.*

## Actions in Response to Client Experience

### Client Satisfaction: Exeter compared with National Performance (2025–26)

Citizens Advice Exeter performs **in line with or above national benchmarks** across key client satisfaction measures in 2025–26, indicating a strong and consistent client experience.

On **ease of access**, Exeter scores slightly **below the national average** (74% Exeter compared with 78% nationally), suggesting access remains an area for continued focus. However, Exeter exceeds national performance on core outcome and advocacy measures, including **problem resolution** (80% vs 78%) and **help to find a way forward** (87% vs 86%). The **likelihood to recommend** remains particularly strong at **91%**, compared with **88% nationally**, reflecting high levels of client trust and confidence in the service.

Overall, the data demonstrates that **Citizens Advice Exeter delivers high-quality advice and positive outcomes**, outperforming national results on impact measures, while highlighting access as a key improvement opportunity. An increase in funding could support this by enabling us to increase our opening hours.

### Financial gains – 2025-26

#### Financial outcomes summary

	Number of outcomes	Client count	Amount	Average per outcome	Average per client
Income gain	1,133	637	£3,718,684	£3,282	£5,838
Re-imburements, services, loans	68	60	£40,020	£589	£667
Debts written off	25	23	£252,839	£10,114	£10,993
Repayments rescheduled	12	11	£6,936	£578	£631
Income loss	1	1	£0	£0	£0
Other	219	173	£140,805	£643	£814
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1,458</b>	<b>741</b>			

(report C2a – summary outcomes and funder dash)

### A breakdown across core service delivery and projects

## Funder

	Number of outcomes	Client count	Income gain		
			Total	Average per outcome	Average per client
Advice Prescribing OED	20	9	£62,632	£3,132	£6,959
CMAF-Carbon Monoxide	6	4	£821	£137	£205
CMAF-Carbon Monoxide and Energy	218	130	£66,734	£306	£513
CORE	142	93	£523,228	£3,685	£5,626
CSDF1	1	1	£4,000	£4,000	£4,000
CSDF2 - Remote Service Delivery - Aviva - 2	7	6	£18,810	£2,687	£3,135
CSDF2 - Remote Service Delivery - Aviva - 3	1	1	£3,416	£3,416	£3,416
Devon - Carers Advice on Benefits	24	16	£40,605	£1,692	£2,538
Devon Macmillan	384	223	£2,082,495	£5,423	£9,339
DWP: Help to Claim - Telephone Service	3	3	£14,322	£4,774	£4,774
EAP - National Grid	10	8	£9,902	£990	£1,238
Exeter - ABC Project	20	12	£85,264	£4,263	£7,105
Exeter - CAB (Carers Advice on Benefits)	5	3	£19,969	£3,994	£6,656
Exeter Action for Children	4	1	£10,150	£2,537	£10,150
Exeter Court	6	5	£8,096	£1,349	£1,619
Exeter DASWAC	30	20	£136,509	£4,550	£6,825
Exeter Debt Project	2	1	£1,287	£644	£1,287
Exeter Foodbank Debt Clients	1	1	£476	£476	£476
Exeter Foodbank Project	70	37	£267,936	£3,828	£7,242
Exeter KPA	10	7	£35,007	£3,501	£5,001
Hospiscare Exeter	24	19	£107,840	£4,493	£5,676
National EAP - DBT	54	32	£18,640	£345	£583
Single Queue Adviceline Phones	9	7	£71,416	£7,935	£10,202
WHD - Energy Advice Programme	6	4	£4,989	£832	£1,247
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1,057</b>	<b>610</b>	<b>£3,594,544</b>	<b>£3,401</b>	<b>£5,893</b>

## **Ward by ward data - 2025/26**

The report below shows the number of clients we have helped and the financial gains to those clients. This data is being shared with all Exeter councillors.

## Ward

	Number of outcomes	Client count	Income gain		
			Total	Average per outcome	Average per client
Alphington	9	6	£43,425	£4,825	£7,237
Duryard and St James	5	3	£14,098	£2,820	£4,699
Exwick	11	9	£41,387	£3,762	£4,599
Heavitree	9	6	£36,686	£4,076	£6,114
Mincinglake and Whipton	9	6	£36,396	£4,044	£6,066
Newtown and St Leonard's	17	11	£67,889	£3,993	£6,172
Pennsylvania	5	3	£4,385	£877	£1,462
Pinhoe	15	11	£27,058	£1,804	£2,460
Priory	14	12	£23,532	£1,681	£1,961
St David's	14	12	£18,138	£1,296	£1,511
St Loyes	7	5	£48,385	£6,912	£9,677
St Thomas	19	13	£48,584	£2,557	£3,737
Topsham	5	4	£15,467	£3,093	£3,867
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>£425,429</b>	<b>£3,061</b>	<b>£4,212</b>

(report CS2a – filter LA as Exeter, Geography Dash)

### General Updates

We continue to seek sources of funding, and the **fundraising** group has raised £20,000 this year. This is amazing work and credit goes to our fundraising team, made up solely of volunteers.

Grant and Trust funding continues to be very difficult to obtain. Citizens Advice often falls outside the remit of grant funders, as we are not a charity that specialises in a particular demographic – such as the homeless. However, any grant out there that we can apply for, we do, even though they are few and far between. We are not a charity that the public tends to consider when they wish to donate to charity, as many believe us to be government funded. We are trying very hard to change this view.

Our grant from Devon County Council continues to make a significant contribution to our ability to offer our service. We hope to be able to remain in our current council owned premises on a peppercorn rent basis until we have to vacate due to ECC relocating. Discussions are underway. In addition, at the time of writing this report, we hope to be selected to lead on the Crisis and Resilience work for ECC.

Our city **Roadshows** have almost come to the end of their current run as we finish off with events regarding the importance of making a will. Our presence in some of the city's most deprived wards has been very well received. Funding from Exeter City Council's Community Grants has contributed to this work.

We have brought our **School Advice Project** with Wynstream Primary School to an end. This was funded by Citizens Advice Exeter and we no longer have the finances to be able to continue with this much needed project. We are pleased to have made a tangible difference to the families we have worked with by providing them with advice in the school environment, where they feel safe. We hope that we have built trust with this community and that they will feel confident to approach us at our drop-in or on the telephone Adviceline.

We are the project lead on an **Advice Prescribing Project** funded by the ICB across One Eastern Devon. We are taking referrals from Social Prescribers. The project continues to go well. Unfortunately, the NHS funding we have been using for this work is ending in October, so this work will cease unless we can find an alternative funding stream.

We are continuing to engage with **networking** opportunities with the business community and are members of the Samphire Club.

We continue to publicise the ways that people can access the service with details on our national website, our own website and on posters outside on our Notice Board. We have fortnightly advice columns in the local newspaper and articles written for local newsletters. In addition to this, we benefit from the Citizens Advice Devon Communications Officer's press releases.

It should be noted that clients' enquiries continue to be very complex with the cost-of-living crisis. Whereas before, clients were asking about one or two subject areas, they are now asking about a range of issues including Energy, Housing, Debt, Employment and Benefits. This can mean that we see fewer clients as advice appointments take more time and often lead to further follow-up appointments. Our wait time for appointments is currently around six weeks. Unfortunately, this waiting time will increase as the service reduces.

Finally, this year, Citizens Advice Exeter is celebrating its 80<sup>th</sup> birthday! By the time you receive this report, we will have had our 80<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration at Exeter City Football Club. I hope that some of you were able to join us.

Citizens Advice Exeter was awarded a Community Grant from Exeter City Council at the end of 2025 to deliver a series of roadshows between January and April 2026. As part of the grant, we committed to providing information and education to the public across a range of locations, focusing on three key areas: scam awareness, gambling harms, and the importance of having a will.

Through our client stories and data, we see first-hand that scams, gambling-related harms, and inadequate later-life planning can have a significant impact on people's wellbeing, finances, and relationships.

By taking our advice directly into the community, we are able to reach individuals who might not otherwise seek help, equipping them with the knowledge and tools to protect themselves and their families. These events offer both educational resources and practical guidance to support residents in their everyday lives.

## **Report: Action on Gambling Harms Roadshows March 2026**

### **Why the focus on Gambling Harms?**

Gambling is often framed as harmless fun, but for some it causes serious, long-term harm. With online platforms, apps, and relentless advertising making gambling easier than ever, more individuals and families are being affected. The harm goes beyond money loss, impacting mental health, relationships, work, and overall well-being. From a public health perspective, gambling harm is a community issue, not just an individual one, and reducing it requires awareness, prevention, and support at a population level.

Citizens Advice Exeter recognises gambling harm as a significant issue that affects not only those who gamble but also their families and communities and are using our community events and platforms to highlight these issues. The impact of gambling-related harm is varied and wide-reaching. Financial losses, debt, housing problems, relationship breakdown,

and decreased mental wellbeing are consistently reported by both gamblers and their families, friends, and co-workers. While action has been taken, and support services provided to help those affected, research shows that this has not tackled the problem.

*"The scary thing is you know there's only one outcome, but you can't stop." Paul Merson England footballer*

**The NHS in England is facing an "uphill battle" with demand for gambling addiction help more than doubling since last**

**Choice of Venues**

We deliberately focused our roadshows on key locations where individuals experiencing gambling-related harm were most likely to be present—namely sporting events and licensed social venues. During February 2026, we held roadshows at three locations in Exeter: an Exeter Rugby match at Exeter Chiefs Stadium (average attendance of over 10,000), an Exeter City Football Club match (attendance on the day was 7,341), and the Exeter MECCA bingo hall (the city's main bingo venue).

All three venues were welcoming and accommodating, and they provided us with suitable locations for engagement. We had existing personal contacts at both sporting venues, which allowed us to approach management directly and may have contributed to successfully securing these opportunities. Staff at each venue demonstrated understanding and awareness of the issues their customers may face. Many were open to conversation and willing to share their observations and concerns.

**Partnership Approach**

At the planning stage of the roadshow, we aimed—where possible—to work alongside partner agencies. This was to ensure that, if members of the public approached us for support, we could offer access to credible and specialist services. While Citizens Advice Exeter can provide guidance on the financial and practical impacts of gambling, we do not have the in-house expertise to address addiction itself. We therefore recognised the importance of a holistic approach to supporting individuals affected by gambling-related harm. We were also fortunate to receive support from the High Sheriff of Devon (2024–2025), who is passionate about this issue and helped to raise awareness of our events and increase our media profile. At a national level, Citizens Advice works in partnership with Gamcare, and we used their promotional materials alongside our own. We also collaborated with local partner ARA (Addiction Recovery Agency), whose representatives attended one of our events. Across all roadshows, we provided literature, website information, and contact details for Gamcare, ARA, and Citizens Advice Exeter.

**Method of Engagement and Public Participation**

At all three venues, we set up a Citizens Advice Exeter display with information and leaflets available to hand out. We shared Citizens Advice "Action on Gambling Harms" materials with passers-by, introducing ourselves with the phrase, "this may help someone you know." As gambling is often a hidden issue associated with shame and fear, we aimed to take a neutral and non-judgmental approach. While no members of the public directly disclosed needing help, a good proportion of those passing by accepted our leaflets. Some people approached the stall to chat and ask questions about the project, and several family members expressed appreciation that we were raising awareness of this hidden issue. Staff at all three venues were also keen to talk, sharing their own observations and concerns about gambling-related harms.

*. "And no-one helped me because I kept it secret"  
Peter Shilton England Footballer*

**Impact and What We Learned**

We set out to raise awareness of this important issue and are confident that we achieved this goal. Whilst one-to-one engagement with individuals experiencing addiction did not happen, we feel was due to the nature of the promotional environment, which was not designed to facilitate this type of personal interaction. A key learning has been the importance of supporting family members. We feel that they may be more likely to seek help initially, equipping themselves to support and engage the individual affected. It is clear that more work is needed to better identify and reach those who require direct support, and to develop more effective ways of engaging them. Moving forward, collaboration with venue partners and specialist agencies would be essential in providing more holistic and accessible support.

*Gambling-related harms have considerable cost to the government and society, likely to be between £1.05 to 1.77 billion. The most socio-economically deprived and disadvantaged groups in England have the lowest gambling participation rates, but the highest levels of harmful gambling and they are also the most susceptible to harm. So, if there are no interventions to improve this situation, harmful gambling is likely to make existing health inequalities worse. The harms identified in this report and the cost to society suggests that more needs to be done to prevent and reduce the harms associated with gambling.*

<https://www.racingpost.com/safer-gambling/interviews/peter-shilton-ive-lost-millions-but-i-hope-to-help-the-next-generation/> Peter Shilton Interview

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/football/58859342> Paul Merson BBC interview

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/2024/12/nhs-tackles-problem-gambling-amid-growing-demand/#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20Gambling%20Commission%2C%20hundreds%20of,engage%20in%20either%20moderate%20or%20low%20risk%20gambling.> NHS information

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cpded42yz23o> High Sheriff of Devon BBC interview

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gambling-related-harms-evidence-review> gov review 2023

Citizens Advice Exeter Fundraising and Promotions team // KD April 2026

**Sue Jolyan | Chief Executive | Citizens Advice Exeter**

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## REPORT TO EXECUTIVE

Date of Meeting: 22 June 2026

Report of: Strategic Director of Corporate Resources

Title: Market Street Car Park (Council Enforcement and Tariff Amendment) and Cathedral & Quay Multi Storey Car Park (Pay on Foot)

### Is this a Key Decision?

No

### Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Executive

### 1. What is the report about?

1.1 Firstly, to seek approval to include Market Street car park in the Parking Places Order 2014 (PPO) to enable enforcement and to provide for parking tariffs to be implemented. Secondly, to seek approval to amend the existing PPO for Cathedral & Quay multi storey car park to provide for Pay on Foot arrangements to be implemented.

### 2. Recommendations:

That Executive approve the following:

2.1 To amend the Parking Places Order 2014 as follows:

2.1.1 To incorporate Market Street car park into the Council's Off-Street Parking Places Order as a 'Pay and Display' car park within the Central Zone parking tariff structure.

2.1.2 In respect of the Cathedral & Quay multi storey car park, to introduce 'Pay on Foot' arrangements into the Council's Off-Street Parking Places Order.

2.2 To delegate authority to consider the responses to the consultation and determine whether to implement the Order (or parts thereof) to the Head of Service Commercial Assets in consultation with the Strategic Director Corporate Resources and Leader of the Council.

### 3. Reasons for the recommendation:

3.1 To support the delivery of the City Council's Corporate Plan, in supporting the economic resilience and vitality of the City Centre

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

4.1 In respect of Market Street car park there will be a capital cost incurred to ensure that the car park meets the Council's compliance and health and safety standards. This will be requested in a report to Council. The upgrade cost will also encompass the relocation, installation and networking of disused payment equipment from the

Harlequins car park once it is closed. Once open and operating Market Street car park will have an onsite car park attendant between the hours of 08:00am and 10:00pm. This is based on a charging period of Monday to Sunday 8.00am - 10.00pm, (including Bank Holidays) with the car park closing at 11pm.

4.2 In respect of Cathedral & Quay multi storey car park there will be a capital cost incurred in relation to the procurement and installation of Pay on Foot equipment comprising payment machines, barriers and camera equipment and associated software. This is built into the refurbishment budget which is due to be considered at full Council on 21<sup>st</sup> July. The installation of this equipment is expected to significantly reduce revenue loss from non-paying customers (who have evaded enforcement activity) and in turn will reduce the resourcing requirements for the Car Park Enforcement team in relation to this asset.

## **5. Section 151 Officer comments:**

1.1. There are no financial implications contained in this report.

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

1.1. In order to bring the proposed changes into effect the Council must comply with the procedural requirements of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, including giving notice of the proposed changes and considering any representations received during the consultation period.

## **7. Monitoring Officer's comments:**

1.1. The Monitoring Officer has no additional comments.

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

1.2. In recommending this proposal no potential impact has been identified on people with protected characteristics as determined by the Act.

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

1.3. There are no additional carbon/environmental impacts arising from the recommendations as the car parks are already in operation.

## **10. Report details:**

### Market Street Car Park

10.1 Market Street is arranged as a ground level, undercroft and display car park extending to 69 spaces which until recently was operated by NCP for a period of over 20 years by way of a commercial lease agreement (which has been subject to a series of periodic renewals). The latest lease was completed on 17<sup>th</sup> October 25 and was granted with a 10-year term and a mutual break clause at the fifth year. The initial passing rent was £55,120 pa (exc).

10.2 On 17<sup>th</sup> March 26, the City Council was advised that NCP had gone into administration and were subsequently informed that Market Street car park had been identified for closure. The car park was subsequently closed for business by NCP on 27<sup>th</sup>

March 26 and payment equipment was disconnected and decommissioned. The Council established immediate control of the car park thereafter ensuring it was safe and secure.

- 10.3 The Council subsequently received correspondence from the Administrator offering a surrender of the lease effective from 27<sup>th</sup> March 26.
- 10.4 Having regard to the sustained high levels of utilisation and net income potential of this city centre car park, and following a review of available options, it is proposed that the direct operation and management of this asset represents the most favourable outcome.
- 10.5 To enable reopening, the car park will require an upgrade to ensure it meets the Council's compliance and health and safety standards. This will also incorporate an upgrade to on-site welfare facilities. The scope of works will include the relocation and reuse of payment equipment from Harlequins car park which is due to close imminently, together with the activation of a supporting RINGO payment system.
- 10.6 Resourcing and policing this car park will be a key factor to its success, particularly given the reported elevated levels of anti-social behaviour occurring within the immediate vicinity.
- 10.7 Given the city centre location, the proposal is to include the car park in the Central pay & display tariff, which aligns with other comparable car parks located nearby.

#### Cathedral & Quay Multi Storey Car Park

- 10.8 Cathedral & Quay is a key city centre asset which supports the vitality of the city centre. On the basis that a refurbishment is approved and proceeds, the asset is forecast to deliver a considerably enhanced net revenue performance, particularly on the basis that the currently closed 2.5 decks are reopened bringing the asset back into full operation.
- 10.9 Having regard to its advantageous location between the Cathedral and The Quay, the car park is used by a variety of customers including business users and tourists/visitors. To enhance the customer experience and utilisation it is proposed that the existing Pay & Display equipment is decommissioned and removed and replaced with an integrated Pay on Foot system (mirroring the arrangement for both John Lewis and Guildhall multi storey car parks).
- 10.10 Importantly the introduction of this new payment system will give the customer greater flexibility – having to pay upon return is expected to significantly reduce current revenue loss from non-paying pay and display customers (who have evaded enforcement activity). This 'self-policing' system is anticipated to reduce the need for on-site enforcement activity, enabling the Enforcement Team to redeploy resources to areas with greater need. This will be replaced by an onsite presence as set out in the report to Council.

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

11.1 The recommendations within this report support the following Corporate Priority:

11.1.1 A Balanced Budget: car park income enables the City Council to deliver a wide range of services for residents, businesses and visitors to the city.

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

12.1 The immediate vicinity surrounding Market Street car park is known to be affected by elevated levels of anti-social behaviour. It will therefore be important that appropriate resource is deployed to the car park to ensure surveillance and to disperse unwanted activity. This issue is compounded by the Corn Exchange entertainment venue (operated by the Council) being located directly above the car park.

12.2 To mitigate this issue the Car Park Service will undertake a robust risk assessment and, based on its extensive experience of managing comparable assets, which develop a resourcing plan for review and approval by the Head of Commercial Assets and Director of Corporate Resources.

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

1.1. In the light of NCP going into administration, the Council has the option of procuring a new private operator for Market Street car park. Following consideration this option has been discounted primarily based on the asset's utilisation and associated revenue potential.

**Director : Strategic Director of Corporate Resources**

Author: Head of Commercial Assets

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

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

None

## REPORT TO EXECUTIVE

Date of Meeting: 22 June 2026

## REPORT TO COUNCIL

Date of Meeting:

Report of: Strategic Director Corporate Resources

Title: Corporate Debt Management Policy

### Is this a Key Decision?

No

### Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Council

### 1. What is the report about?

1.1 This report seeks approval of a revised Corporate Debt Management Policy, which provides an overarching, consistent framework for the management of debt across the Council. It is accompanied by service-specific recovery procedures to reflect differing regulations.

### 2. Recommendations:

2.1 That the Executive recommend to Council approval of the revised Corporate Debt Management Policy.

2.2 Member agreement is also sought to delegate authority to the Leader, Section 151 Officer and Portfolio Holder to agree amendments to the Policy after targeted engagement with the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector.

### 3. Reasons for the recommendation:

3.1 An effective Corporate Debt Management Policy provides the Council with a clear framework for collecting sums owed while meeting legal and ethical obligations. It supports income maximisation through well-defined recovery processes, which in turn protects the Council's cash-flow and helps sustain service delivery.

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

4.1 No additional staffing resources are required.

4.2 An effective debt management policy can yield significant benefits for the local authority – whether from council tax, business rates, rents and other fees and charges. It supports income maximisation through clear recovery processes, which in turn protects the Council's cashflow position and fund its services.

## **5. Section 151 Officer comments:**

5.1 Adoption of this Policy will provide an approved framework for Officers to operate under. This is a welcome addition to the governance of debt management at the Council.

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

6.1 The proposed Policy provides the corporate framework for the recovery of sums due to the Council across a number of income streams. The legal basis and recovery options vary depending on the type of debt concerned. For example, the collection and enforcement of council tax, business rates and housing benefit overpayments are governed by specific statutory provisions and associated regulations, whereas sundry debts will generally fall to be pursued through contractual terms and the civil recovery remedies through the courts. Members will therefore note that the policy refers to a number of service-specific procedures. The intention is to ensure that recovery action is lawful, proportionate and taken in accordance with the applicable legislative scheme.

6.2 In exercising its debt recovery functions, the Council must act reasonably, fairly and consistently, having regard to public law principles, the need to take account of vulnerability and hardship, and its wider statutory duties, including the public sector equality duty. Members will note that the policy places an emphasis on early engagement, appropriate support and proportionality in enforcement. This is consistent with good practice.

## **7. Monitoring Officer's comments:**

7.1 The proposed Policy supports a clearer and more consistent governance framework for debt recovery across the Council.

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

8.1 In recommending this proposal potential impact has been identified on people with protected characteristics as determined by the Act and an Equality Impact Assessment has been included in the background papers for Member's attention.

8.2 Engagement with the VCSE will be undertaken as they play a crucial role in supporting people in the community and reaching those most in need.

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

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

## **10. Report details:**

10.1 The primary objective is to properly document and consolidate in a single document, the Council's current debt recovery arrangements, so that it provides clear guidance on:

- How the Council collects money owed to it fairly and consistently
- How it seeks to prevent debt by ensuring appropriate support and advice is available
- How we support people who are in difficulty or have problem debt

The key drivers for preparing a comprehensive Corporate Debt Management Policy are:

### **Audit Findings and Action Plan**

Audits undertaken by our internal auditors, South West Audit Partnership (SWAP), reported that the Council currently has three separate debt procedure documents, which have not been reviewed since 2019 and do not include all necessary information. SWAP reported that:

- They have no documented owner or review frequency
- They have not been approved by members
- They do not make clear what debt recovery action services should take once reminder letters have been issued
- They do not provide clear guidance on whether and when debts should be written off
- They do not explain how officers should handle credit balances
- They do not mention any Legal assistance that could be provided to help collect debts

Furthermore, a SWAP audit in respect of Council Tax Arrears Recovery also reported that the Debt Collection Policy, covering the recovery of council tax was last reviewed in 2015 and does not clearly set out the Council's approach to billing, recovery and enforcement.

The proposed updated Corporate Debt Management Policy seeks to address these audit findings.

### **Good Practice**

SWAP provided further examples of good practice which highlighted that some policies of partner councils also had specific policies setting out the process for different types of debt. The proposed Corporate Debt Management Policy therefore includes appendices to set out arrangements for service specific areas with all service areas expected to follow in conjunction with the overarching policy.

### **Financial Regulations**

In October 2025, Council approved changes to the Council's Financial Regulations. The changes included new authorisation limits for debt write-offs. The proposed new policy reflects the changes to Financial Regulations and sets out the authorisation limits and criteria to write-off debts.

### **Income Collection Team**

A new Income Collection Team was formed in July 2025 with responsibility for the collection of overpaid Housing Benefits and to support services across the Council with the recovery of sundry debt. Time has been taken to gain a better understanding of the processes, portfolio of debt, management reporting arrangements and system functionality.

## Legal Service Support

Resources in Legal Services have been strengthened to provide dedicated support for the recovery of Council debt.

The Housing and Litigation Team will be responsible for acting on instructions for debt recovery or enforcement. The Housing and Litigation Team comprises of the Housing and Litigation Team Lead, a Litigation Lawyer, a Legal Officer (Litigation and Debt Recovery), and a Legal Apprentice.

### 10.2 Proposed Changes

The main purpose of the proposed new Corporate Debt Management Policy is to ensure they provide all necessary information, a key recommendation of the auditors. No significant changes are proposed, at this stage, as the focus is on consolidating our arrangements in a single policy and to clarify thresholds for decision making (e.g. debt write-offs) for formal approval. However, the few changes are:

- **Crisis and Resilience Fund**

The policy recognises that customers experiencing financial hardship require additional support. The proposed policy sets out that officers may consider signposting customers facing financial hardship to support services available through the new Crisis and Resilience Fund.

- **Vulnerability Statement**

Updated Vulnerability Statement to ensure it provides clear guidance to all officers involved with debt management, so that additional support, flexibility and understanding is given to customers considered to be vulnerable.

- **Debt Collection Agents**

The practice of making referrals to Debt Collection agents at the pre-Court stage will end in respect of the recovery of Overpaid Housing Benefits and Sundry Debt. The enforcement agents have limited powers at the pre-Court stage to recover debts and can only issue letters to request payment, with a low success rate. In-house Legal expertise will be utilised instead to determine the appropriate recovery actions, on a case-by-case basis.

- **Recovery of Overpaid Housing Benefits**

Additional Direct Debit run for the recovery of overpaid Housing Benefits – the Council currently only offer payment to be taken on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month but will also offer the 15<sup>th</sup> moving forwards as demand data indicates that a mid-month collection date would better suit many customers and support effective recovery.

- **Business Rate Reminders**

Realigning the number of reminders issued to businesses in respect of unpaid business rates with statutory requirements, which reduces them from three reminders to two reminders, achieving efficiency savings from reduced postage and officer time.

### 10.3 12 Month Review

If approved, a review of the Corporate Debt Management Policy will be performed within 12 months. This is shorter than usual and reflects that work remains ongoing to identify improvements and streamlining of debt recovery processes, for example exploring a move towards a synchronised recovery pathway for sundry debt. There is potential for services to have the same default payment terms and number of reminders, but this requires detailed investigation due to the diverse range of services, differing contractual arrangements and any IT system constraints.

#### **Modernising and improving the administration of Council Tax**

On 15 April 2026, the Government announced changes to the administration of council tax that will apply from 1 April 2027, which will impact on the policy, including:

- Instalments will default to spread over 12 months, rather than the current 10 months
- Extending the time before a household loses the right to pay in instalments to 63 days from the first missed payment

Early adoption is not possible, as the Government intend to consult with councils on the steps councils should follow within the 63-day period.

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

11.1 A Corporate Debt Management Policy, which provides an overarching, consistent framework for the management of debt across the Council contributes to a well-run Council.

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

12.1 Poor income collection risks budget shortfalls and increased borrowing to cover gaps and higher interest costs. An effective Corporate Debt Management Policy helps to support the needs and circumstances of debtors while maintaining high rates of collection and the prevention of arrears.

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

13.1 None

**Director: Strategic Director Corporate Resources**

Author: Head of Service, Finance

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

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

None

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## Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Please refer to the [Equality Impact Assessments \(EQIAs\)](#) form for details on how to complete.

The aim of an equality impact assessment is to consider the equality implications of any decision (e.g. new or revised policy, process, project, function, or service) on different groups of people including employees and customers. This document helps to evaluate whether the decision may inadvertently disadvantage groups of people and identify ways to avoid discrimination and proactively advance equality.

### 1. Details of the proposal

<b>Name of the proposal:</b>	Corporate Debt Policy
<b>Version number:</b>	
<b>Does this proposal impact on people?</b>	Choose an item: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Explain your answer whether 'yes' or 'no'</b>	The policy applies to income owed to the Council from both individuals and businesses
<b>Is this a new or existing policy/project/service?</b>	Choose an item: <input type="checkbox"/> New <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Existing
<b>Person responsible for the proposal:</b>	Head of Service, Finance
<b>Person responsible for the EqIA (if different to above)</b>	
<b>Proposal start date:</b>	22/07/2026
<b>When will this proposal be implemented?</b>	22/07/2026
<b>Briefly describe the aims and objectives of the proposal</b>	

	To introduce an effective Corporate Debt Management Policy to ensure the Council manages outstanding debts efficiently while meeting legal and ethical obligations with a focus on early intervention to prevent debt building up in the first place, including payment plans, application of discounts and exemptions and signposting customers to services, programmes and activities that support building financial resilience.
<b>What are the anticipated outcomes of the proposal?</b>	That monies owed to the Council are recovered promptly and appropriately and that the policy provides a clear framework to ensure fairness and prevent undue hardship for those facing financial difficulties.
<b>Who is likely to be affected by the proposal?</b>	You can select multiple options: <input type="checkbox"/> Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Service users <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wider community
<b>How are they likely to be affected?</b>	The Corporate Debt Policy will provide the framework for how services across the Council collect income in a fair, proportional, consistent and transparent manner
<b>Is this proposal going to be approved by SMB, Executive or Council?</b>	Select: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SMB <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Executive <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Council
<b>When is the proposal going to SMB, Executive or Council?</b>	22/06/2026

### 3. Consultation & Engagement

You will nearly always need to involve and consult with stakeholders during your assessment. The extent of the engagement will depend on the nature of the proposal. This should include the individuals/groups who are affected by your proposal. Any proposal for consultation or engagement must be done via the [Consultation and Engagement Form](#).

<p><b>How are you communicating with the individuals/teams who are affected by your proposal?</b></p> <p>You can select multiple options:</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Social media <input type="checkbox"/> Focus groups <input type="checkbox"/> Website
--

- Mail drop
- Via community group
- Other (please describe):

Consultation with senior staff across the Council who are involved in debt recovery has been undertaken;

- Council Tax
- Business Rates
- Housing Benefits
- Housing
- Commercial Assets
- Legal Services

#### 4. Impacts on People

**How will the proposed change affect people with protected characteristics?** Make sure that you assess the impact based on evidence.

- Who will benefit, who won't, who can access, who can't access, who is at an advantage, who is at a disadvantage?
- What evidence has been used for this assessment? For example, employee diversity data, national statistics, customer survey, feedback etc. [Sources of equality data](#) are available on Sharepoint. (Please don't include any information that risks identifying people such as names, or the diversity data, if less than six people).

**Note:** You can copy and paste more rows underneath each protected characteristic if there is more than one impact

How will this proposal affect people with protected characteristics?	Identify Impact:	Why will it have this effect? Use the evidence collated, any engagement or consultation to inform your thinking and record it here. Have you identified any gaps in evidence, if so, what are the gaps? Does this need to be incorporated in the action plan?
Age	Both positive and negative	All customers treated fairly and consistently to ensure that no one receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of age with Persons under 18 (and age 25 for care leavers) specifically covered in the Vulnerability Statement. When a person is recognised to be vulnerable, consideration will be given

<b>How will this proposal affect people with protected characteristics?</b>	<b>Identify Impact:</b>	<b>Why will it have this effect?</b> Use the evidence collated, any engagement or consultation to inform your thinking and record it here. Have you identified any gaps in evidence, if so, what are the gaps? Does this need to be incorporated in the action plan?
		to additional measures that can be taken to support them and the appropriateness of recovery action.
Disability: including sensory, mobility, mental health, neurodiversity, long term ill health	Both positive and negative	All customers treated fairly and consistently to ensure that no one receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of disability and are specifically covered in the Vulnerability Statement. People with disabilities are more likely to face unemployment due to limitations imposed by their disability or it may affect their ability to manage their financial affairs. When a person is recognised to be vulnerable, consideration will be given to additional measures that can be taken to support them and the appropriateness of recovery action.
Gender reassignment	Both positive and negative	All customers treated fairly and consistently to ensure that no one receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of gender recognition. Debt collection practices should be respectful of an individual's chosen name and gender identify. This includes ensuring all communications reflect their affirmed identity and written in gender neutral language.
Marriage and Civil partnership (work related only)	No Impact	All customers treated fairly and consistently to ensure that no one receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of marriage or civil partnership.
Pregnancy & Maternity	Both positive and negative	All customers treated fairly and consistently to ensure that no one receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity and are specifically covered in the Vulnerability Statement. When a person is recognised to be vulnerable, consideration will be given to additional measures that can be taken to support them and the appropriateness of recovery action. This may include allowing longer to pay to reflect the unique financial circumstances of expecting parents.
Race: including ethnic origin, nationality/national origin	Both positive and negative	All customers treated fairly and consistently to ensure that no one receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of ethnicity. Alternative formats for any debt recovery communications, including translations, will be provided on request.
Religion or Belief	No Impact	All customers treated fairly and consistently to ensure that no one receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of religion and belief.

<b>How will this proposal affect people with protected characteristics?</b>	<b>Identify Impact:</b>	<b>Why will it have this effect?</b> Use the evidence collated, any engagement or consultation to inform your thinking and record it here. Have you identified any gaps in evidence, if so, what are the gaps? Does this need to be incorporated in the action plan?
Sex	No Impact	All customers treated fairly and consistently to ensure that no one receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of sex.  In the vast majority of cases, domestic abuse is experienced by women and perpetrated by men. At least one woman a week is killed by her male partner or former partner in England and Wales (ONS, 2025a). Data supplied from 32 police forces showed that the victim was female in 72.1% of domestic abuse-related crimes recorded by the police in the year ending March 2025, compared with 27.9% of domestic abuse-related crimes where the victim was male (ONS, 2025a). (Women’sAid) A person who is experiencing domestic abuse, coercive control or any form of domestic violence are specifically covered in the Vulnerability Statement. When a person is recognised to be vulnerable, consideration will be given to additional measures that can be taken to support them and the appropriateness of recovery action.
Sexual Orientation	No Impact	All customers treated fairly and consistently to ensure that no one receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of sexual orientation.
Intersectionality: Could this proposal have an impact on people who have a combination or intersection of two or more characteristics?	Choose an item.	

## 7. Outcome of Assessment

<b>Select one of the following options:</b>	<b>Tick the relevant box</b>
---	------------------------------

No barriers identified, proceed with proposed change.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Adjust the proposal/policy to remove barriers identified by the EqIA.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Continue with the proposal/policy despite potential for adverse impacts.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stop the proposal/policy as there are adverse impacts that cannot be prevented/mitigated or justified.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><b>Please explain why the option has been chosen:</b></p> <p>The policy aims to provide a framework for the management of Council debt that is proportional, consistent and transparent with a primary focus on preventative measures to help customers sustain payments, avoid further debt recovery actions, and protecting and supporting vulnerable customers that are experiencing financial difficulties.</p>	

## 8. Action Plan

Considering the impacts, you have identified above, please detail any actions you will need take to remove barriers, eliminate negative impacts or maximise opportunities. (Add more rows if required). If an action is to meet the needs of a particular protected group please specify this. These actions should be included in your Service Plan.

Action(s) to be taken.	Expected Outcomes	Responsible Person	Timescale	Progress	Complete
Corporate Debt Policy to be communicated to all officers involved with the Debt Recovery Process	Raise awareness of available preventative measures, including signposting to the new Crisis and Resilience Fund services to support				

	customers develop financial resilience for the future				

### 9. Monitoring

**How will you monitor the impact of your proposed change once it has been implemented?** Once the activity has been implemented this equality impact assessment should be periodically reviewed to make sure your changes have been effective and your approach is still appropriate. Include the timescale for review in your action plan above.

Monitoring of collection rates, benefit take-up, number of enforcement notices issued, reasons for write-offs and number of referrals to the Crisis and Resilience Fund services will indicate whether the policy is successful.

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# Exeter City Council Corporate Debt Management Policy



## CORPORATE DEBT MANAGEMENT POLICY

<b>Author</b>	Michelle White
<b>Owner</b>	Head of Service, Finance
<b>Created</b>	21 May 2026
<b>Review Period</b>	1 Year
<b>Approval by:</b>	Council
<b>Approval date:</b>	

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## **1. Introduction**

An effective Debt Management Policy is essential to ensuring the Council manages outstanding debts efficiently while meeting legal and ethical obligations.

Uncollected income reduces resources available to deliver vital public services, so it is crucial that all monies owed are recovered promptly and appropriately.

This policy establishes principles that guide debt management across the Council. It aims to ensure that debt collection is fair, consistent, cost-effective, and aligned across all recovery teams.

The Council has a legal duty and a responsibility to its residents to maximise income collection and minimise outstanding debt.

## **2. Policy Aims**

The aim of this policy are to:

- Maximise income for Exeter City Council and protect its cash-flow
- Ensure that all council tax, rent payer and business rate payers' interests are protected by effective debt collection
- Develop a culture of positive customer payment behaviours
- Be 'preventative' for example offering payment options and to signpost customers with debt issues to services, programmes and activities that support building financial resilience
- Be fair but firm, and ensure consistency in dealing with customers
- Protect and support vulnerable customers and those experiencing financial difficulties

## **3. Scope of the Policy**

This policy applies equally to the collection of income for the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account:

- Council Tax
- Non-Domestic Rates and BID
- Housing Revenue Account rents and service charges
- Temporary accommodation rents
- Overpaid Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support
- Commercial Property rents and service charges
- Sundry Debt

There are specific rules and regulations which govern the recovery and collection of these debts and are set out in the respective appendices.

## 4. Debt Recovery Principles

The Council will apply the following principles:

- **Proportionality** – Recovery action will reflect a balanced approach, considering both the potential loss of income to the Council and the costs of pursuing the debt.
- **Consistency** – The Council will take a consistent approach to:
  - The advice provided
  - The use of its powers
  - The recovery methods applied

Consistency does not mean simple uniformity. Officers will consider factors such as the debtor's circumstances, financial and economic climate we are operating in, payment history and ability to pay.

- **Transparency** – Debtors will be informed of what is expected of them, what they can expect from the Council, and the reasons for any recovery action. All communications will aim to clearly explain the action taken in plain English standards and relevant timescales.

## 5. Roles and Responsibilities

The Council's Financial Regulations set out that Strategic Directors issuing an invoice for monies due to the Council shall be responsible for the collection of the debt. Invoices must be raised promptly after delivery of goods or completion of the service. Where possible, payment should be taken in advance or at the time of providing the goods or service.

All officers involved in activities around the collection and recovery of any income type are responsible for delivering this policy.

## 6. Debt Management Practices

This policy aims to prevent debt by helping people maintain payments and supporting them to manage their finances effectively. The City Council will apply the following principles when managing debt:

- Invoices and reminder notices will be issued promptly to the person or business responsible for payment.
- Demand notices in relation to Council Tax and Business Rates will be issued in accordance with relevant regulations.
- Housing rent charges will be properly notified in accordance with secure and flexible tenancy agreements
- Invoices will be issued for commercial property rents in accordance with lease and licence agreements

- Temporary accommodation rent charges will be properly notified in accordance with the licence agreements
- Invoices will only be raised for amounts over £10, unless there is a valid reason to do otherwise.
- All charges will be clearly explained, including:
  - What the charge or liability is for
  - The amount due
  - How to make payment
  - When payment is due
- Alternative formats for any debt recovery communications, including large print, Braille or translations, will be provided on request.
- The Council is committed to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and will ensure that no one receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of disability, ethnicity, age, gender recognition, sex, sexual orientation, religion and belief, pregnancy and maternity or marriage and civil partnership. The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requires the local authority to have due regard to certain equality considerations when exercising their functions, more details are available at [Equality and Diversity Policy January 2025](#)
- Customers will be encouraged to contact the Council immediately if they anticipate difficulty paying.
- Where appropriate, reminders will include information on potential future actions or costs arising from non-payment.
- The Council will promote the most efficient and cost-effective payment methods.
- All payments must be recorded accurately and in a timely manner, to ensure balances are up to date.
- Resolve queries and disputes promptly to enable income to be received at the earliest opportunity, and pause further recovery action in the meantime, where appropriate.
- Income recovery will be maximised using appropriate and economic recovery methods.
- Where statutory benefits or discounts may apply or discretionary reliefs, the Council will inform and support customers to access them.

- With the debtors' consent, the Council will work with welfare agencies regarding outstanding debts.
- Customers facing financial hardship may be signposted to services, programmes and activities that support building financial resilience through the Crisis and Resilience Fund.
- Under the Debt Respite Scheme (Breathing Space Moratorium and Mental Health Crisis Moratorium) Regulations 2020, the Council will suspend recovery of qualifying debts during the moratorium period and engage with the debtor's advice provider where required.

## **7. Methods of Payment**

The following are payment methods currently accepted by the Council:

- Direct Debit (except for garden waste)
- On-line internet banking (using debit, credit card or PayPal)
- Touch tone telephone payments (using debit or credit card)
- Post Office (for sundry debt, council tax, housing benefit overpayments and rents)
- Paypoint (as above)
- Payzone (as above)
- Bank Transfer (including BACS, CHAPS, faster payments, standing orders etc)
- Secure Call Service telephone card payments

Cheques and cash are still accepted, by exception, but are not a preferred payment method.

## **8. Vulnerability**

The Council recognises that some members of the community may be vulnerable and may require additional support, flexibility and understanding in dealing with their financial affairs. Vulnerability does not mean that a person will not be required to pay amounts they are legally obliged to pay. However, when a person is recognised to be vulnerable, consideration should be given to the additional measures that can be taken to support them and the appropriateness of any recovery action. Please refer to the Vulnerability Statement, Appendix 1.

## **9. Cost Recovery**

If the Council incurs additional costs from taking recovery or enforcement action, e.g. court costs, charging orders or expenses in relation to bankruptcy or winding-up proceedings, we will always seek to recover these from the debtor, where legislation permits.

## **10. Credit Balances**

We will make reasonable efforts to refund balances where there is a credit unless there is another debt within the Council pertaining to the same customer. In these instances, we will transfer the credit to reduce the debt.

Credit balances that cannot be transferred, due to no active account, or are unable to be refunded (e.g. unable to trace) shall be credited to the respective service area.

## 11. VAT

It is important that VAT is correctly applied to invoices and this may vary for different types of service. The incorrect application of VAT may result in financial penalties to the Council from HMRC.

For any queries, please contact the authority's VAT officer at [vat.queries@exeter.gov.uk](mailto:vat.queries@exeter.gov.uk).

## 12. Enforcement Agents

The Council has a statutory duty to collect monies owed to it and effective recovery of unpaid debts helps ensure fairness to the majority of customers who pay on time. The Council will always aspire to avoid actions of last resort, such as the use of enforcement agents. However, where a debt remains unpaid, the Council may refer the matter to enforcement agents where it is legally entitled to do so. This will generally arise either following the obtaining of a court judgment, liability order, warrant or writ permitting enforcement of the debt, or through the use of Commercial Rent Arrears Recovery where applicable.

Any actions of this nature are considered on a case-by-case basis.

## 13. Register as a Creditor

Any service area that is registering as a creditor of a person or company that owes the Council money in a bankruptcy or liquidation case, must be satisfied that they have established the total debt owed to the Council across all service areas when providing details to the official receiver or insolvency practitioner.

## 14. Write-Offs

The Council will seek to minimise the cost of write-offs by taking all necessary action to recover what is due, but recognises where a debt is irrecoverable, prompt and regular write-off of such debts is good practice.

Please refer to Appendix 2 for a list of circumstances that indicate that a debt is uncollectable. In these circumstances, the decision to write-off will be taken in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations, as follows:

Write-off Value	Type	Authorised
Unlimited	Irrecoverable debts due to bankruptcy, liquidation, insolvency, death, no trace, time bar, error	Head of Service, Finance
Up to £10,000	General	Relevant Head of Service & Section 151 Officer *
£10,001 - £50,000	General	Strategic Director & Section 151 Officer

£50,001 - £100,000	General	Section 151 Officer, Strategic Director & Portfolio Holder
Over £100,000	General	Full Council

Write-offs up to a value of £5 shall be treated as cancellations.

## 15. Bad Debt Provision

During the financial year, the ASH debtor system defaults to raising a bad debt provision (loss allowance) for all sundry debtor invoices outstanding over 6 months old.

Budget holders should be aware that their budgets will be adversely affected by this provision and to minimise this, should actively manage and monitor their outstanding debtors.

At financial year-end, a collective assessment is carried out for all types of debtor (council tax, NDR, housing rents, sundry) to determine expected credit losses and prudent bad debt provisions at the reporting date. Provision matrices, based on historical payment experience but updated for future conditions are used.

## 16. Legal Services

Legal Services will be formally instructed to action the recovery of outstanding debts which fall within the scope of this policy, strictly in accordance with the procedures, thresholds and safeguards set out in the relevant appendices of this policy, listed at paragraph 19 below.

The Housing and Litigation Team will be responsible for acting on instructions for debt recovery or enforcement. The Housing and Litigation Team comprises of the Housing and Litigation Team Lead, a Litigation Lawyer, a Legal Officer (Litigation and Debt Recovery), and a Legal Apprentice. The Legal Officer (Litigation and Debt Recovery) will receive the instruction in first instance and will be the primary point of contact for instructing officers, unless otherwise advised.

## 17. Performance Monitoring

Key performance metrics relating to income collection rates, outstanding invoices and arrears are being incorporated into the Council's Corporate Performance Framework. The reporting process is to be determined but will include a periodic performance report presented to the Strategic Management Board and a periodic report to Executive.

The General Fund budget monitoring reports to Council also provide performance data in relation to sundry debtors and income write-offs on a quarterly basis.

For the Housing Revenue Account, a range of key performance indicators (KPIs) are reported to the Council Housing and Development Advisory Board (CHADAB), including rent arrears.

## 18. Specific Policy Area Recovery Procedures

Please refer to the separate appendices for the debt collection procedures for the following areas:

Appendix 3 Council Tax

Appendix 4 Business Rates & BID

Appendix 5 Housing Revenue Account – Rent & Service Charges

Appendix 6 Temporary Accommodation – Rent & Service Charges

Appendix 7 Overpaid Housing Benefits & Council Tax Support

Appendix 8 Commercial Property – Rent & Service Charges

Appendix 9 Sundry Debt

## Key Terms

### “Bad Debt(s)”

A Debt that is likely irrecoverable because the Debtor is unable or unwilling to pay. This could be because of their insolvency, a dispute, or because the Council has insufficient evidence to pursue the Debt. These Debts are typically written off.

### “Breathing Space”

This is the Breathing Space scheme, under the Debt Respite Scheme (Breathing Space Moratorium and Mental Health Crisis Moratorium) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020. It provides individuals in problem debt with temporary legal protections. There are two types:

#### Standard Breathing Space

Gives eligible debtors 60 days of protection from creditor enforcement, interest, and charges.

#### Mental Health Crisis Breathing Space

Lasts for the duration of the debtor’s mental health crisis treatment plus 30 days.

In both instances, Debtors must seek approval from a debt adviser, and certain debts, such as secured debts, still require ongoing payments.

### “Billing Address”

The address where the Debtor receives their invoices, or it is their last known address.

### “Customer”

An individual or entity, such as a company or charity, liable to pay monies to the Council

<b>“Debt(s)”</b>	A legitimate liability owed to the Council. This might be goods or services supplied by the Council, or it might be monies owed by statute (e.g., Council Tax).
<b>“Debtor(s)”</b>	An individual or entity, such as a company or charity, that owes a Debt.
<b>“Demand”</b>	An invoice, bill, or some other written request for payment from a Debtor.
<b>“Final Notice”</b>	If a Reminder is unpaid, this is a final letter warning the Debtor might face Recovery action.
<b>“Recovery”</b>	The use of the words “recover”, “recovering”, “recovery”, and “recovered” refers to when Collection has failed, and the Council takes further action to recover the Debt (e.g., instructing Legal Services or an Enforcement Agent).
<b>“Reminder”</b>	If a Demand is unpaid, this is a letter asking the Debtor to pay the original Demand.

## **Vulnerability Statement**

The Council recognises that some members of the community may be vulnerable and may require additional support, flexibility and understanding in dealing with their financial affairs. Each person will be assisted individually dependent upon their personal circumstances. When dealing with potentially vulnerable people in debt consideration should be given to:

- putting recovery action on hold, to allow longer to pay
- assisting the person to claim benefits, reductions, discounts, or other entitlements
- referring the person to sources of professional debt advice agencies regulated by the FCA
- when appropriate officers will discuss a referral to the Crisis and Resilience Fund
- providing information in an accessible format
- agreeing a temporary payment arrangement with lower repayment than would normally be agreed
- where allowed in law or permission is given by the customer we will share data regarding vulnerable people with relevant agencies
- the council may request a debt that is with an Enforcement Agent be returned to the council for collection. This action will only take place following consultation between the council and the Enforcement Agent where both agree this to be the best course of action, owing to the customer's situation
- consideration may be given to write-off the debts in exceptional circumstances

## **Situations where a resident may be seen as vulnerable**

The cause of vulnerability may be temporary or permanent in nature, and the degree of vulnerability will vary widely. The following list identifies some of the characteristics of people who could be considered vulnerable although each case must be taken on its own merits.

- **A person with disabilities**  
A person may be considered vulnerable where a disability affects their ability to manage their financial affairs
- **A person experiencing serious or life-threatening health conditions**  
A person may be considered vulnerable if they are experiencing a serious or life-threatening condition.

- **A person experiencing severe financial hardship**

A resident may be considered vulnerable if they are in receipt of benefits (or are awaiting the outcome of an application) and experiencing serious financial difficulties, such as following a loss of employment, which suddenly prevents them from meeting their existing financial commitments.

- **A person aged under 18**

It is unlikely that a person aged under 18 will owe money to the Council. However, they contact the Council on behalf of a parent, guardian or other adult they support or care for. Where this occurs, staff must ensure that the matter is progressed with the responsible adult and that appropriate safeguarding considerations are applied.

- **Enforcement visits where a child is present**

If, during an enforcement visit, a person aged under 18 is present at the premises (including where the child is the only person present), the child must be treated as automatically vulnerable.

- **Where the child is the only person present**

No enforcement action must be taken at that visit. The Enforcement Agent must withdraw and make arrangements to re-attend when a responsible adult is present, and/or refer the case back to the Council in accordance with escalation procedures.

- **Safeguarding and conduct requirements**

In all circumstances, the situation must be handled sensitively and in a manner consistent with safeguarding responsibilities.

- **Elderly people**

Elderly people may be regarded as vulnerable where they are frail, confused, or in poor health, especially when they are reliant on fixed or limited incomes.

- **A person recently bereaved**

A person who has recently experienced the bereavement of a close relative may be considered vulnerable.

- **Lone parents**

Lone parents may be regarded as potentially vulnerable, especially when caring for very young children. Their caring responsibilities can limit their ability to undertake employment, often resulting in reliance on welfare benefits and reducing their financial resilience.

- **A person who is pregnant**

A person who is pregnant may be considered vulnerable.

- **A person that has difficulty reading or writing**  
A resident who has difficulty reading, writing and low knowledge of financial matters may be regarded as vulnerable, as they may struggle to understand written notices.
- **Care Leaver**  
A resident who has left local authority care up until their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday
- **A person experiencing domestic violence/abuse or experiencing coercive control**  
A person who is experiencing domestic abuse, coercive control, or any form of domestic violence may be considered vulnerable.
- **A person with a history of alcohol and substance misuse**  
A person who with a history of alcohol or substance misuse may be considered vulnerable.

This list is not intended to be exhaustive and each case must be considered on its own merits, considering all relevant circumstances. Where a resident is known or believed to be vulnerable, particular care must be exercised before any enforcement action is authorised. Decisions should take full account of the individual's circumstances and the potential impact of enforcement on their wellbeing and financial stability.

Reason for write-off	Details
Absconded / No Trace	All reasonable attempts to find the debtor have failed.
Deceased	Insufficient or no funds, in the Deceased's estate.
Time bar	Debts over 6 years where a liability order has not been granted (for council tax and non-domestic rates) or no contact has been made, and no payments have been received in accordance with the Limitation Act 1980 (as amended) for Sundry Debt.
Uneconomical to pursue	When all recovery processes have been tried or considered, or the cost of proceeding would be prohibitive.
Section 13A Hardship – Council Tax (Appendix 1a)	Each case taken on its merits against a range of criteria
Section 49 Hardship – Business Rates (Appendix 1b)	Each case taken on its merits against a range of criteria
Debt remitted by the Court	Magistrate decision to reduce the debt
Bankruptcy	The debtor is declared bankrupt and sums due as at the date of bankruptcy cannot be recovered.
Debt Relief Order (DRO)	The debt is included in a debt relief order and cannot be recovered.
Company in Liquidation / Wound up / Dissolved / Struck off	The debtor is a limited company. The company no longer exists as a legal entity and there is no means of recovering the debt.
Company in Administration	The company is being administered on behalf of its creditors, and the administrators have no legal responsibility for the accrued debts of the company.
Company Voluntary Administration (CVA)	The company has entered an arrangement with its creditors through an insolvency practitioner.
Individual Voluntary Arrangement (IVA)	The debtor has entered an arrangement with its creditors through an insolvency practitioner.
Non-recoverable Housing Benefit	Housing benefit has been overpaid but is not recoverable under the Housing Benefit Regulations 2006, 100(2) or the Housing Benefit (Persons who have reached the qualifying age for state pension credit) Regulations 2006, 81(2).

## **Council Tax Section 13A Policy**

### **Criteria for using powers under Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (LGFA S.13A (1)(c))**

The Council will consider using its powers to reduce Council Tax liability for any Council Tax payer or class of payer and each case will be considered on its merits. The following criteria should be met for each case:

- There must be evidence of extreme hardship or personal circumstance that justifies a reduction in Council Tax liability (the Vulnerability Statement will inform decision making).
- The Council must be satisfied that the customer has taken reasonable steps to resolve their situation prior to application. The customer is expected to take up any offer of money advice and support via the Crisis and Resilience Pathways.
- In the case of an unoccupied property it must not be the sole or main residence of a customer.
- The customer does not have access to other assets that could be realised to pay their Council Tax.
- Eligibility for Council Tax Support has been explored and any entitlement awarded
- All eligible discounts or exemptions have been awarded.
- The customer must not be prohibited from access to public funds
- In the case of an unoccupied property, there must be evidence that every effort is being made to bring the property back into use.

Any reduction made under S.13A (1)(c) will be for the current financial year only. If the situation has not been resolved by the end of the financial year a further application will be required.

## **Business Rate Hardship Relief Policy**

### **Background**

The Council is able to exercise its discretion under Section 49 of the Local Government Finance Act 1998 to provide either partial or full rate relief for non-domestic rate payments in cases of hardship where it would be reasonable to do so having due regard to the interests of council taxpayers in general.

### **Application Criteria**

For the Council to consider granting hardship relief, an application must be submitted, including copies of last 2 financial years audited accounts and evidence of any mitigating actions taken to support financial position. Prior to applying, the Council will seek to confirm that the following criteria are met:

- Where there has been a material change to the property or there is concern that the rateable value is too high, that businesses have first applied to the Valuation Office
- All other statutory rate reliefs have been awarded first including any government funded schemes
- Consideration has first been given to rate deferral, re-profiling of instalments and payment arrangements as an alternative method of support
- That the proposed relief is for a temporary period
- Applications will only be considered where signed by the ratepayer, or, where an organisation is the ratepayer, an appropriately authorised representative of the organisation
- The applicant will be required to submit an application form that sets out their reasoning as to why they should be considered for Hardship Relief

### **How the Council will assess your application**

The council will consider applications for hardship relief from individuals and organisations based on their own merits, on a case-by-case basis.

In making decisions on whether to award the relief the Council takes into account the following criteria:

- Any reduction or remission of rates on the grounds of hardship should be the exception rather than the rule
- That it is in the interests of council taxpayers as a whole to grant rate relief. The 'interests' of the council taxpayers in the area may go wider than direct financial interests:

### **Economic & Employment Impact**

- The loss of the business would worsen the employment prospects in the area
- The business provides employment to local residents in an area where employment opportunities are limited
- The loss of the business would impact on other businesses (including local supply chain) and the local community
- The loss of the business would reduce amenities of an area if it is the sole provider of the service in the area

### **Financial Sustainability**

- The business must continue to trade
  - Any reduction of the rates must be shown to be significant to the future viability of the business
  - Sufficient evidence of likelihood of recovery of the applicant's business
  - What proactive measures the business/trader is taking to reduce other significant overheads
  - Measures being taken to reduce their rate liability, for example occupying smaller premises, letting out parts of the building, where reasonable to do so
- The proposed cost of funding relief is affordable for the Council given the constraints on Council finances
  - That the granting of relief to a business/organisation must be balanced against whether this creates unfair market conditions to the detriment of others

The Council will reserve the right to request any other information it feels appropriate in order to consider an application.

There is no provision within the rating regulations to withhold payment whilst an application for relief is pending, therefore recovery action may continue if due instalments are not paid.

### **Decisions**

In accordance with the Council's Constitution, delegated authority is given to the Head of Service, Finance in consultation with the Executive Member with relevant portfolio, for determining applications for Section 49 hardship rates relief.

An award will be granted only for the period for which there is clear evidence of hardship for the ratepayer concerned.

## **Council Tax Recovery Procedures**

### **Introduction**

1. Council tax is a tax levied on all eligible domestic dwellings. The amount of council tax levied is dependent on the council tax band that the property falls into and the amount of tax to be raised.
2. Council tax is payable in full unless a reduction or exemption applies, such as discounts for empty properties, single occupants, low-income residents.
3. Council tax is payable in line with a statutory instalment scheme or by agreement. There is a legal duty placed on the Council to collect outstanding debts in accordance with the Council Tax (Administration and Enforcement) Regulations 1992.
4. This appendix must be read in conjunction with the Corporate Debt Management Policy. The Service Specific procedures prevail, where a conflict arises.

### **Administration**

5. The Council Tax Team deal with all aspects of the administration, collection and recovery of Council Tax, seeking advice from Legal Services in relation to recovery, as required.
6. Records are held and managed in the MRI system, the Council's Revenues and Benefits System.

### **Protocols**

7. The Council believes that preventing arrears from building up is essential and the additional measures taken are as follows:
  - Offer four dates for Direct Debit as it is recognised that this is a proven method for ensuring payments are made on time; 1st, 8th, 15th and 25th of each month.
  - Council Tax may be paid by instalments, which by default are spread over 10 months. However, households retain the right to request billing over 12 months
  - The Council will enter into payment arrangements to encourage and support residents in getting back on track with their payments, based on an assessment of affordability.
  - The Council will support the customer in applying for available discounts and exemptions.

- Customers facing financial hardship may be signposted to services, programmes and activities that support building financial resilience through the Crisis and Resilience Fund.
  - The Council will not refuse any payment which reduces the debt. However, if it is less than the requested amount recovery action may continue.
8. The Council will apply to the Magistrates' Court for Liability Orders, when necessary, to recover council tax debt.

Following the granting of a Liability Order the debtor will be given an opportunity to make a suitable payment arrangement. Should the debtor not make or keep to a payment arrangement the following recovery action(s) can be taken.

The Liability Order gives additional recovery powers, including:

- **Attachment of Earnings**

This action permits deductions to be taken directly from the debtor's earnings to recover council tax arrears. The action would require the debtor's employers to deduct the amount specified by the Court and remit it to the Council. This action will remain in force until the debt has been satisfied.

- **Attachment of Benefits**

This action permits deductions to be made directly from certain prescribed benefits of the debtor to recover council tax arrears. This may include Income Support, Job Seeker's Allowance, Employment Support Allowance, Pension Credit or Universal Credit. The Department for Work and Pensions facilitate these deductions, which are then paid to the local authority. This action will remain in force until the debt has been satisfied.

- **Taking Control of Goods – use of Enforcement Agents**

A Warrant of Control authorises Enforcement Agents to attend at the judgment debtor's home or business address. They will collect money (or monies) owed under the judgment debt or remove goods from the home or business to sell at auction.

There are limits to the types of goods that court Enforcement Agents may remove. They cannot remove goods that are necessary to allow a judgment debtor a basic standard of living or the tools of his trade.

A Warrant of Control cannot be issued for more than £5,000, except to enforce an agreement made under the Consumer Credit Act 1974.

Where a debt is in excess of £5,000 the judgment creditor cannot apply to the County Court for the execution, instead they must apply to the High Court for

execution, where the terminology changes slightly and it becomes a "Writ" of Execution or a Writ of Control to be executed by a High Court Enforcement Officer (HCEO) .

- **Charging Orders**

A Charging Order may be granted following obtaining a money judgment. The Charging Order secures a judgment debt against the property of a debtor, such as a house or land, or other qualifying asset such as shares. The effect of the Charging Order is that the debt may be repaid from the sale proceeds, should the property to which it has been secured, be sold.

A Charging Order alone does not compel the judgment debtor to sell their property. However, once the Charging Order is in place, the creditor may apply to the Court for an Order for Sale, requiring the property to be sold, so that the creditor may then recover the debt from the sale proceeds.

- **Bankruptcy**

Should the Council obtain a liability order, or judgment, against an individual for more than £5000 of unpaid council tax, bankruptcy proceedings may be considered. The Council must undertake an assessment of the debtor's circumstances, to ensure there are none which prevent bankruptcy. This may include disability, in accordance with the Council's Equalities Duty. Following the consideration of the assessment findings, the Council may commence proceedings by serving the statutory demand and subsequently presenting a bankruptcy petition. There is a strict procedural timeline to be followed.

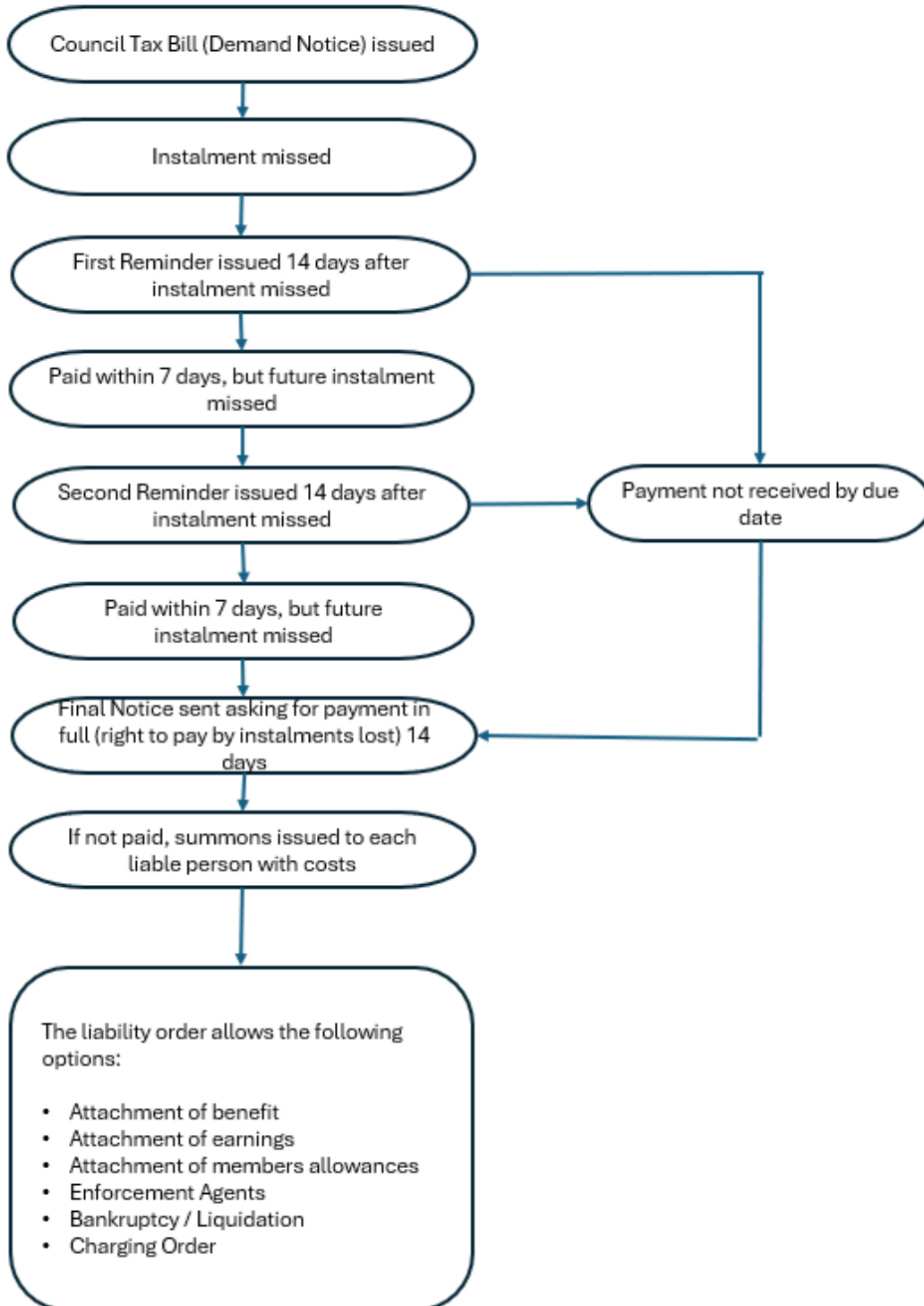
- **Committal**

The Council may make an application for committal to the Magistrates' Court. Should this application be successful, it will have the effect of a debtor being subject to imprisonment for non-payment, with a maximum sentence of three months. As creditor, the Council would need to establish that the debtor has had the means to pay the debt since the date of the relevant order or judgment and has wilfully refused or neglected to do so. This is a critical requirement, as the court must be satisfied that the debtor's non-payment is due to "wilful refusal" or "culpable neglect" rather than an inability to pay. Proof of the debtor's means can be presented in a manner deemed just by the court, and the standard of proof required is the criminal standard, beyond reasonable doubt. The Magistrates also have the power to remit all, or part, of the debt.

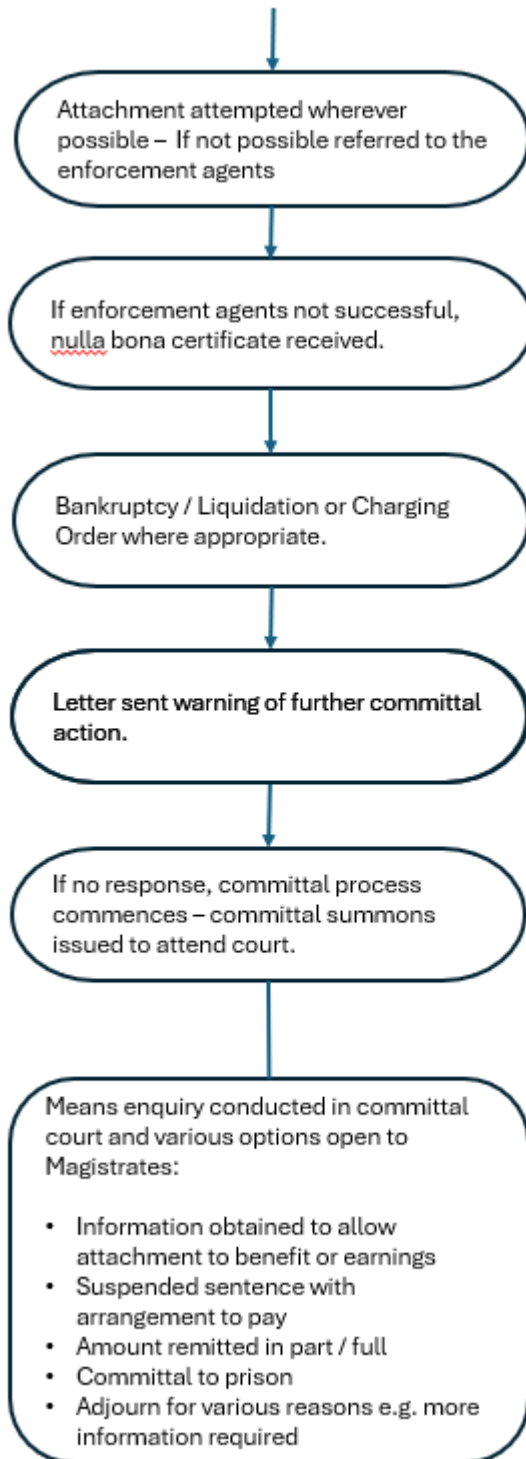
In accordance with the Council's Constitution, we will only proceed with seeking a charging order, bankruptcy or committal to prison, after seeking approval with the Chief Executive and Relevant Portfolio Holder and after prior advice from Legal Services.

The Council reserves the right to pursue the most appropriate recovery methods depending on the specific personal and financial circumstances of the debtor.

Collection and Recovery Flowchart Council Tax



Cont.



## **Business Rates & BID Levy Recovery Procedures**

### **Introduction**

1. Non-domestic rates are a tax levied on eligible business properties. The amount of non-domestic rates is dependent on the rateable value of the property and the nationally set rating multiplier(s).
2. The full rate of tax is liable to be paid unless the property, owner or occupier is eligible for a relief or exemption.
3. Non-domestic rates are payable in line with a statutory instalment scheme or by agreement. There is a legal duty placed on the Council to collect outstanding debts in accordance with the Non-Domestic Rating (Collection and Enforcement) (Local Lists) Regulations 1989 (as amended).
4. A Business Improvement District (BID) scheme applies for Exeter city centre. The Council acts on behalf of the BID Company to bill and collect the BID levy. The Council shall use all reasonable endeavours to take all reasonable steps for collecting the BID levy which are consistent with its usual procedures for the collection of non-domestic rates.
5. This appendix must be read in conjunction with the Corporate Debt Management Policy. The Service Specific procedures prevail, where a conflict arises.

### **Administration**

6. The Business Rates Team deal with all aspects of the administration, collection and recovery of Business Rates and BID levies, seeking advice from Legal Services in relation to recovery and the BID Chief Executive (for BID levies), as required.
7. Records are held and managed in the MRI system, the Council's Revenues and Benefits System. A BID module specifically holds records relating to the billing and recovery of BID levies.

### **Protocols**

8. The Council believes that preventing arrears from building up is essential and the additional measures taken are as follows:
  - Offer two dates for Direct Debit as it is recognised that this is a proven method for ensuring payments are made on time; 1st and 25th of each month.
  - Business Rates may be paid by instalments, which by default are spread over 10 months. However, businesses retain the right to request billing over 12 months

- The Council will enter into payment arrangements to encourage and support businesses in getting back on track with their payments, taking into consideration the fluctuations in income, common to seasonal businesses, and place the emphasis for repayment on times of likely maximum business activity.
  - The Council will support businesses in applying for available discounts, reliefs and exemptions
  - The Council will provide advice in relation to appealing rateable values with the Valuation Office
  - The Council will not refuse any payment which reduces debt. However, if it is less than the requested amount recovery action may continue.
9. The Council will apply to the Magistrates Court for Liability Orders, when necessary, to recover business rate debt

The Council will use all appropriate methods of enforcement available through Liability Orders including:

- **Taking Control of Goods – use of Enforcement Agents**

A Warrant of Control authorises Enforcement Agents to attend at the judgment debtor's home or business address. They will collect money (or monies) owed under the judgment debt or remove goods from the home or business to sell at auction.

There are limits to the types of goods that court Enforcement Agents may remove. They cannot remove goods that are necessary to allow a judgment debtor a basic standard of living or the tools of his trade.

A Warrant of Control cannot be issued for more than £5,000, except to enforce an agreement made under the Consumer Credit Act 1974.

Where a debt is in excess of £5,000 the judgment creditor cannot apply to the County Court for the execution, instead they must apply to the High Court for execution, where the terminology changes slightly and it becomes a "Writ" of Execution or a Writ of Control to be executed by a High Court Enforcement Officer (HCEO) .

- **Bankruptcy**

If the business is in the name of individuals rather than a limited/incorporated company, the Council can start bankruptcy proceedings under the Insolvency Act, where the individual's debt is in excess of £5,000 and a liability order has been obtained.

If bankruptcy has already been declared, the Council will require evidence to confirm the date of the bankruptcy order. The Official Receiver will appoint a trustee who will send a proof of debt form for the Council to submit a claim for the amount owed.

- **Liquidation**

If the debtor business is a company, the Council can start liquidation proceedings against the company under the Insolvency Act, whereby the company's assets are collected and realised to discharge its debts. Debts incurred before the company was liquidated will be included in the Council's claim to the insolvency practitioner.

If the company has already gone into liquidation, the Council will require evidence of when it happened. The Council will make a claim as an unsecured creditor to the insolvency practitioner appointed to deal with the company.

- **Administration**

If the debtor business is a company, the Council can apply to the court with other creditors for the company to be placed in administration. The administrator may decide to allow the company to continue to trade or it may decide to sell the business as a going concern.

If your business has gone into administration already, the Council will require evidence of when it happened. The Council will make a claim to the administrator.

- **Charging Orders**

A Charging Order may be granted following obtaining a money judgment. The Charging Order secures a judgment debt against the property of a debtor, such as a house or land, or other qualifying asset such as shares. The effect of the Charging Order is that the debt may be repaid from the sale proceeds, should the property to which it has been secured, be sold.

A Charging Order alone does not compel the judgment debtor to sell their property. However, once the Charging Order is in place, the creditor may apply to the Court for an Order for Sale, requiring the property to be sold, so that the creditor may then recover the debt from the sale proceeds.

In accordance with the Council's Constitution, the Council will only proceed with seeking a charging order or bankruptcy, after seeking approval with the Chief Executive and Relevant Portfolio Holder.

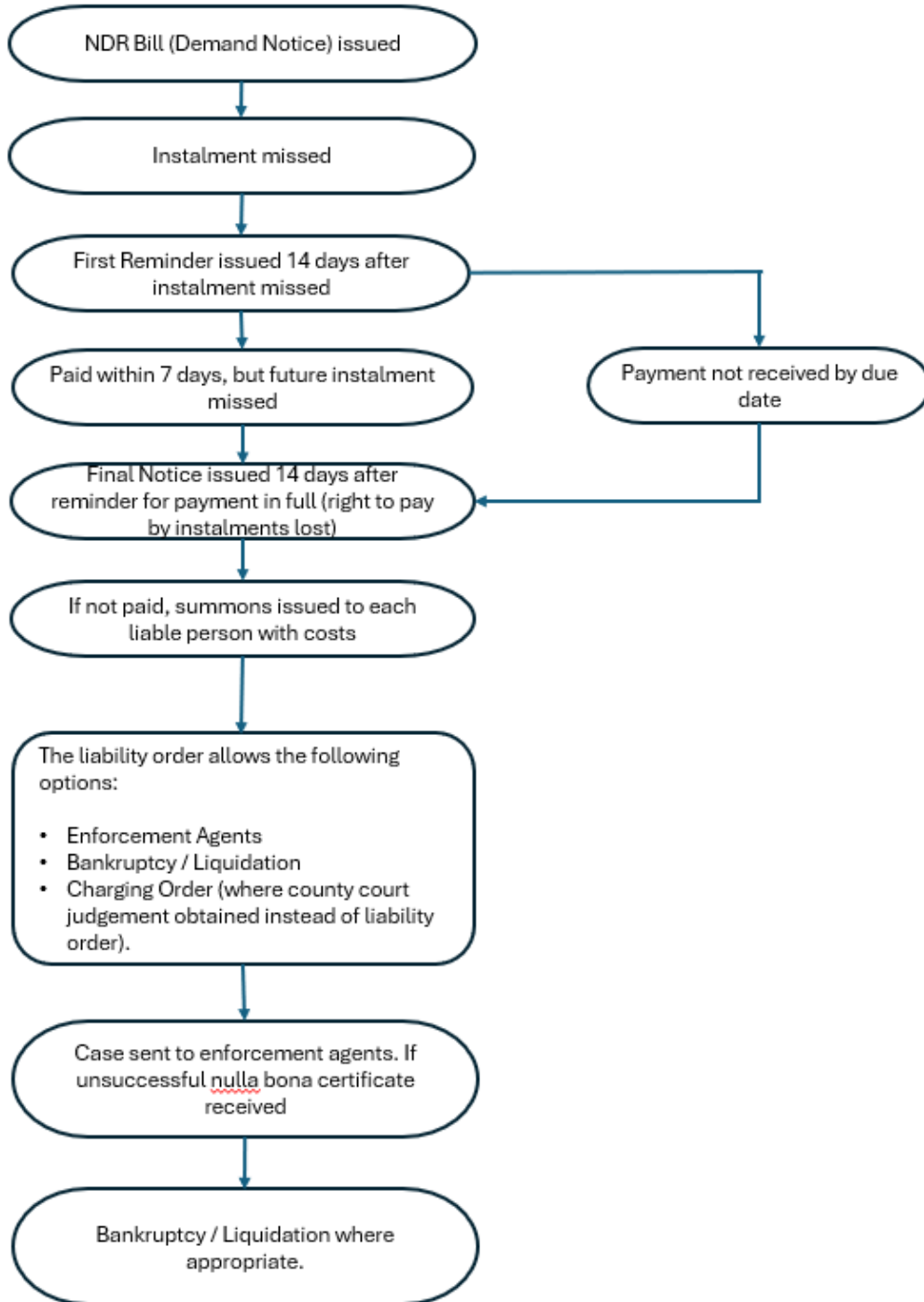
## **10. Write-offs**

Decisions to write-off business rate debt are made in line with the Council's Financial Regulations, as set out in the overarching Corporate Debt Policy.

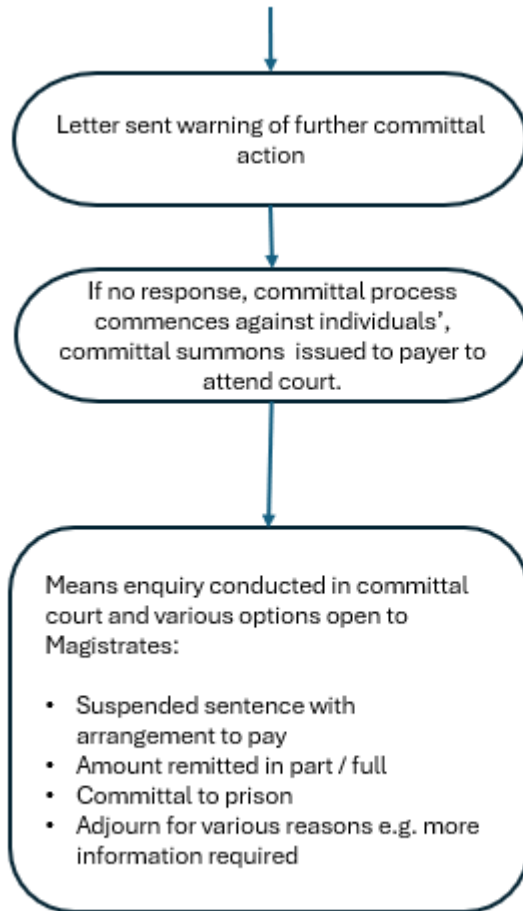
However, the BID Company (InExeter Ltd) Board of Directors are responsible for approving any BID levy write-offs.

The Council reserves the right to pursue the most appropriate recovery methods depending on the specific personal and financial circumstances of the debtor.

Collection and Recovery Flowchart NDR



Cont.



## **HRA Rents and Service Charge Recovery Procedures**

### **Introduction**

1. Local authorities collect rents into the Housing Revenue Account where the housing is provided under Part II of the Housing Act 1985 and is required to be accounted for in the HRA under section 74 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.
2. Tenant rents and service charges are the primary sources of HRA income. Rentals of non-dwellings are also chargeable, for example garages.
3. Authorities must set reasonable rents, having regard to:
  - Government rent policy
  - The Rent Standard issued by the Regulator of Social Housing
  - The national rent formula (condition, location, earnings, size)
4. Rent and service charges are payable in accordance with secure and flexible tenancy agreements. Council expects its tenants or former tenants who owe money to the Council to comply with legal obligations in respect of that liability.
5. This appendix must be read in conjunction with the Corporate Debt Management Policy. The Service Specific procedures prevail, where a conflict arises.

### **Administration**

6. The Housing Lettings Team are responsible for charging rents and service charges to housing tenants with the Housing Income Collection Team responsible for collection and recovery. Advice is sought from Legal Services in relation to recovery, as required.
7. Records are held and managed in Open Housing, the Council's Housing Management System.

### **Protocols**

8. The Council believes that preventing arrears from building up is essential and the additional measures taken are as follows:
  - Offer four dates for Direct Debit as it is recognised that this is a proven method for ensuring payments are made on time; 1st, 8th, 15th and 25th of each month.
  - Tenants are charged rent on a fortnightly basis – with two rent free fortnights
  - Making sure that tenants know who their Housing Officer is so that they can discuss tenancy issues at an early stage.

- The Council will enter into payment arrangements to encourage and support residents in getting back on track with their payments, based on an assessment of affordability.
- The Council will signpost customers to available benefits, discounts, reliefs and exemptions.
- If the tenant is a Council employee, a voluntary deduction may be made directly from their salary
- Customers facing financial hardship may be signposted to services, programmes and activities that support building financial resilience through the Crisis and Resilience Fund.
- The Council will consider a tenant's vulnerability to ensure our recovery actions are reasonable and proportionate.
- The Council will not refuse any payment which reduces the debt. However, if it is less than the requested amount recovery action may continue.

## 9. Recovery Action

In the event of an account falling into arrears, the Council will commence recovery actions, including:

- **DWP**

Where the tenant is in receipt of Universal Credit, the Council will apply to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) for an 'Alternative Payment Arrangement', whereby a tenants Housing element of Universal Credit will be sent directly to the Council to recover arrears arising under their tenancy agreement.

The Council will apply to the DWP to collect rent arrears direct from the living costs element of Universal Credit, with deductions collected at a rate determined by statute.

- **Garage arrears**

The Council will terminate the tenancy in respect of a garage after six weeks rent arrears. Associated costs will be recharged to the tenant, e.g. changing the lock and securing the garage

- **Notice of Seeking Possession**

A notice will be served on a tenant who falls six weeks into arrears, the notice remains in place for fifty-two weeks. Failure to pay the account in full or enter into a payment agreement within 28 days of the issue of the notice, the Council will

commence steps to recover possession of the property by making an application to the County Court.

- **Possession Claims**

The Council will apply to the County Court for a possession claim, when necessary, to seek possession of the property.

In accordance with the Council's Constitution, the Council will only proceed with seeking a possession order, after seeking approval with the Head of Service Legal and Democratic Services and/or the Housing and Litigation Team Lead.

The outcomes of an application for possession could be:

- **Adjourned on Terms**

The Court agrees an acceptable payment plan to clear the rent arrears; the Order is made up of current rent plus agreed arrears with costs awarded. A tenant who breaches the terms of the Order will be restored to court where the Council will make an application for an Outright or Suspended Possession Order.

- **Suspended Possession Order (SPO)**

The Court awards the Council possession of the property, alongside an award of costs but the possession order is suspended. This means that, although the Court has granted possession, enforcement of the Order is suspended under repayment terms set by the Court and shall not be enforced, providing the tenant adheres to the terms of the Order. Should a tenant breach the terms of the SPO, through failure to comply with repayment, the Council will apply for a warrant of possession with the County Court Bailiff. A tenant can apply for a warrant suspension hearing to be held in the County Court.

- **Outright Possession Order (OPO)**

The Court awards the Council outright possession of the property with costs awarded. The Council will set a date for the tenants to vacate the property. The Council must then apply to the County court bailiff for a warrant of possession. The County Court bailiff and the Council notify the tenant of the eviction date and time. Once the warrant has been executed, the tenancy comes to an end. A tenant can apply for a warrant suspension hearing to be held in the County Court.

- **Eviction**

The Council's primary concern is to recover the rent debt rather than to regain possession. The Council will consider possession only as a last resort, if all other actions have failed.

A safety risk assessment is carried out prior to the eviction; systems are checked for any concerns relating to the property, tenant and any associated persons that may pose a risk at the eviction, this includes animals that are kept at the property. The Court Bailiff and Housing Officer who attend the eviction are sent a copy of the risk assessment. Gas capping and lock change are booked and a Rent Collection Officer will attend the eviction.

**10. Former Tenant Arrears**

All efforts are made to keep arrears low before a tenancy is ended, however there are occasions when a tenancy ends with a debt outstanding.

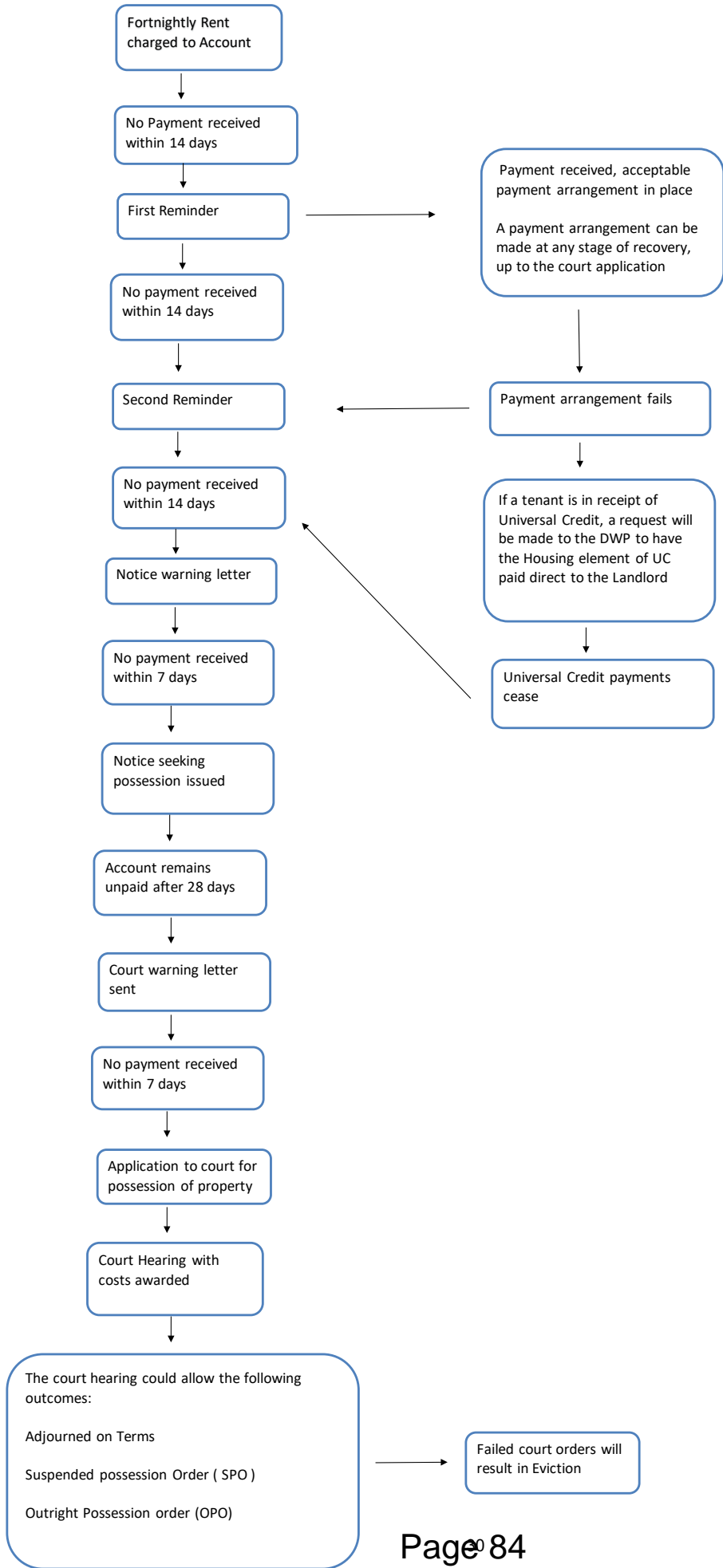
The former tenant's financial circumstances and ability to repay will be assessed to agree manageable repayment arrangements. Where the individual remains a current tenant with former tenancy arrears, priority will be given to rent payments under the current tenancy.

If former tenants fail to engage or make payments to settle their former arrears including former garage rent arrears, the Council will:

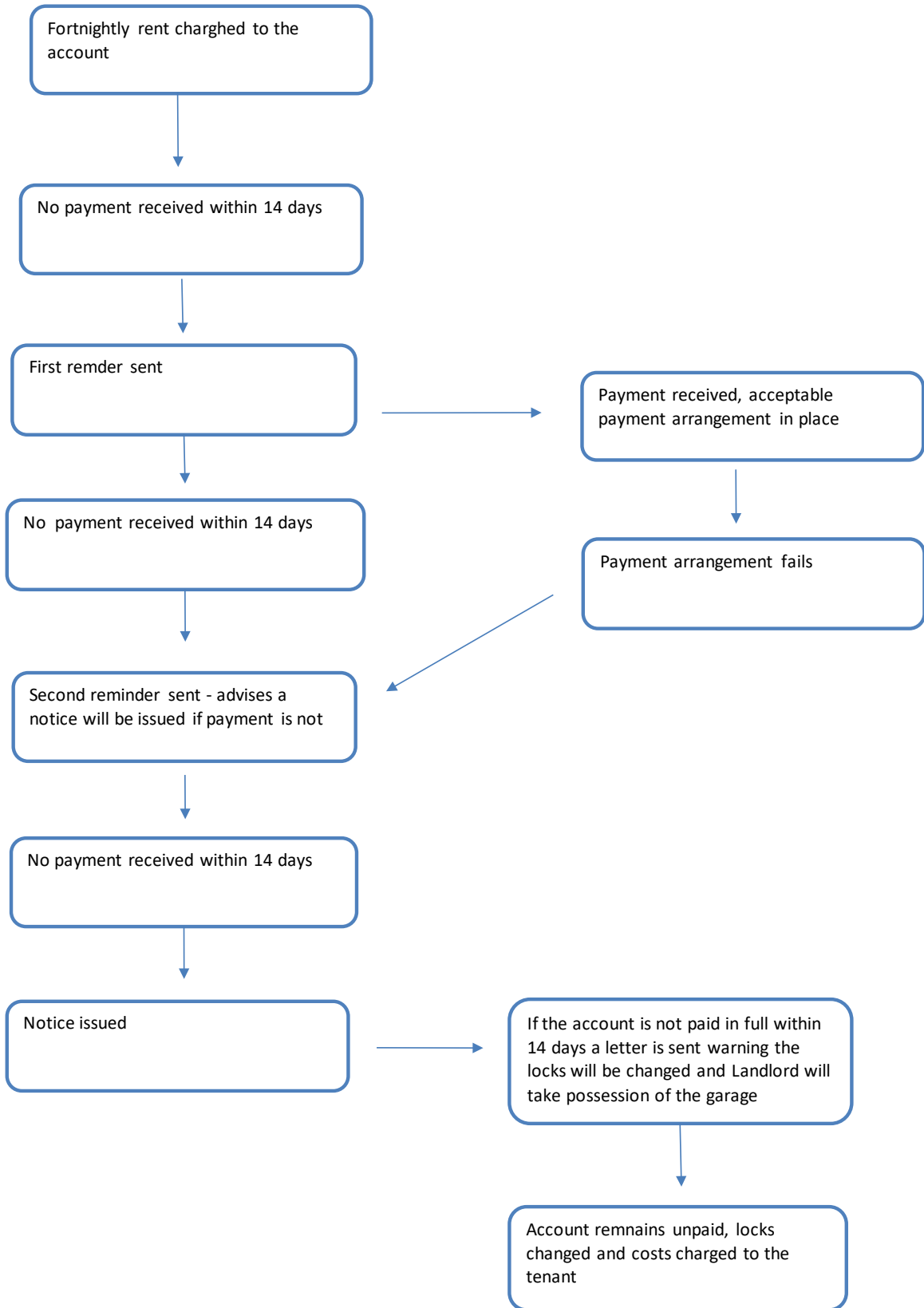
- Apply to the Court for a County Court Judgement (CCJ)
- Apply for an attachment of earnings through the County Court
- Refer the debt to an enforcement agent to collect
- Use a third-party reporting agency to trace and verify a current address (e.g. Experian)

The Council reserves the right to pursue the most appropriate recovery methods depending on the specific personal and financial circumstances of the debtor.

**HRA Collection Flow Chart**



**Garage Collection Flow Chart**



## **Temporary Accommodation Rents and Service Charge Recovery Procedures**

### **Introduction**

1. The homelessness duties of local housing authorities are set out in Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended). Local authorities are legally obliged to provide temporary accommodation in some situations.
2. Applicants in temporary accommodation are expected to contribute towards the costs of their accommodation, typically through rent or a licence fee, and in some cases through a service charge. Some applicants may be entitled to support with these costs through the benefit system.
3. Case law provides for a local authority to provide or secure accommodation at a nil or peppercorn rent for a person who is assessed to have no income or savings.
4. Temporary accommodation includes local authority owned accommodation, private registered provider owned accommodation, bed and breakfast and accommodation provided by a private landlord.
5. Rent and service charges are payable in accordance with a 7-day licence agreement and charges are made on a weekly basis.
6. This appendix must be read in conjunction with the Corporate Debt Management Policy. The Service Specific procedures prevail, where a conflict arises.

### **Administration**

7. The Housing Lettings Team are responsible for charging rents and service charges in relation to temporary accommodation with the Housing Income Collection Team responsible for collection and recovery. Advice is sought from Legal Services and the Housing case worker in relation to recovery, as required.
8. Records are held and managed in Open Housing, the Council's Housing Management System.

### **Protocols**

9. The Council believes that preventing arrears from building up is essential and the additional measures taken are as follows:
  - Offer four dates for Direct Debit as it is recognised that this is a proven method for ensuring payments are made on time; 1st, 8th, 15th and 25th of each month.

- The Council will enter into payment arrangements to encourage and support residents in getting back on track with their payments, based on an assessment of affordability.
- The Council will signpost customers to available benefits, discounts, reliefs and exemptions.
- Housing Services will actively engage with the Benefits & Welfare Team to ensure that a claim has been submitted and progressing.
- Customers facing financial hardship may be signposted to services, programmes and activities that support building financial resilience, including through the Crisis and Resilience Fund.
- The Council will consider a tenant's vulnerability to ensure our recovery actions are reasonable and proportionate.
- The Council will not refuse any payment which reduces the debt. However, if it is less than the requested amount recovery action may continue.

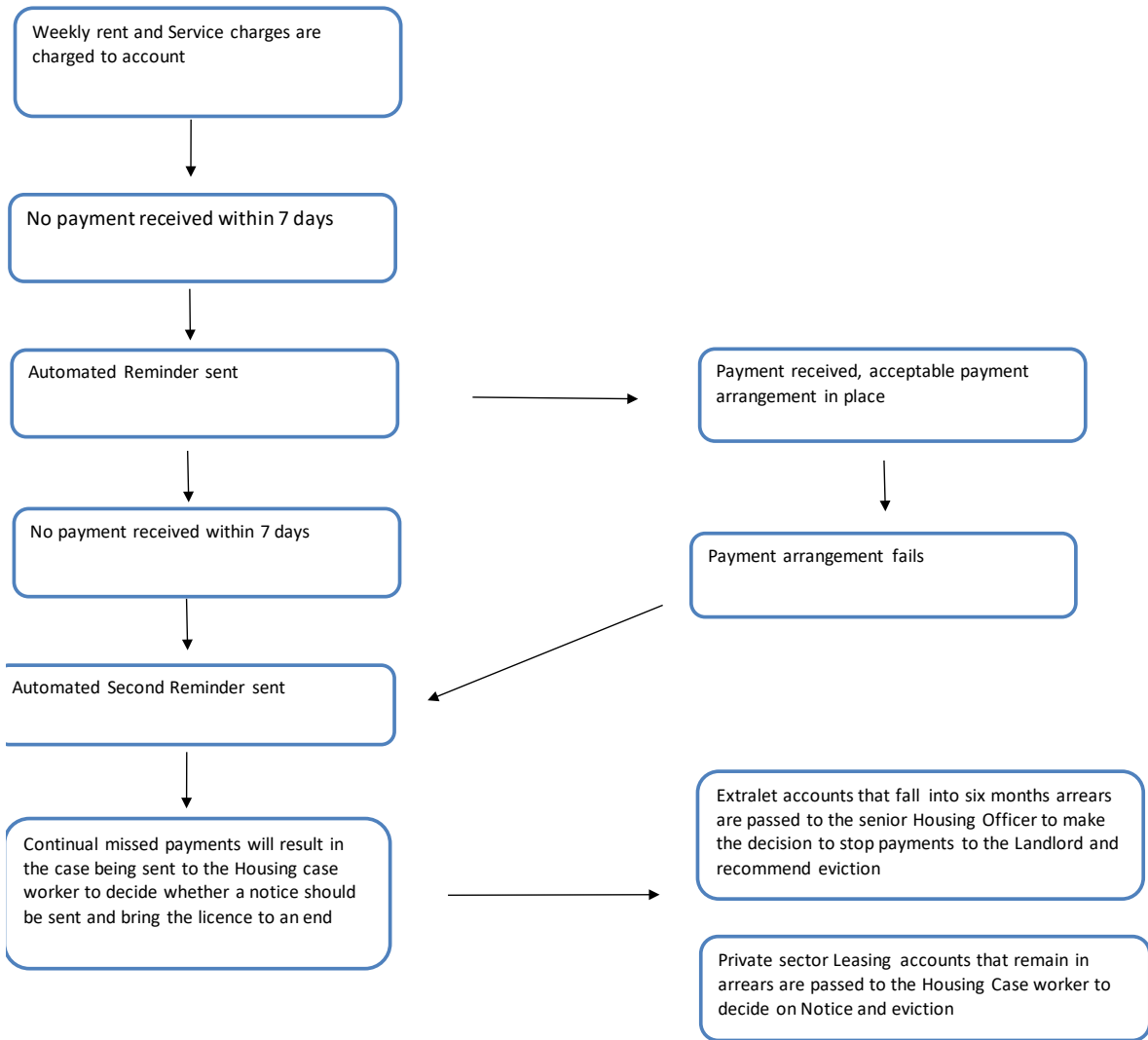
#### 10. **Recovery Action**

In the event of an account falling into arrears, we will commence recovery actions:

- Automated reminder letters will be issued as soon as the account falls into arrears (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> reminders) and Housing Caseworker notified of this.
- Senior Rent Collection Officer will endeavour to make contact to agree a suitable repayment plan.
- Debt escalated to Housing Caseworker to determine whether to end accommodation provided to a household pursuant to Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) is fair and proportionate.
- Where the Housing Caseworker is ending accommodation provided pursuant to Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) they will be responsible for bringing the licence to an end and pursuing any court action, as necessary, to evict.

The Council reserves the right to pursue the most appropriate recovery methods depending on the specific personal and financial circumstances of the debtor.

Temporary Accommodation collection Flow Chart BB PSL Extralet



## **Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support Overpayment Recovery Procedures**

### **Introduction**

1. Overpayments of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support occur due to a change in benefit entitlement. They are described as an amount of benefit that has been awarded but to which there is no entitlement to under the regulations.
2. Accurate and prompt identification of overpayments ensure that the incorrect payment of benefit no longer continues and maximises the chance of recovery.
3. Recovered in accordance with Housing Benefit Regulations 2006, The Housing Benefit (State Pension Credit) Regulations 2006, Council Tax Benefit Regulations 2006 and the Council Tax (Administration and Enforcement) Regulations 1992.
4. The recovery of overpaid Housing Benefits is managed in the Council's IMAN system.
5. This appendix must be read in conjunction with the Corporate Debt Management Policy. The Service Specific procedures prevail, where a conflict arises.

### **Administration**

6. The Benefits and Welfare Team are responsible for identifying, calculating, classifying and notifying overpayments of Housing Benefits and Council Tax Support. The team deal with any disputes and appeals and deal with recovery when possible through the deduction of ongoing benefits.
7. The Income Collection Team are responsible for recovery where there is no ongoing entitlement or the customer wishes to make an alternative arrangement. Advice is sought from Legal Services in relation to recovery, as required.
8. Records are held and managed in the MRI system, the Council's Revenues and Benefits System. The IMAN module specifically holds records relating to the recovery of overpaid Housing Benefits.

### **Protocols**

9. To reduce the likelihood of overpayments occurring, and the size of overpayments, the Council will:
  - Support residents through the application process with clear instructions and accurate advice, checking relevant information provided in support of the claim
  - Customers can use our Contact Us form on the website and select the Benefits and Welfare option to let the Council know about a change in income

- Provide advice and information to customers through the website and letters as well as the Customer Services Team by telephone
- Encourage claimants to promptly report changes to their circumstances through a range of contact routes
- Use DWP/HMRC data to ensure that benefit entitlement is based on up-to-date information
- Proactively review awards for known future changes and at regular intervals to verify household circumstances
- Act on any information received in relation to a claimant's change in circumstances as soon as reasonably practical after receiving sufficient information to identify an overpayment
- Promptly suspend further payments if it appears likely that an overpayment may be occurring and there is not enough information to calculate the new entitlement. Suspension is used proportionately and decided on an individual basis, to avoid causing financial hardship. It is generally used for cases where there is likely to be no ongoing entitlement or where a customer fails to respond to requests for information.

## **Overpayment Notification Letters**

10. All notification letters will:

- Be dated and issued to all affected persons as soon as is reasonably practicable after the decision is made
- Include the reasons for the decision and a calculation showing how the overpayment amount was determined
- Explain the right to request a further statement and the time limit for doing so
- Give the claimants appeal rights and time limit for doing so
- Be accompanied by an invoice with amount due and payments terms

## **Decisions on Recoverability**

11. Where the Council has identified an overpayment was caused by an official error, it should decide whether recovery of the overpayment is legally allowed. Regulation 100 of the Housing Benefit Regulations 2006 and relevant caselaw will be applied to the facts of the case.

12. If it is determined the claimant or the person receiving the payment has not contributed to the error and could not reasonably have been aware of the overpayment, the overpaid sums cannot be recovered. The same considerations will apply to Council Tax Support overpaid as a result of official error.

## **Methods of Recovery**

### **13. Council Tax Support**

Overpayments of Council Tax Support deemed recoverable will result in an adjustment being made to the claimant's council tax account for the appropriate year. An amended bill will be issued and will be subject to recovery action under the council tax recovery procedures.

### **14. Overpaid Housing Benefits – ongoing benefits**

Where an invoice for overpaid Housing Benefits has been issued the Council will normally collect from ongoing housing benefits, with maximum recovery rates set by the Department for Work and Pensions. Officers have discretion to reduce the recovery rate or suspend deductions, e.g. to avoid causing unreasonable financial hardship or if debts are owed to another council department such as housing rents.

15. In all cases a minimum amount of fifty pence per week Housing Benefit must remain in payment.

### **16. Overpaid Housing Benefits – no ongoing benefits**

To support claimants repay their overpayments, the Council promotes repaying by direct debit and offer two dates; 1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>

17. The Council will enter into affordable payment arrangements

18. Claimants facing financial hardship may be signposted to services, programmes and activities that support building financial resilience, including through the Crisis and Resilience Fund.

19. Officers will signpost customers to available benefits, discounts, reliefs and exemptions, if applicable

20. The Council will consider a claimant's vulnerability to ensure our recovery actions are reasonable and proportionate

21. The Council will not refuse any payment which reduces the debt. However, if it is less than the requested amount recovery action may continue.

## Recovery Options

22. Two reminders will be sent and if still no contact has been made then the most appropriate recovery action will be considered by the Income Collection Team, which may include:

- Apply to DWP (Debt Management) to recover Housing Benefit overpayments by deduction from certain DWP benefits, as prescribed by HB Reg 105/(SPC) 86 or CTB Reg 90/(SPC) 75. This may include possible deductions from Income Support, Job Seeker's Allowance, Employment Support Allowance, Pension Credit or Universal Credit. The Department for Work and Pensions facilitate these deductions, which are then paid to the local authority.

This action will remain in force until the debt has been satisfied.

- Apply to another local authority for them to deduct from the resident's ongoing Housing Benefits.
- Where a debtor has failed to make an arrangement to pay and is in PAYE employment, the Council can seek a Direct Earnings Attachments, using the DWP's Matching Service with HMRC to establish earnings and pension information in addition to last known address. The employers then make deductions from the debtors' earnings and pay to the Council.
- Where overpayment is recoverable from a landlord deduction from current benefit payments will be made. If a landlord fails to repay a HB overpayment, the Council can decide to recover the debt from the HB paid to the landlord for other tenants. Landlords cannot attribute the amount deducted to the tenant that the HB is being paid for – these are known as 'blameless tenants'.

If the above routes have been exhausted, the Income Collection Team will seek advice from Legal Services to determine the remaining recovery options.

- These debts may be pursued via an application for a Money Judgement using Money Claims online or the County Court. Prior to a claim to Court being issued a 'letter before action' must be sent, in accordance with the Pre-Action Protocol for Debt Claims. This will give the individual debtor 28 days to pay, respond with an instalment offer or complete a Standard Financial Statement form, before the Court application is made.

Once the Council obtains a Money Judgment, enforcement action may be considered, should the debt remain outstanding. The enforcement action available generally may include:

- A Warrant of Control authorises Enforcement Agents to attend at the judgment debtor's home or business address. They will collect money (or monies) owed under the judgment debt or remove goods from the home or business to sell at auction.

There are limits to the types of goods that Court Enforcement Agents may remove. They cannot remove goods that are necessary to allow a judgment debtor a basic standard of living or the tools of his trade.

- A Charging Order may be granted following obtaining a money judgment. The Charging Order secures a judgment debt against the property of a debtor, such as a house or land, or other qualifying asset such as shares. The effect of the Charging Order is that the debt may be repaid from the sale proceeds, should the property to which it has been secured, be sold.

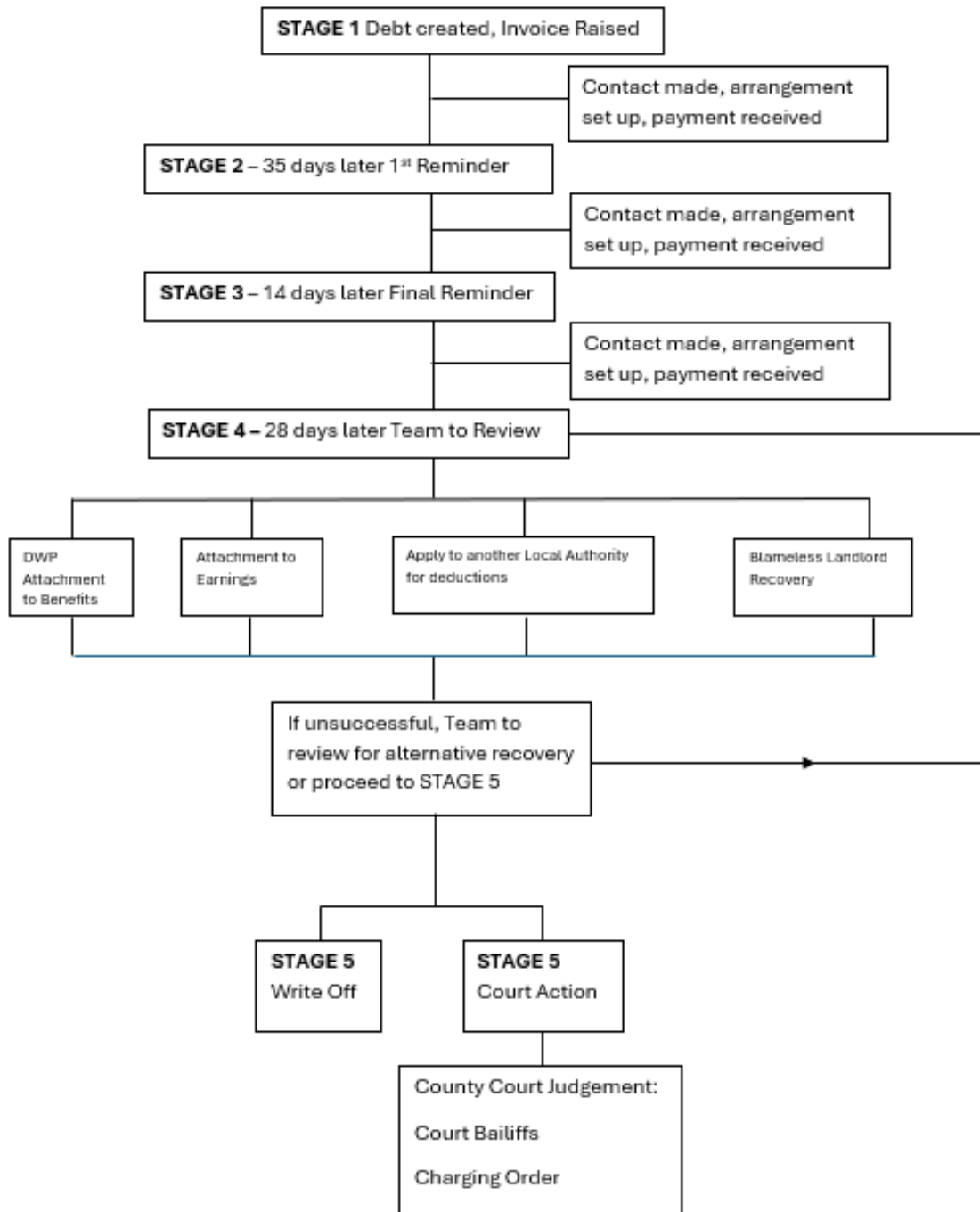
A Charging Order alone does not compel the judgment debtor to sell their property. However, once the Charging Order is in place, the creditor may apply to the Court for an Order for Sale, requiring the property to be sold, so that the creditor may then recover the debt from the sale proceeds.

In accordance with the Council's Constitution, we will only proceed with seeking a charging order, after seeking approval with the Chief Executive and Relevant Portfolio Holder.

23. Where the debtor is deceased, an invoice will be sent to their executors or representatives to seek recovery from their estate.

The Council reserves the right to pursue the most appropriate recovery methods depending on the specific personal and financial circumstances of the debtor.

**Overpaid Housing Benefit Collection flow-chart**



## **Commercial Rent Recovery Procedures**

### **Introduction**

1. The Council has a large portfolio of properties, varying from traditional commercial properties such as retail, office and industrial but also includes other properties such as sports centres, community centres and those of cultural or historical importance.
2. The Council lets these premises to tenants to use for business purposes and charges rent for such use. All invoices are raised three weeks in advance and lease payment terms typically require payment in advance.
3. Leases of commercial premises place obligations on tenants, which include the obligation to pay rent on the terms laid out in the lease. The Council expects its tenants or former tenants who owe money to the Council to comply with legal obligations in respect of that liability.
4. Any service charge and insurance charge payable under the lease or licence also need to be paid in full.
5. This appendix must be read in conjunction with the Corporate Debt Management Policy. The Service Specific procedures prevail, where a conflict arises.

### **Administration**

6. The Commercial Assets team are responsible for ensuring the correct rent and service charges are charged to tenants in accordance with lease or licence terms.
7. The Income Collection Team are responsible for producing periodic invoices, for issuing reminders and Direct Debit payment runs.
8. Advice is sought from Legal Services in relation to recovery, as required, by the Commercial Assets team (in respect of current tenants) and Income Collection Team (in respect of former tenants).
9. Commercial rent and service charge debtors are held and managed in the ASH Debtor system.

### **Protocols**

10. The Council believes that preventing arrears from building up is essential and the additional measures we take are as follows:
  - The Council offers for payments to be made by Direct Debit on the 1st of each month, as it is recognised that this is a proven method for ensuring payments are made on time.
  - Existing leases require payment by standing order. The Council is moving all new leases to payment by Direct Debit.

- The Council will ensure that tenants know who their Estates Officer is, to enable discussions of any issues with their tenancy, or rent arrears, at an early stage.
- Outstanding invoice reminders are sent to tenants before further action is taken to recover arrears.
- The Council may enter into payment arrangements to encourage and support tenants in getting back on track with their payments.
- Where rent is billed quarterly in accordance with the lease terms, the Council will consider requests to move to monthly billing to support tenants to keep on track with their payments.
- Where there is an applicable government mandated scheme in effect, the Council will consider requests for rent concessions where these meet the appropriate requirements of any such scheme.
- The Council will require all arrears to be paid in full as part of any request to assign a lease.
- No lease will be entered into or renewed, with the Council, if there are arrears on the tenant's rent account.
- No tenant shall be permitted to accrue more than one quarter's rent arrears without these being addressed via a payment arrangement with the Council or other collection method.

## Recovery Action

11. Each lease permits the Council to take action to recover rent arrears.
12. In the event of an account falling into arrears, the Council will commence recovery action which can include:
  - **Commercial Rent Arrears Recovery (CRAR)**  
CRAR is a statutory power under the Tribunals Courts and Enforcement Act 2007 which allows commercial landlords to recover rent arrears by seizing and selling tenant goods without a court order. The Council will service notice on the tenant before certified enforcement agents can enter the property. CRAR may only be used to recover rent arrears.

- **Guarantor**

If a third party has agreed to act as guarantor for a tenant, the Council can pursue the guarantor if the tenant fails to pay the rent.

- **Forfeiture**

Forfeiture enables the Council to terminate a tenant's lease early and regain possession of the commercial premises. The right to forfeit must be exercised carefully to avoid waiving the breach. For non-payment of rent, the Council may forfeit the lease by peaceable re-entry or by court proceedings, provided the tenant has not remedied the breach by paying the arrears and associated costs within the statutory period. For other breaches, the landlord must serve a notice under section 146 of the Law of Property Act 1925, specifying the breach and allowing the tenant a reasonable time to remedy it and to pay compensation.

Following termination of the lease, and the Council successfully regaining possession of the property, any arrears will then be reclassified as a debt and may be dealt with as below.

### 13. **Former Tenants**

Where a tenant is no longer in occupation of the premises, and the tenancy has come to an end, any rent, service charge or insurance arrears shall become a sundry debt and managed under the Sundry Debt Recovery Policy.

- **Rent Deposit**

A rent deposit is a sum of money paid by a tenant to a landlord at the start of a lease to act as security against breaches of the lease. It is typically equivalent to 3 - 6 months' rent, or one to two quarters rent, and is managed by way of a rent deposit deed, which shall remain in place for the duration of the lease and returned to the tenant upon expiry of the lease. Where there is a rent deposit, it will be applied to a debt before passing the remaining debt balance to the Council's legal advisors.

- **Legal Action**

Debts will be passed to the Council's legal advisors to consider recover through Court action seeking a Money Judgment and any possible enforcement action.

#### **Enforcing an Order**

Enforcing a Money Judgment can include:

- **An Attachment of Earnings**

This action permits deductions taken directly from the debtor's salary to recover rent arrears. The action would require the debtor's employer to deduct the amount specified by the Court from the debtor's earnings and remit it to the Council.

This action will remain in force until the debt has been satisfied.

Failure to comply with the terms of an Order may be further enforced by a fine, or in certain cases imprisonment up to 14 days. This action can be used against individuals, such as sole traders, however not against corporate tenants.

- **Taking Control of Goods - A Warrant of Control**

A Warrant of Control authorises Enforcement Agents (Bailiffs) to attend at the judgment debtor's home or business address. They will collect money (or monies) owed under the judgment debt or remove goods from the home or business to sell at auction.

There are limits to the types of goods that court Enforcement Agents (Bailiffs) may remove. They cannot remove goods that are necessary to allow a judgment debtor a basic standard of living or the tools of his trade.

A Warrant of Control cannot be issued for more than £5,000 except to enforce an agreement made under the Consumer Credit Act 1974.

Where a debt is in excess of £5,000 the judgment creditor cannot apply to the County Court for the execution, instead they must apply to the High Court for execution, where the terminology changes slightly and it becomes a "Writ" of Execution or a Writ of Control to be executed by a High Court Enforcement Officer

- **A Charging Order**

A Charging Order may be granted following obtaining a money judgment. The Charging Order secures a judgment debt against the property of a debtor, such as a house or land, or other qualifying asset such as shares. The effect of the Charging Order is that the debt may be repaid from the sale proceeds, should the property to which it has been secured, be sold.

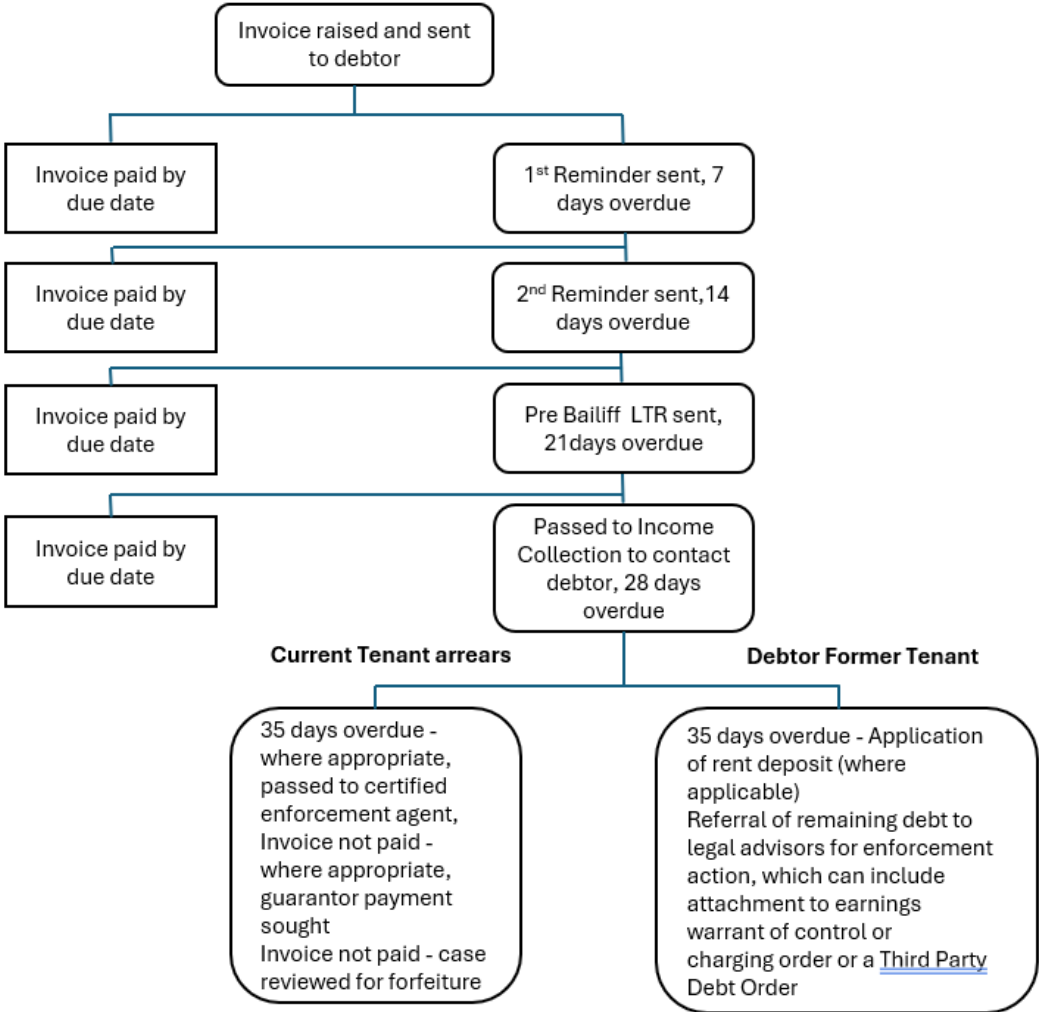
A Charging Order alone does not compel the judgment debtor to sell their property. However, once the Charging Order is in place, the creditor may apply to the Court for an Order for Sale, requiring the property to be sold, so that the creditor may then recover the debt from the sale proceeds.

- **A Third-Party Debt Order**

Following obtaining a money judgment, should the debt remain unpaid, a Third-Party Debt Order may be applied for. Such an order enables the creditor to recover monies owed to the debtor by a third party, most commonly funds which are held within the debtor's bank account or building society account. This may first involve the Court making an interim order to freeze funds and then granting a final order requiring payment to the creditor.

This action is suitable where the Council receives reliable information that the debtor holds accessible funds to repay the debt or is due payment from a third party.

**Commercial Rent Collection Flow Chart**



## Sundry Debt Recovery Procedures

### Introduction

1. This policy relates to all other monies owed to the Council that are administered in the ASH Sundry Debtor System, except for commercial rents and services charges already covered in Appendix 8 of the Corporate Debt Policy.
2. The Income Collection Team ([incomecollection@exeter.gov.uk](mailto:incomecollection@exeter.gov.uk)) support services across the Council with the recovery of sundry debts which include Home Call alarm, Waterways, Allotments, Leasehold Flat service charges and repairs, Housing recoverable repairs, CIL and Section 106 sums, Leisure and Trade Waste.
3. This appendix must be read in conjunction with the Corporate Debt Management Policy. The Service Specific procedures prevail, where a conflict arises.

### Administration

4. Individual service areas are responsible for raising sundry debtor invoices for goods and services supplied or other charges and selecting the appropriate recovery pathway, as this determines the payment terms and the issuing of reminders. Please refer to Appendix 9a.
5. The Income Collection Team are responsible for producing periodic invoices, for issuing reminders, Direct Debit payment runs, co-ordinating any annual uplifts in relation to fees and charges and supporting services with any account queries.
6. The Income Collection Team seek advice from Legal Services in relation to recovery, as required, on behalf of services and refer back to services to confirm instructions.
7. All sundry debtor records are held and managed in the ASH Debtor system. All users are required to update records to reflect any debt recovery activity and record contact details for each debtor.

### Protocols

8. The Council believes that preventing arrears from building up is essential and the additional measures taken are as follows:
  - The Council offers for payments to be made by Direct Debit on the 1st (for all services) and 15th (commercial waste) of each month.
  - Whenever possible, invoices should be raised in advance of providing goods and services, to encourage payment in advance and avoid a debt position. In the event of non-payment the service will either not be provided or could be withdrawn.
  - Services will enter into payment arrangements to encourage and support customers in getting back on track with their payments, based on an assessment of affordability.

Support is available from the Income Collection Team to set the agreed plan up in the ASH Debtor system.

- Services are expected to liaise with their customers to encourage settlement and to avoid further debt recovery actions.
- Customers facing financial hardship may be signposted to services, programmes and activities that support building financial resilience through the Crisis and Resilience Fund.
- The Council will not refuse any payment which reduces the debt. However, if it less than the requested amount recovery action may continue.

## 9. Recovery Action

If, after the issue of reminders and final notices, payments remain outstanding and the debtor has failed to agree a repayment plan or engage with services, then recovery action will commence.

### Legal Services Advice

The Income Collection Team act on behalf of services to seek advice from Legal Services to determine available recovery options due to the diverse range of sundry debts, including an assessment of recoverability and costs to pursue. Recommended actions are then agreed with the respective service manager.

Recovery action can include:

- **Customer Contact**  
Additional attempts to engage with the customer and seek settlement of invoices; either by the respective service and/or the Income Collection Team
- **Money Claim**  
Debts may be pursued via an application for a County Court Judgement using Money Claims online or the County Court. Prior to claim to Court being issued a 'letter before action' must be sent, in accordance with the Pre-Action Protocol for Debt Claims. This will give the individual debtor 28 days to pay, respond with an instalment offer or complete a Standard Financial Statement form, before the Court application is made.

The procedure followed, and timescales for the debtor to respond will differ should they be a corporate debtor.

Once the Council obtains a money judgment, enforcement action may be considered, should the debt remain outstanding. It should be noted that the enforcement action available will be dependent on the legal basis for the debt. The enforcement action available generally is as follows:

- **Attachment of Earnings**

If the debtor's employment details are known, an Attachment of Earnings Order may be made. This action permits deductions taken directly from the debtor's salary to recover the debt. The action would require the debtor's employer to deduct the amount specified by the Court from the debtor's earnings and remit it to the Council. This action will remain in force until the debt has been satisfied.

Failure to comply with the terms of an Order may be further enforced by a fine, or in certain cases imprisonment up to 14 days.

This action can be used against individuals, such as sole traders, however not against corporate tenants.

- **Enforcement Agents**

A Warrant of Control authorises Enforcement Agents to attend at the judgment debtor's home or business address. They will collect money (or monies) owed under the judgment debt or remove goods from the home or business to sell at auction.

There are limits to the types of goods that Court Enforcement Agents may remove. They cannot remove goods that are necessary to allow a judgment debtor a basic standard of living or the tools of his trade.

A Warrant of Control cannot be issued for more than £5,000 except to enforce an agreement made under the Consumer Credit Act 1974.

Where a debt is in excess of £5,000 the judgment creditor cannot apply to the County Court for the execution, instead they must apply to the High Court for execution, where the terminology changes slightly and it becomes a "Writ" of Execution or a Writ of Control to be executed by a High Court Enforcement Officer.

The Council may also appoint their own bailiffs to act as enforcement agents, following obtaining a money judgment, without the need to apply for a warrant of control. The Council must still ensure that private bailiffs act within the law, particularly in cases involving vulnerable debtors, and maintain clear protocols and complaints procedures.

- **Charging Order**

A Charging Order may be granted following obtaining a money judgment. The Charging Order secures a judgment debt against the property of a debtor, such as a house or land, or other qualifying asset such as shares. The effect of the Charging

Order is that the debt may be repaid from the sale proceeds, should the property to which it has been secured, be sold.

A Charging Order alone does not compel the judgment debtor to sell their property. However, once the Charging Order is in place, the creditor may apply to the Court for an Order for Sale, requiring the property to be sold, so that the creditor may then recover the debt from the sale proceeds.

In accordance with the Council's Constitution, the Council will only proceed with seeking a charging order, after seeking approval with the Chief Executive and Relevant Portfolio Holder and after prior advice from Legal Services.

- **A Third-Party Debt Order**

Such an order enables the Council to recover monies owed to the debtor by a third party, most commonly funds which are held within the debtor's bank account or building society account. This may first involve the Court making an interim order to freeze funds and then granting a final order requiring payment to the Council.

This action is suitable where the Council receives reliable information that the debtor holds accessible funds to repay the debt or is due payment from a third party.

## **10. Monitoring and Reporting Performance**

In addition to the performance metrics in the Corporate Performance Framework, a report of outstanding invoices is provided to the Strategic Management Board and Operational Management Board each month.

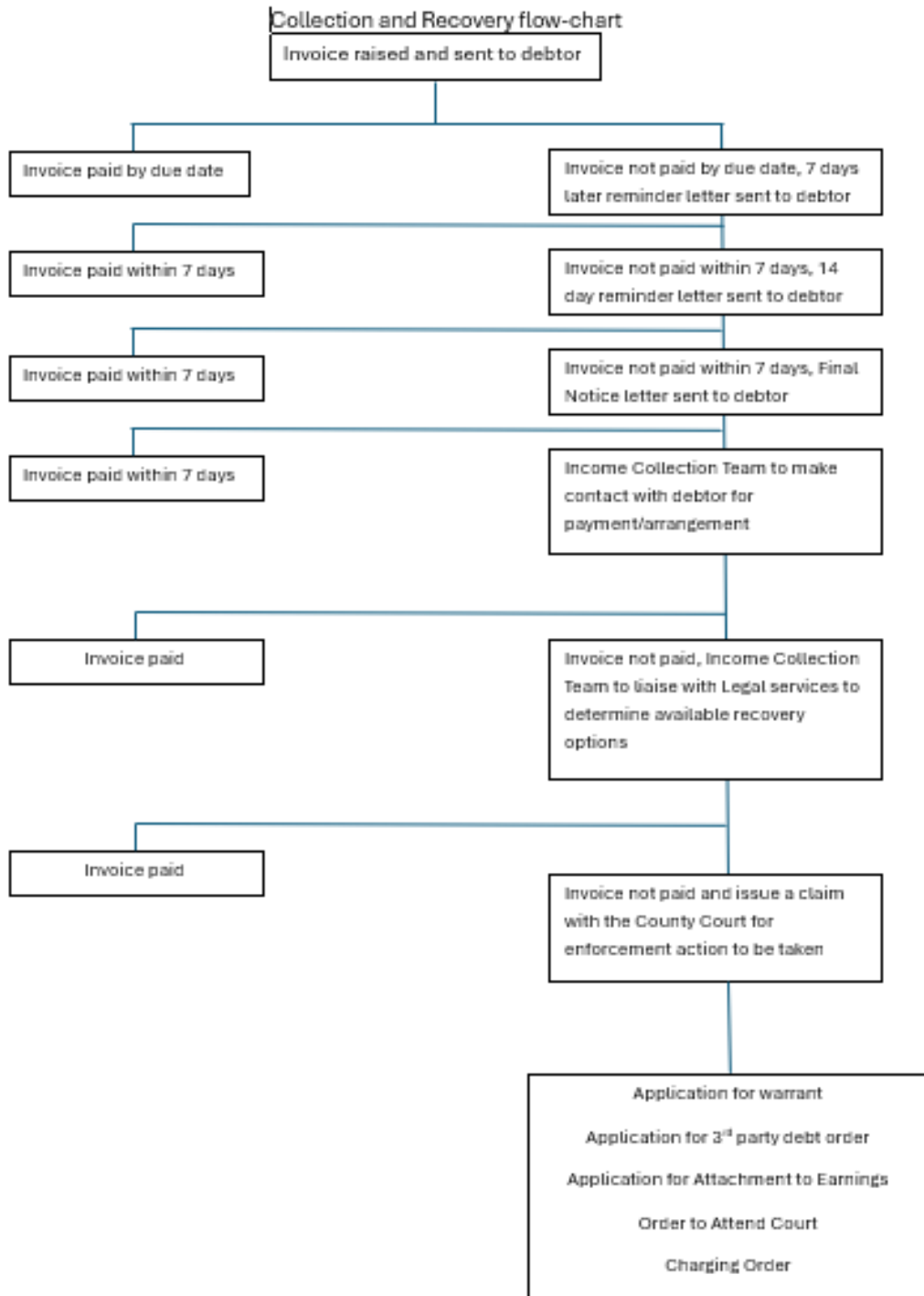
## **11. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Exception**

CIL invoices (demand notices) are raised in the ASH sundry debtor system, but their recovery is managed in accordance with Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations. The regulations give collecting authorities the power to issue a range of surcharges, stop notices and if necessary to recover funds by appropriate legal action.

CIL debt is monitored on a weekly basis, and the Strategic Management Board receive quarterly updates.

The Council reserves the right to pursue the most appropriate recovery methods depending on the specific personal and financial circumstances of the debtor.

**Example of Sundry Debtor Recovery Flow-chart (reminder timings & numbers vary between services)**



## Recovery Pathways

Debt Type	Default terms	Number of reminders	1 <sup>st</sup> reminder	2 <sup>nd</sup> reminder	3 <sup>rd</sup> reminder	Service area involvement
Trade waste collection service	14 days	3	14 days reminder letter	7 days	10 days	Referred after reminders
Trade waste consumables	21 days	3	14 days copy invoice	7 days	10 days	Referred after reminders
Home Call	Nil	1	21days copy invoice			Referred after reminder
Waterways	14 days	2	7 days copy invoice	10 days		Referred after reminders
EBAC	21 days	3	7 days copy invoice	10 days	10 days	Referred after reminders
Allotments	21 days	1	21days copy invoice			Referred after copy invoice sent
Leasehold flats – major works	28 days	3	7 days copy invoice	10 days	10 days	Referred after reminders
Housing Recoverable Repairs	21 days	3	7 days reminder letter	14 days	7 days	Referred after copy invoice sent
Leasehold flat – service charges	Nil	1	21 days copy invoice			Referred after copy invoice sent
CIL & S106	21, 28 or 60 days	2	Varies	Varies	Varies	Managed by service
Leisure	21 days	2	15 days	14 days	n/a	Referred after reminders
Other sundry	Varies	Varies	n/a	n/a	n/a	

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## REPORT TO EXECUTIVE

Date of Meeting: 22 June 2026

Report of: Chief Executive

Title: Corporate Plan Progress and Performance – Half Yearly Report

### Is this a Key Decision?

No

### Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Executive

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

- 1.1 This report is to update Executive on the progress made against the priorities and areas of focus in the Corporate Plan 2025-2028, up to the end of the 2025/2026 finance year. The full progress summary can be found in Appendix A.
- 1.2 Executive is also asked to note the new Corporate Performance Framework which has been developed. The framework provides a series of measures using trusted data to help assess how well the council is performing against the intended outcomes in the Corporate Plan 2025-2028. The Corporate Performance Framework report can be found in Appendix B.
- 1.3 This report will be brought to Executive Committee on a half-yearly basis. The Strategic Management Board will monitor progress and performance every quarter to keep all actions and measures under review and ensure successful delivery of the Corporate Plan objectives.

#### 2. Recommendations:

- 2.1 That Executive notes the progress that has been made against the priorities and objectives in the Corporate Plan 2025-2028.

#### 3. Reasons for the recommendation:

- 3.1 To enable members, employees and stakeholders to be informed about progress against the outcomes set out in the 2025 – 28 Corporate Plan and performance against the key strategic outcome and service delivery measures.

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

- 4.1 The Strategic Directors and Heads of Service, are asked to review priorities, outcomes and measures contained in the Corporate Plan 2025-28 on a quarterly basis. The Executive Committee are asked to review this every six months. Financial resources will be allocated to support the delivery of strategic priorities outlined in the plan, and these will be identified within the annual budget setting process.

## **5. Section 151 Officer comments:**

5.1 There are no specific financial implications contained in this report.

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

6.1 There is no specific legal obligation for local authorities to publish a corporate plan. However, they are considered to be good practice and demonstrate effective governance. They are widely used by local authorities as a strategic management tool to set out a council's vision, priorities and objectives.

6.2 The main statutory duty that relates to corporate plans is the Best Value Duty which was introduced by the Local Government Act 1999. This requires local authorities to secure continuous improvement in how they carry out their functions '...having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness'

## **7. Monitoring Officer's comments:**

7.1 Members will note the legal aspects above. The Monitoring Officer has no additional comments.

## **8. Report details**

8.1 The three-year Corporate Plan 2025-2028 was approved by members on 22 July 2025. The plan outlines 4 key priorities of Local Economy, Homes, People and Sustainable Environment, underpinned by A Well-Run Council. Under each priority is a series of intended outcomes and areas of focus. A full update against the areas of focus can be found in Appendix A.

8.2 The Corporate Plan is important because it provides a clear strategic direction for the council, setting out the long-term priorities, intended outcomes and key actions that will guide decision-making, resource allocation and service delivery. It gives members, officers, partners and residents a shared understanding of what the council is seeking to achieve and helps ensure that activity across the council is aligned to the council's priorities.

8.3 Since the approval of the plan in July 2025, extensive work has taken place with Strategic Directors and Heads of Service to develop a Corporate Performance Framework to enable robust monitoring and evaluation of the Corporate Plan. This consists of all of the measures set out in the Corporate Plan. The full Corporate Performance Framework report can be found in Appendix B.

8.4 The Corporate Performance Framework is equally important because it translates the outcomes and actions in the Corporate Plan into measurable indicators using trusted data. This enables the Council to track progress, identify areas of strong performance and where improvement is needed, and take timely corrective action. Together, the Corporate Plan and the Corporate Performance Framework strengthen accountability, support transparency, demonstrate the Council's commitment to continuous improvement, and provide assurance that priorities are being delivered effectively and efficiently for the benefit of residents and communities.

8.5 The key highlights from Appendix A and Appendix B are set out below.

## **Key highlights**

Overall, the Council's performance is strong with over 85% of the measures identified in the Corporate Plan either in line or improving against targets. There are a number of standout results, with several measures significantly exceeding target.

### **Local Economy**

- Street trading and markets growth was particularly strong alongside consistently high service standards in food hygiene compliance and street cleansing, graffiti and litter reduction.
- Work continues to support city centre vitality through a positive approach to regeneration, enabling flexible uses and facilitating schemes that contribute to increased footfall, cultural activity and reduced vacancy rates.
- A public consultation is underway for the City Centre Strategy and the Culture Strategy, with the final Strategy's being recommended for adoption at September Executive and October Council 2026.

### **People**

- Exeter Leisure memberships increased, while perceptions of Exeter as a safe place to live also exceeded target.
- The creation of a City Centre Community Safety Team was approved by Council in January 2026. The new team will be provided with powers to address anti-social behaviour across Exeter.
- Four new priorities for Safer Exeter, the Community Safety Partnership, were agreed by Safer Exeter March 2026 for the next 3 years. An action plan has been developed to deliver the 4 priority themes.
- The Wonford Community Hub and King George V schemes to improve community sport and playing field facilities have been agreed. These schemes are now proceeding to delivery.
- The Newtown Active Travel Scheme is under construction, with a new walking and cycleway through the Triangle Car Park being delivered.

### **Homes**

- Delivered some of the strongest headline results, with new homes completed up (480 built in 2024/25) , social rent share outperforming the region at 53.1%, and social housing units also up year on year by 23.0%.
- A Housing Needs and Homelessness restructure was completed this year which saw the formation of an 'Early Intervention and Prevention Team' and a dedicated casework service that will support all potential approaches from customers including those rough sleeping.
- The first phase of the Vaughan Road development has been completed offering 35 additional 1 and 2 bedroom council units.

### **Sustainable Environment**

- Excellent progress on carbon reduction with a 15.4% reduction in the City Council carbon footprint, supported by strong gains in renewable energy generation.
- Awarded Silver Status for delivering Carbon Literacy Training across the council
- The council's costed Carbon Reduction Plan was approved by Executive April 2026, the first of its kind across Local Authorities in England, a pioneering project

developed by the Centre for Energy and Environment at the University of Exeter. Delivery is through existing Service Plans, as well as successful external grant funding.

- The council is leading Exeter's Nature Towns and Cities accreditation application with support from partners including Devon Wildlife Trust, the University of Exeter and the Met Office. Successful accreditation will result in Exeter being designated a 'Nature City' with potential to unlock significant funding. The project is currently in the engagement phase with more than 1,000 people taking part in the recent 'Wild Exeter' survey.

### **A Well-Run Council**

- Performs strongest in financial management and service efficiency, including 99.1% of invoices paid within 30 days, a reduction in sundry debt arrears, and significant growth in online self-service transactions, all of which demonstrate strong operational delivery.
- Progress is also being made in advancing the Council's equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) agenda, with delivery of the EDI plan, development of inclusive policies and training, and improved use of workforce data to monitor outcomes and inform future action.
- Progress is being made to implement the Consultation and Engagement Strategy, establishing clearer standards, strengthening coordination across services, and promoting more inclusive, evidence-based engagement with residents and stakeholders.
- The Government completed its Fair Funding Review, reforming the allocation of grant funding to English local authorities from 2026/27 based on updated assessments of relative need, area costs, and resources. This resulted in the first multi-year Settlement in a decade, covering the period from 2026/27 to 2028/29. As a result of this, the anticipated reductions of £3.5m for 2026/27 were no longer required. This enabled a balanced budget to be set.

8.6 There are some areas which are performing at below the expected level. These are summarised below:

- Comparing 2026 Q1 with Q1 2025 / 2024 / 2023 business creation and closures, there is a slight reduction in business births (-10). We will continue to engage with InExeter and Devon Chamber in how we support businesses and individuals to set up and grow a business across Exeter.
- The number of residents reporting Exeter as a welcoming and inclusive city is below target 63% vs 72%. This reflects a perception-based measure influenced by a range of factors, including wider economic conditions, community cohesion and the city experience.
- Inactivity amongst people in our priority neighbourhoods has increased by 2.8% vs a target reduction of -2.00%. This is a national trend with a number of factors contributing including complex lives, cost of living and structural inequalities.
- There has been an approximate drop of £900 in Ward Grant spend (2.5%) for 2025/26. 2026/27 data is not yet available. Further work will be undertaken to publicise ward grants through councillors and community builders.
- Improving access for disabled facilities and warm homes grants is currently -19.39% against a targeted improvement of 5% year on year.
- Recovery of overpaid Housing Benefit down -5.7% vs 2.0% increase. Permanent staff resources for the recovery of overpaid Housing Benefits has enabled a housekeeping exercise of historic debts to be performed and driven up write-offs during 25/26 compared to 24/25
- Internal health and safety training/compliance for workforce is low at 66.4% vs 90.0% target.

- Complaints processing is currently below the target to provide a satisfactory remedy for 50% of cases before reaching the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO). There was a drop in the number of complaints in 2024/25 (8) compared to 2023/24 (10). However, whilst 50% of cases in 2023/24 were successfully resolved locally, none of the 10 cases in 2024/25 were remedied prior to reaching the LGO.

8.7 Actions have been identified to address areas which are performing at below the expected level. These actions will be added to Service Plans and kept under regular review by the relevant Strategic Director and Head of Service.

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

9.1 A full Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) was conducted when the Corporate Plan was approved in July 2025. Progress has been made against the agreed actions contained within the EQIA including the development of an Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan, the roll out of Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Training for council employees and the introduction of a Consultation and Engagement strategy that will help to ensure that all voices are heard when developing plans to deliver against the outcomes identified in the Corporate Plan

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

10.1 The new Corporate Plan 2025 - 2028 includes several initiatives aimed at reducing the carbon footprint and promoting sustainability, by working in partnership to reduce carbon emissions, by supporting the delivery of District Heat Networks, securing affordable clean and secure energy for the city and bringing forward an Electric Vehicle Strategy for the city.

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

11.1 The decision directly contributes to the Council's Corporate Plan as it relates to the monitoring and delivery of that plan and provides safeguards and assurance that the priorities and objectives will be delivered in a timely way.

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

12.1 The risks associated with projects or initiatives identified in the plan will be assessed as they are approved on an individual basis and included in the Council's Risk Registers as appropriate.

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

13.1 No other options have been identified.

## **Chief Executive**

Author: Lorraine Betts

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

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

None

List of Appendices:

- Appendix A Corporate Plan 25-28 Half Yearly Review
- Appendix B Corporate Performance Quarterly Report May 2026

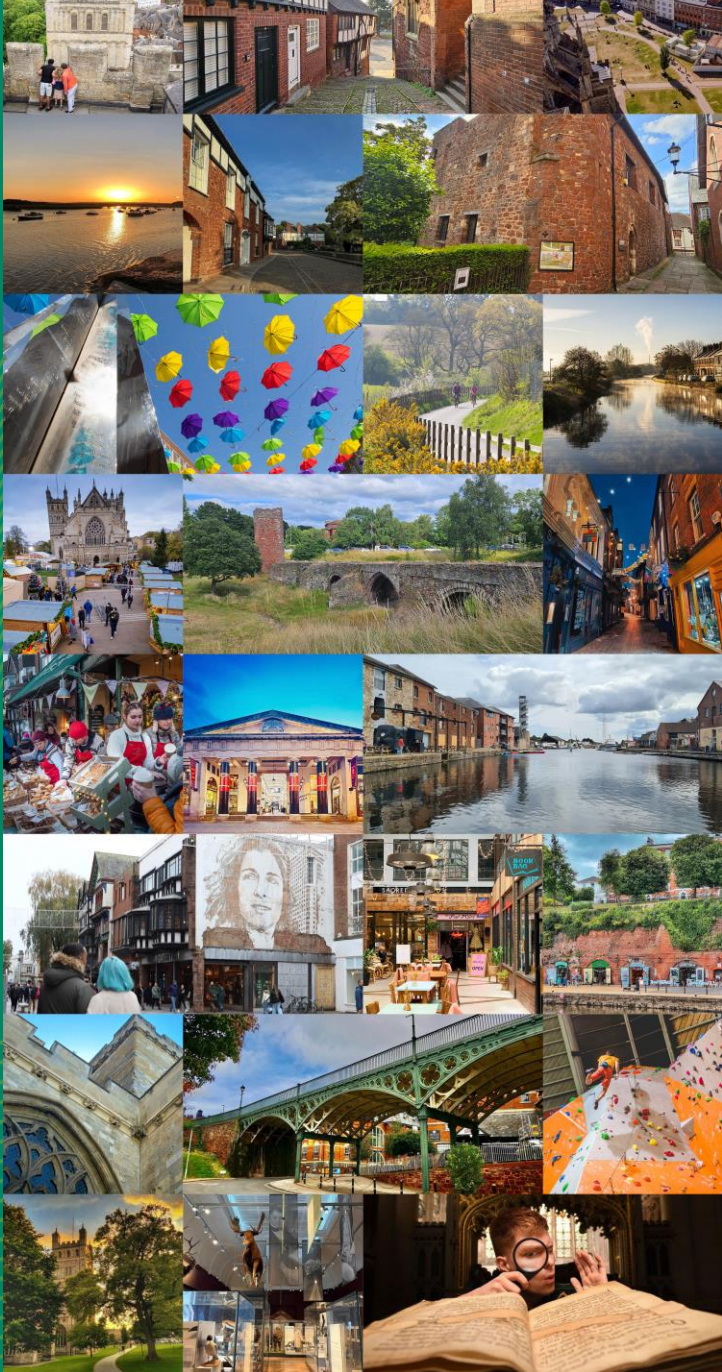
	B	C	D	E
	<b>e Plan - Areas of Focus - Half Yearly Progress Report - May 2026</b>			<b>APPENDIX A</b>
1				
2				
3				
4	<b>Intended outcomes</b>	<b>Areas of focus</b>	<b>Progress - May 2026</b>	<b>Owner</b>
5	<p>A thriving, diverse and resilient city which can adapt to changing conditions.</p> <p>An increase in independent shops and a low level of empty shops. A vibrant cultural and tourism offer.</p> <p>A safe and thriving night-time economy.</p>	<p>To achieve this our strategic efforts will focus on partnership work to deliver a City Centre Strategy and support regeneration and investment across the city.</p> <p>We will focus on building capacity and capability to work at national and regional levels to encourage growth, regeneration and inward investment.</p>	<p>City Development continue to support city centre vitality through a positive approach to regeneration, enabling flexible uses and facilitating schemes that contribute to increased footfall, cultural activity and reduced vacancy rates.</p> <p>There was a public consultation for the City Centre Strategy and the Culture Strategy, with the final Strategy's being recommended for adoption at September Executive and October Council 2026.</p>	Director of Place
6	<p>Health inequalities will reduce.</p> <p>Communities will be more resilient.</p> <p>More residents, including those from our priority neighbourhoods and communities, will be participating in leisure and cultural events and activities.</p> <p>A safe and thriving city with great things to see and do for everyone.</p>	<p>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. We will secure and expand the work of the Sport England Place Partnership and Wellbeing Exeter, and we will address anti-social behaviour through the Exeter Community Safety Partnership.</p>	<p>The new Exeter Community Safety Charter was launched March 2026.</p> <p>The City Centre Community Safety Team pilot was approved by Council January 2026 to be made permanent and to increase to cover the whole of Exeter. Team has been recruited into with training being undertaken and to provide the new team with the necessary powers to address Anti-Social Behaviour across Exeter. Four new priorities for Safer Exeter, the Community Safety Partnership, were agreed by Safer Exeter March 2026 for the next 3 years. Action Plan developed to deliver the 4 priority themes.</p> <p>The Local Active Lives survey highlights a small increase in inactivity in those on the lowest incomes within priority neighbourhoods. Activity levels for ethnic minorities and women have increased.</p> <p>The Wonford and KGV schemes to improve community sport and playing field facilities have been agreed with budget through an extraordinary council, they are now proceeding to delivery.</p> <p>The Newtown Active Travel Scheme is under construction, with a new walking and cycleway through the Triangle Car Park being delivered</p> <p>A successful project to improve Green Circle signage and awareness delivered with city stakeholders and Great Western Railway.</p> <p>An enhanced programme of work within Wellbeing Exeter, includes delivering outcomes for women and young people currently not in employment or education. This is in addition to the core Wellbeing Exeter programme that continues to focus on addressing inactivity and supporting communities in priority areas.</p> <p>City Development continue to support healthy and inclusive communities through place-making, ensuring new development contributes to accessible spaces, community infrastructure and environments that encourage wellbeing and participation.</p>	CX and Director of Place
7	<p>Better quality, energy efficient and more affordable homes to buy or rent.</p> <p>New housing developments that are well integrated into existing communities.</p> <p>Fewer people will be homeless or in temporary housing.</p> <p>The number of people on the social housing waiting list will reduce.</p>	<p>To achieve this our strategic efforts will focus on working in partnership to deliver the Exeter Plan and Liveable Exeter sites. We will secure investment for building more social housing and reduce rough sleeping and the number of people in temporary accommodation, enabling more people to find sustainable housing.</p>	<p>Vaughan Road Phase A completed in September 2025 offering 35 additional 1 &amp; 2 bed units</p> <p>Vaughan Road Phase B due to commence on site in July 2026 anticipated completion late 2027 offering 16 additional 1 &amp; 2 bedroom units</p> <p>Laings commenced March 2025 anticipated completion March 2027 offering 7 new family homes.</p> <p>Fewer people will be homeless or in temporary housing.</p> <p>Data from MHCLG 'data for insights dashboard' has the following information on households in TA at the end of the relevant period</p> <p>Quarter 4 (Jan – Mar 26) – 108 households</p> <p>Quarter 3 (Oct – Dec 25) – 99 households</p> <p>The number of people on the social housing waiting list will reduce.</p> <p>Quarter 4 (Jan- Mar 26) Exeter had 2,004 applications recorded on Devon Home Choice</p> <p>Quarter 3 (Oct – Dec 25) Exeter had 1,932 applications recorded on Devon Home Choice</p> <p>Whilst we have not yet shown a reduction in households on Devon Home Choice nor those in Temporary Accommodation the figures have remained reasonably static for a period of time.</p> <p>Housing Needs and Homelessness restructure was completed on the 1st April which saw the formation of an 'Early Intervention and Prevention Team' and a dedicated casework service that will support all potential approaches from customers including those rough sleeping.</p> <p>The focus of the early prevention team will be to drive the 'Prevention First' agenda, in line with the National Plan to End Homelessness. This will mean that we would expect to see an increase in early preventions (prior to statutory action), a reduction in approaches at crisis point (statutory casework) resulting in a reduction being placed into Temporary Accommodation. Those that do require temporary accommodation work is underway to commission a framework agreement for providers to enter in if they wish which will raise the quality and standards of accommodation which will be in place from Qtr. 4.</p> <p>As part of a focused proactive approach to early prevention, the team will be regular reviewing applications on Devon Home Choice for those awarded lower bandings with a view to exploring viable alternative housing pathways such as private rented and supported accommodation improving our prevention outcomes much earlier on.</p>	<p>Director of Place</p> <p>Director of Housing and Operations</p>

	B	C	D	E
4	<b>Intended outcomes</b>	<b>Areas of focus</b>	<b>Progress - May 2026</b>	<b>Owner</b>
	<p>A city taking action to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.</p> <p>A Net Zero Carbon City.</p> <p>Well-maintained parks, open spaces and biodiversity across the city.</p>	<p>To achieve this our strategic efforts will focus on working in partnership to reduce carbon emissions, by supporting the delivery of District Heat Networks, securing affordable clean and secure energy for the city and bringing forward an Electric Vehicle Strategy for the city.</p>	<p>The City Council has been awarded Silver Status for delivering Carbin Literacy training across the City Council.</p> <p>The City Council's costed Carbon Reduction Plan was approved by Executive April 2026, the first of its kind across Local Authorities in England, a pioneering project developed by the Centre for Energy and Environment at the University of Exeter. Delivery is through existing Service Plans, as well as successful external grant funding.</p> <p>The Net Zero team are leading on the procurement of 511,000kw of new solar panels, to be installed on Exeter Arena, St Sidwell's Leisure Centre, Wonford Leisure Centre, the Guildhall Car Park and Exeter Bus Station. This will avoid 91,668 pf co2 emissions per year.</p> <p>The Riverside Leisure Centre Decarbonisation Project is in its 2nd year, with work being undertaken to finalise surveys and plans for the replacement of the roof and the decarbonisation of its heating system. The Riverside Leisure Centre is one of highest carbon emitting building and was eligible for Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) funding, with £3.3m being awarded to be spent by March 2028.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The Exeter Territorial Greenhouse Gas Inventory report (2023) (latest data available) shows that Exeter has continued its steady decline towards Net Zero, with total GHG emissions in Exeter for 2023 reducing by an estimated 8% (by 38.0 kCO2e to 436.3 kCO2e) from 2022.</li> <li>•The Exeter Partnership Climate and Nature Theme Group brings together representatives from organisations, businesses and community groups to work collaboratively together to deliver the Net Zero Exeter 2030 Plan. The quarterly meetings have focused on: nature and biodiversity; energy; and the circular economy.</li> <li>•The GWR/Green Circle Project aimed to connect the city's railway stations with the Green Circle trail, encouraging visitors and citizens to take the train rather than drive (reducing carbon emissions). The project was successfully delivered time and within budget, as part of the national Railway 200 celebrations (celebrating 200 years of the modern railway), and was highly commended at the Exeter Sustainability Awards.</li> <li>•Nature Towns and Cities Accreditation: Exeter City Council is leading Exeter's Nature Towns and Cities accreditation application with support from partners including Devon Wildlife Trust, the University of Exeter and the Met Office. Successful accreditation will result in Exeter being designated a 'Nature City'. The project is currently in the engagement phase with more than 1,000 people taking part in the recent 'Wild Exeter' survey through the Engage Platform. Focus groups and workshops are taking place over the coming months.</li> <li>•Great British Spring Clean: Exeter City Council joined Keep Britain Tidy's Great British Spring Clean providing litter picking equipment and promoting the initiative through its networks and communications channels. Held between 13 and 29 March, community groups, schools and individuals took part in the nation's biggest mass-action environmental campaign by pledging to pick up litter in their neighbourhoods.</li> </ul> <p>Through planning policy and development management, City Development is embedding Net Zero and biodiversity objectives into new development, supporting the delivery of low carbon, climate resilient growth.</p>	<p>Director of Place</p>
8	<p>A balanced budget achieved by focusing on priorities, efficient delivery of services and sustainable income generation.</p> <p>Effective investment and maintenance programmes for the assets that underpin our business.</p> <p>Delivery of cost effective and accessible customer focused services enabling more people to self-serve when and how they want with a face-to-face offering for those residents who need it.</p> <p>Staff and members who feel valued, supported and equipped to achieve the best they can for residents and stakeholders.</p> <p>Open and transparent decision-making.</p>	<p>To achieve this, we will work within our Code of Corporate Governance, to ensure good practice in financial services, governance and staff and Members health and wellbeing.</p> <p>We will actively communicate and engage with residents and communities and seek their views on projects and initiatives in line with our Consultation Charter.</p> <p>Equality and diversity will be a priority to ensure we meet our legal duties and promote inclusion in all that we do.</p>	<p>Good progress has been made in strengthening how the Council supports, engages and develops its workforce. A more structured approach to workforce oversight is being introduced through monthly KPI and action reporting, ensuring consistent monitoring of risks, trends and actions across services and supporting more transparent, evidence-based decision-making.</p> <p>Improvements to employee experience are underway, including the rollout of enhanced performance management arrangements through iTrent, development of a learning and development system, and implementation of a new Occupational Health service. At the same time, HR capacity and capability has been strengthened through recruitment and a more structured HR Business Partnering model, enabling more proactive and strategic support to services.</p> <p>A wider programme of organisational development and engagement is progressing, including LGR staff engagement activity, strengthened communication channels, and leadership development to support managers to lead through change and uncertainty.</p> <p>Progress is also being made in advancing the Council's equality, diversity and inclusion agenda, with delivery of the EDI plan, development of inclusive policies and training, and improved use of workforce data to monitor outcomes and inform future action.</p> <p>Progress is being made to implement the Consultation and Engagement Strategy, establishing clearer standards, strengthening coordination across services, and promoting more inclusive, evidence-based engagement with residents and stakeholders.</p> <p><b>Balanced Budget</b></p> <p>The Government completed its Fair Funding Review, reforming the allocation of grant funding to English local authorities from 2026/27 based on updated assessments of relative need, area costs, and resources. This resulted in the first multi-year Settlement in a decade, covering the period from 2026/27 to 2028/29.</p> <p>As a result of the Fair Funding Review, the anticipated reductions of £3.5m for 2026/27 were no longer required. This enabled a balanced budget to be set using previously approved reductions and a number of straightforward budgets adjustments that do not affect service provision.</p> <p>For the first time, a flexible use of capital receipts strategy was approved, allowing capital receipts to fund expenditure that would ordinarily fall to revenue. This provides flexibility to support the transitional costs associated with Local Government Reorganisation.</p>	<p>CX and Director of Corporate Resources</p>
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# Corporate Performance Framework

## Quarterly Summary Report

27 May 2026



# Contents

1. About the Corporate Performance Framework
2. Executive Summary
3. Corporate Performance Dashboard overview (May 2026)
4. Summary of Strategic Priorities, Highlights and Exceptions, Actions and Mitigations
  - Priority 1 - Local Economy
  - Priority 2 – People
  - Priority 3 – Homes
  - Priority 4 – Environment
  - Priority 5 – A Well-Run Council
5. Continuous Performance Improvement

# About the Corporate Performance Framework

This report provides a quarterly overview of the Corporate Performance Framework.

The purpose is to

- keep Strategic Management Board and Executive Members informed about the Council's performance against the priorities and objectives set out in the Corporate Plan 2025-2028
- keep the measures under regular review
- enable a proactive approach and assurances to deliver the Corporate Priorities.

- [Corporate Performance Framework - Power BI](#) dashboard is accessed via the intranet
- [CPF User Guide 2.pptx](#) for guidance on exploring the dashboard
- The framework consists of **83** individual measures and metrics linked to the Corporate Plan objectives
- The data behind each measure comes from a range of trusted and reliable sources including Exeter City Council, LG Inform+ and Devon & Cornwall Police
- Data refreshes at different times and frequencies ranging from every day to once per annum – each quarterly report will give the latest snapshot\*
- **61** measures are RAG rated to show:

Improving
In line
Worsening
- Some measures in the dashboard are presented without a RAG rating. These qualitative reports provide valuable context and deeper insight into the Council's overall performance.

# Executive Summary

**Overall, the Council's performance this quarter\* is strong with over 85% of the measures either in line or improving against targets. There are a number of standout results, with several measures significantly exceeding target.**

**Local Economy** - street trading and markets growth was particularly strong alongside consistently high service standards in food hygiene compliance and street cleansing, graffiti and litter reduction.

**People** - Exeter Leisure memberships increased, while perceptions of Exeter as a safe place to live also exceeded target.

**Homes** - delivered some of the strongest headline results, with new homes completed up (480 built in 2024/25) , social rent share outperforming the region at 53.1%, and social housing units also up year on year by 23.0%.

**Sustainable Environment** - reveals excellent progress on carbon reduction with a 15.4% reduction in the City Council carbon footprint, supported by strong gains in renewable energy generation.

**A Well-Run Council** - performs strongest in financial management and service efficiency, including 99.1% of invoices paid within 30 days, a reduction in sundry debt arrears, and significant growth in online self-service transactions, all of which demonstrate strong operational delivery.

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\*Data in this report taken from the Corporate Performance Framework Dashboard at 02.05.2026



# Executive Summary

**There are some areas which are currently below target or may be moving in the wrong direction. Areas for focus are:**

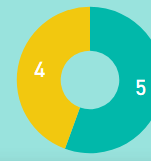
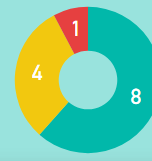
**Local Economy** – shopping centre footfall and business creation are below desired thresholds

**People** – the perception of Exeter as a welcoming and inclusive city, applications for Ward Grants and inactivity levels amongst residents in our priority neighbourhoods (2.8% increase vs a -2.0% decrease target) are areas for potential improvement

**Homes** - access to disabled facilities and warm home grants (-19.4% vs 5.0% increase target), affordable homes completed overall (1.1% vs 5.0%) and HMO registrations and monitoring where higher than normal volumes are expected in 2026

**Sustainable Environment** - no current red metrics but EV strategy adoption is not at desired levels (-1.2% vs 5.0% target increase) and recycling performance shows little change (-0.1 against a 1.0 improvement target)

**A Well-Run Council** - complaints processing in 2024/25 is below target, recovery of overpaid Housing Benefit (-5.7% vs 2.0% increase) and internal health and safety training/compliance (66.4% vs 90.0%).



**Priority 1: Local Economy**

We will build on Exeter’s thriving economy by attracting new businesses and continued investment in our city by collaborating with national, regional and local businesses and partners. We will work together on regeneration and growth activities designed to attract new businesses and continued investment in our public spaces, culture, heritage and tourism industries.



**Priority 2: People**

We will encourage residents and community groups, to be healthier and more active, promote inclusion and community cohesion and efforts to ensure people feel safe and welcome.



**Priority 3: Homes**

We will expand our own council housing; do all we can to fight homelessness, and we will engage communities, the city’s key partners and developers in delivering the homes which Exeter needs, whilst protecting our valuable green spaces.



**Priority 4: Sustainable Environment**

We will reduce our own carbon emissions and work with the city’s key partners, businesses, communities and residents to take action to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.



**Priority 5: A Well-Run Council**

A well-run council Despite 14 years of reduced government funding and the increasing cost of living, we are committed to maintaining a strong and resilient council and delivering quality services and a balanced budget.

# Local Economy

Priority 1





# Priority 1 | Local Economy

## Summary








**Local Economy.** We will build on Exeter’s thriving economy by attracting new businesses and continued investment in our city by collaborating with national, regional and local businesses and partners. We will work together on regeneration and growth activities designed to attract new businesses and continued investment in our public spaces, culture, heritage and tourism industries.

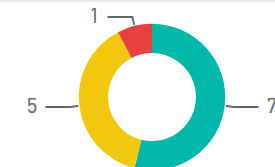
**Intended Outcomes.** The outcomes we want are a thriving diverse and resilient city centre which can adapt to changing conditions, an increase in independent shops and fewer empty shops than there are today, and businesses will be reporting increases in footfall and business success within a vibrant cultural and tourism offer.

**Strategic Partnerships.** To achieve this our strategic efforts will focus on partnership work to deliver a City Centre Strategy and support regeneration and investment in our Liveable Exeter sites. We will focus on building capacity and capability to work at national and regional levels to encourage growth, regeneration and inward investment.







## Strategic Outcome Metrics



-  Shopping Centre footfall
-  City Centre vacant shops Vacant Shops rate.
-  Business creation and closures per 10,000 population
-  Average weekly workplace earnings
-  Gross value added per hour
-  Total spend on Culture and Heritage
-  Publication of City Centre Strategy



## Service Delivery Metrics

-  Improvements in street cleansing, reducing litter and removing graffiti
-  Percentage of compliant food hygiene establishments
-  Number of premises licence with late night refreshment
-  Well-regulated and successful street trading and markets
-  Ensuring events and celebrations in the city are well run and safe through our work on the Safety Advisory Group
-  Safe, accessible and sustainable licenced taxi services across the city

## Directorate Business Plan Metrics

-  Operations Business Plan Dashboard (opens in new window)
-  Place Business Plan Dashboard (opens in new window)

## Performing well

Food hygiene compliance is a standout strength at 98.9% vs 90% target and graffiti/cleansing performance (93.4% vs 90%) is also strong.

Street trading/markets regulation is well above target (35.3% vs 5.0%) and the number of vacant shops is decreasing.

Taxi licensing density (based on number of taxis per 1000 residents) is above target at 3.6% vs 2.0%.

Total spend on Culture and Heritage has exceeded the target by more than double, and Exeter was second in the South-West region for investment in cultural and heritage.

The Draft City Centre Strategy 2026-2031 consultation has been launched.

## Performing in line with target

Average weekly workplace earnings continue to increase but remain behind the national average, and Exeter was ranked 4<sup>th</sup> in the region (2025).

Gross Value Added per hour continues to grow at 2.27% but remains slightly below the 5% target.

Shopping Centre footfall is currently in line but showing a slight fall in numbers year to date, compared to 2025 (decrease of 110k).

The total number of premises with a license for late night refreshments has grown slightly and surpasses the regional average.

The Exeter Safety Advisory Group reviewed over 72% of city centre events in 2025 although this falls slightly short of the 80% target.

## Performance not meeting target

Exeter shows moderate business creations and closures but has the second-lowest enterprise density in the region and is behind target at -2.46% vs a 2% year on year increase.

# Actions and priorities

- Comparing 2026 Q1 with Q1 2025 / 2024 / 2023 business creation and closures, there is a slight reduction in business births (-10). Continued **engagement with InExeter and Devon Chamber** in how we support businesses and individuals to set up and grow a business across Exeter.
- **City Centre Strategy** currently out for public consultation, which closed 28 June 2026. Final version will be reported back to Executive Autumn 2026 for adoption.

# People

Priority 2





# Priority 2 | People

## Summary

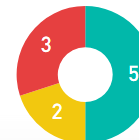
**People.** We will encourage residents and community groups, to be healthier and more active, promote inclusion and community cohesion and efforts to ensure people feel safe and welcome.






**Intended Outcomes.** The outcomes we want are that health inequalities will reduce, communities will be more resilient and more residents, including those from our priority neighbourhoods and communities, will be participating in leisure and cultural events and activities. There will be a thriving and safe night-time economy with great things to see and do for everyone.





**Strategic Partnerships.** To achieve this our strategic efforts will focus on partnership work alongside our priority neighbourhoods and communities working to ensure the provision of sustainable cultural, leisure and enrichment opportunities; securing and expanding the work of the Sport England Place Partnership, Wellbeing Exeter partnership; and, through the Community Safety Partnership, address anti-social behaviour.






## Strategic Outcome Metrics








-  Index of Multiple Deprivation
-  Age distribution
-  Age-standardised mortality rates
-  Causes of death
-  Residents in bad or very bad health

-  Life expectancy: local authorities
-  Life expectancy: Exeter wards
-  Exeter as a safe place to live
-  Exeter as a welcoming, inclusive city




## Strategic Partnership Metrics

-  Annual report on outputs from the Sport England Place partnership
-  Performance reports from Wellbeing Exeter
-  Annual report on the delivery of the Community Safety Partnership Action plan

## Service Delivery Metrics

-  Number of City Centre ASB incidents
-  Year on year increase in residents taking up Exeter Leisure membership and use of leisure centres
-  More inactive people in our priority neighbourhoods becoming active
-  Increase in use of the Green Circle for leisure and active travel
-  Greater understanding about the impacts of ward grants on inclusion and community cohesion

## Directorate Business Plan Metrics

-  Operations Business Plan Dashboard (opens in new window)
-  People and Communities Business Plan Dashboard (opens in new window)
-  Place Business Plan Dashboard (opens in new window)

### Performing well

Exeter is largely considered a safe place to live during the day according to the Annual LGA Resident Survey (30.6% vs 26%). However, a higher than the national average number of residents report feeling fairly or very unsafe at night.

Reports from the Sport England Place Partnership, Wellbeing Exeter, and the Community Safety Partnership Action Plan are received on time and used to inform decision making.

The number of residents taking up Exeter Leisure memberships and using our leisure centres continues to rise year on year with numbers growing by 31% in 2024/25.

### Performing in line with target

Use of the Green Circle for leisure and active travel by people in priority neighbourhoods is in line with target at 2.1% vs 5% year on year increase.

The number of City Centre ASB incidents in 2024 (10861) and 2025 (11021) were high putting Exeter over the regional average. However, there are signs of improvement with 2730 incidents recorded so far in 2026.

### Performance not meeting target

The number of residents reporting Exeter as a welcoming and inclusive city is below target 63% vs 72%. This reflects a perception-based measure influenced by a range of factors, including wider economic conditions, community cohesion and the city experience.

Inactivity amongst people in our priority neighbourhoods has increased by 2.8% vs a target reduction of -2.00%. There are small fluctuations yearly in the active lives data and this is not a significant increase. However, this is a national trend with a number of factors including complex lives, cost of living and structural inequalities.

There has been an approximate drop of £900 in Ward Grant spend (2.5%) for 2025/26 which is due to a drop in applications. 2026/27 data is not yet available.

# Actions and priorities

- Strengthen engagement & insight through consultation & engagement strategy
- Focus Wellbeing Exeter activity on under-represented groups through the enhanced programme
- Actively convene VCSE sector to explore approaches to improving social connection and inclusion
- Greater promotion of ward grants through Councillors and Community Builders

# Homes

Priority 3





# Priority 3 | Homes

## Summary

**People.** We will expand our own council housing; do all we can to fight homelessness, and we will engage communities, the city's key partners and developers in delivering the homes which Exeter needs, whilst protecting our valuable green spaces.

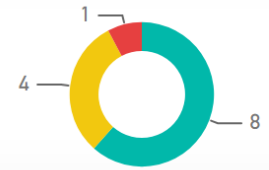
**Intended Outcomes.** The outcomes we want are better quality, energy efficient and more affordable homes to buy or rent, with new housing developments well integrated into existing communities. Fewer people will be homeless or in temporary housing and the number of people on the social housing waiting list will reduce.

**Strategic Partnerships.** To achieve this our strategic efforts will focus on working in partnership to deliver the Exeter Plan; secure investment for building more social housing and in reducing rough sleeping and the number of people in temporary accommodation; enabling more people to find sustainable housing.



## Strategic Outcome Metrics

- Total new homes completed per financial year
- Affordable homes completed per financial year
- Total increase in social housing units
- Reductions in number of people living in fuel poverty
- Percentage of affordable completions that are social rent per financial year



## Service Delivery Metrics

- % of building control application processed within target timeframes to ensure timely and efficient service
- % of planning applications processed within target timeframes to ensure timely and efficient service
- Households in Temporary Accommodation
- Total households on the housing waiting list
- HMO registrations and a programme of effective monitoring to improve quality of homes
- Improvements in social housing tenant satisfaction rates
- Number council houses retrofitted to reduce carbon emissions and energy bills
- Improving access to disabled facilities and warm home grants to those in greatest need

## Directorate Business Plan Metrics

- Operations Business Plan Dashboard (opens in new window)
- People and Communities Business Plan Dashboard (opens in new window)
- Place Business Plan Dashboard (opens in new window)
- Statutory Homelessness Dashboard (opens in new window)

## Performing well

Total new homes built in 2025 was 480, exceeding the long-term average of 455 and above our target 5% year on year increase. This sustained level of delivery supports the city’s growth ambitions and helps to meet ongoing housing demand.

The number of social housing units has increased year on year by 22.96%. The percentage of affordable completions that are social rent has declined slightly but Exeter remains well ahead of others in the region at 53.1% higher than average. This reflects the tenure mix of schemes coming forward and delivered through Section 106 agreements, where outcomes are influenced by site-specific viability and market conditions. Future performance will be dependent on the tenure mix within the existing pipeline of permitted schemes.

In Building Control, performance has improved significantly, with 100% of applications now being processed within target timescales for 2026/27, compared to 87.5% in the previous year. This reflects improved workflow management and prioritisation within the service, alongside a reduction in application volumes. Continued monitoring will be required to ensure performance is sustained, particularly given the higher proportion of applications agreed with extensions.

Similarly in planning, performance has improved, with the proportion of planning applications determined within target timescales increasing from 80.6% to 90.3% in 2024/25 and remaining stable at 90.39% in 2025/26. This reflects sustained service performance despite an increase in application volumes during the current year. Continued monitoring will be required to maintain this position as demand remains high.

The number of households on the housing waiting list has reduced significantly by -10.6% compared to a target reduction of -5% each year. As of the 31st March 2026, there were 2010 applicants registered on Devon Home Choice for Exeter City Council

Social housing tenant satisfaction rates are improving at 5.6% vs the target of 5%. In 2023/24 the overall satisfaction of the service provided by ECC Housing following perception surveys undertaken during that year stood at 70% and for 2024/25 this measure had increased to 76%. This positive result was not received with complacency, but with a desire to drive continuous improvement across the service.

The number of council houses retrofitted to reduce carbon emissions and reduce energy bills (685) is significantly above the 5% improvement threshold at 13.4%.

### Performance in line with target

The number of affordable homes completed overall are modest at 1.1% vs 5.0% target for 2024/25. 178 homes were delivered in 2023/24 following higher levels in 2021/22 and 2022/23. The variation between years mainly reflects scheme phasing and the timing of large developments coming forward. We will continue to monitor delivery against the programme to ensure the pipeline of schemes is maintained.

The number of people reported as living in fuel poverty is slightly behind at -0.5% reduction vs a target of -1.0%.

Households in temporary accommodation reduced in 2024-2025 to 501. A reduction of 4.39%, this is just below the target of a -5%. Overall numbers of households in TA remain static and as of the 14th of May 2026 there are currently 98 households in TA. The use of spot purchase hotels is down. No 16/17 year olds have been placed in TA and there are no families in B&B for longer than 6 weeks.

HMO registrations and monitoring for quality are under performance thresholds currently at 82.1% vs 90.0%. In the nominated time period, the PSH Team approved 39 HMO Licenses under Part 2 of the Housing Act 2004, of the 39 applications submitted. The average time to approve was 73 days, this is well within the current 112 days target time. It should also be noted that 2026 is an “anniversary year” exactly 20 years since HMO licensing was introduced and it is predicted there will be a very large volume of license renewals this year. 22 inspections of licensed HMOs were carried out during the nominated time period, with 12 of those signed off as fully completed works.

### Performance not meeting target

Improving access for disabled facilities and warm homes grants is currently -19.39% against a targeted improvement of 5% year on year.

# Actions and priorities

- Affordable Homes - we will continue to monitor delivery against the programme to ensure the pipeline of schemes is maintained.
- Building control applications will continue to be monitored to ensure performance is sustained, particularly given the higher proportion of applications agreed with extensions.
- Planning applications will continue to be monitored to maintain this position as demand remains high.

# Sustainable Environment

Priority 4





# Priority 4 | Sustainable Environment

## Summary

**Sustainable Environment.** We will reduce our own carbon emissions and work with the city’s key partners, businesses, communities and residents to take action to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

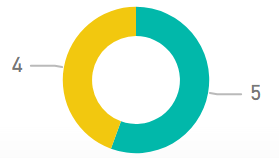
**Intended Outcomes.** The outcomes we want are a city taking action to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change resulting in a net zero carbon city with well-maintained parks and open spaces and biodiversity across the city.

**Strategic Partnerships.** To achieve this our strategic efforts will focus on working in partnership to reduce carbon emissions, by supporting the delivery of District Heat Networks, securing affordable clean and secure energy for the city and bringing forward an electric vehicle strategy for the city.



## Strategic Outcome Metrics

- Annual renewable energy generated from City Council owned solar
- City Council annual carbon footprint



## Strategic Partnership Metrics

- Milestones towards the delivery of new District Heat Network in the City
- Adoption of an electric vehicle strategy for the city

## Service Delivery Metrics

- Energy efficient council homes
- Renewable energy capacity owned by the City Council
- Annual carbon emissions from City Council Leisure facilities
- Increases in recycling rates
- Roll out of food waste collection city wide

## Directorate Business Plan Metrics

- Operations Business Plan Dashboard (opens in new window)
- Place Business Plan Dashboard (opens in new window)

### Performing well

Annual renewable energy generated from council sites is up 9.2% vs 5.0% for the year 2024.

The City Council annual carbon footprint was reduced by - 7,168 tCO<sub>2</sub>e (-15.42%) in 2023/24, exceeding the target of -5.0%.

Renewable energy capacity owned by the City Council is growing well at 7.6% vs 5.0% target.

Leisure decarbonisation is ahead of plan with emissions down - 10.8% vs -5.0% target.

The roll-out of food waste collection to all 60,810 properties in the city was completed on time for the March 2026 deadline.

### Performance in line with target

Milestones towards the delivery of a new District Heat Network in the City remain largely on track with just one milestone outstanding.

The City-wide EV strategy adoption is under target, with progress at -1.2% vs 5.0% target increase however Exeter remains ahead of many peer authorities with 159 non-rapid and 101 rapid public electric vehicle charge points.

Energy efficiency in council homes is only 0.7% improvement vs a targeted -5.0% decrease, indicating insufficient progress against desired direction.

Recycling performance is virtually unchanged at -0.1% reduction vs 1.0 target increase.

# Actions and priorities

- No measures are currently RAG rated as not meeting target

# A Well-Run Council

Priority 5





# Priority 5 | A Well-Run Council

## Summary








**A Well-Run Council.** Despite 14 years of reduced government funding and the increasing cost of living, we are committed to maintaining a strong and resilient council and delivering quality services and a balanced budget.

**Intended Outcomes.** The outcomes we want are to meet the challenges of ongoing reductions in funding, by reducing costs, generating additional income and prioritising spend whilst maintaining good quality statutory services that meet resident needs.




**Strategic Partnerships.** To achieve this we will conduct our business in accordance with the Delivering Good Governance in Local Government (CIPFA) Framework; engaging residents and businesses in priority setting and service developments whilst transforming services to make it as easy as possible for people to help themselves by providing high-quality information and advice, first time, through digital and self-help services and a single point of contact; and managing our built assets to improve value for money, income potential and to maximise their longevity.






## Service Delivery Metrics

-  Business and council tax collection rates
-  Invoices paid within 30 days
-  Sundry debt collection; arrears as a % of total debt
-  Levels of non-ringfenced reserves
-  Speed of processing housing benefit claims
-  Recovery of overpaid Housing Benefits
-  Healthy and Safety compliance Built Assets
-  Health and Safety Compliance Workforce
-  Number of elections and committee meetings held










## Strategic Metrics




-  Draft Local Government Outcomes Framework for Exeter
-  Value for Money reports from LG Inform
-  Corporate risk register

## Directorate Business Plan Metrics

-  Corporate Resources Dashboard (opens in new window)
-  Executive Office Dashboard (opens in new window)
-  HR Dashboard (opens in new window)



-  MyExeter accounts and tenants portal
-  Increase in citizens self-serving online
-  Telephony answer rate for call centre
-  Freedom of Information responses
-  Complaints processing
-  Total web page hits
-  External audit of financial statements
-  Partnership register
-  Strata business plan dashboard

-  Operations Dashboard (opens in new window)
-  People and Communities Dashboard (open in new...)
-  Place Dashboard (open in new window)

## Performing well

Payment performance is excellent with 99.1% of invoices paid within 30 days vs 90.0% target and showing improving on previous years (96.02% for 2025/26 and 95.24% for 2024/25.)

Sundry Debt arrears reduced -20.5% vs -10.0% target. Targeted work underway to reduce level of historic sundry debts.

Housing Benefit claims are being processed 2 days faster than the national average. However, performance may vary due to fluctuations in caseload. Exeter has a higher proportion of temporary and supported accommodation claimants which drives up processing times compared to our rural neighbours.

Health and Safety Compliance Built Assets is strong at 96.55% vs a target of 95.0%.

My Exeter accounts and tenants' portal uptake at 13.85% vs 5.0% and online self-service transactions up 12.6% vs a target of 5.0%. New integrations including one with the Council Tax portal will take place in June 2026, a marketing campaign is planned for My Exeter this summer.

FOI responses within the 20-day SLA for 2026 are above target at 93.5% vs 90.0%. A new automation to the service will be introduced in June 2026 which will help improve the service.

## Performance in line with target

In-year collection rates for Council Tax (95.3%) and NDR (98.2%) are slightly below targeted levels at 96.5% and 98.5% respectively but remain an improved position. Both teams have faced challenges with a service wide restructure and introduction of additional NDR multipliers.

Non-ringfenced reserves (GF 18.6%, HRA 15.6%) above 15% thresholds, and sundry debt arrears reduced -20.5% vs -10.0% target.

The telephony answer rate is trending slightly below the average year to date at -0.23% vs a target improvement of 5.0%.

Total web hits down -2.8% compared to a target increase of 5.0%. Web content is being updated and overhauled with an updated template suite going live in July 2026.

Strata Business Plan status is "Stable". Strata working with our Digital and Data team and services in the council continue to make good progress on completing projects within the agreed business plan.

### Performance not meeting target

Recovery of overpaid Housing Benefit down -5.7% vs 2.0% increase, Permanent staff resources for the recovery of overpaid Housing Benefits has enabled a housekeeping exercise of historic debts to be performed and driven up write-offs during 25/26 compared to 24/25

Internal health and safety training/compliance for workforce is low at 66.4% vs 90.0% target.

Complaints processing is currently below the target to provide a satisfactory remedy for 50% of cases before reaching the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO). There was a drop in the number of complaints in 2024/25 (8) compared to 2023/24 (10). However, whilst 50% of cases in 2023/24 were successfully resolved locally, none of the 10 cases in 2024/25 were remedied prior to reaching the LGO.

### Councillor Enquiries

Councillor enquiries are not a specific measure within the Corporate Plan but are another indicator of how well the Council is performing. An overview is therefore included as part of this report. This includes figures since the new process began in September 2025.

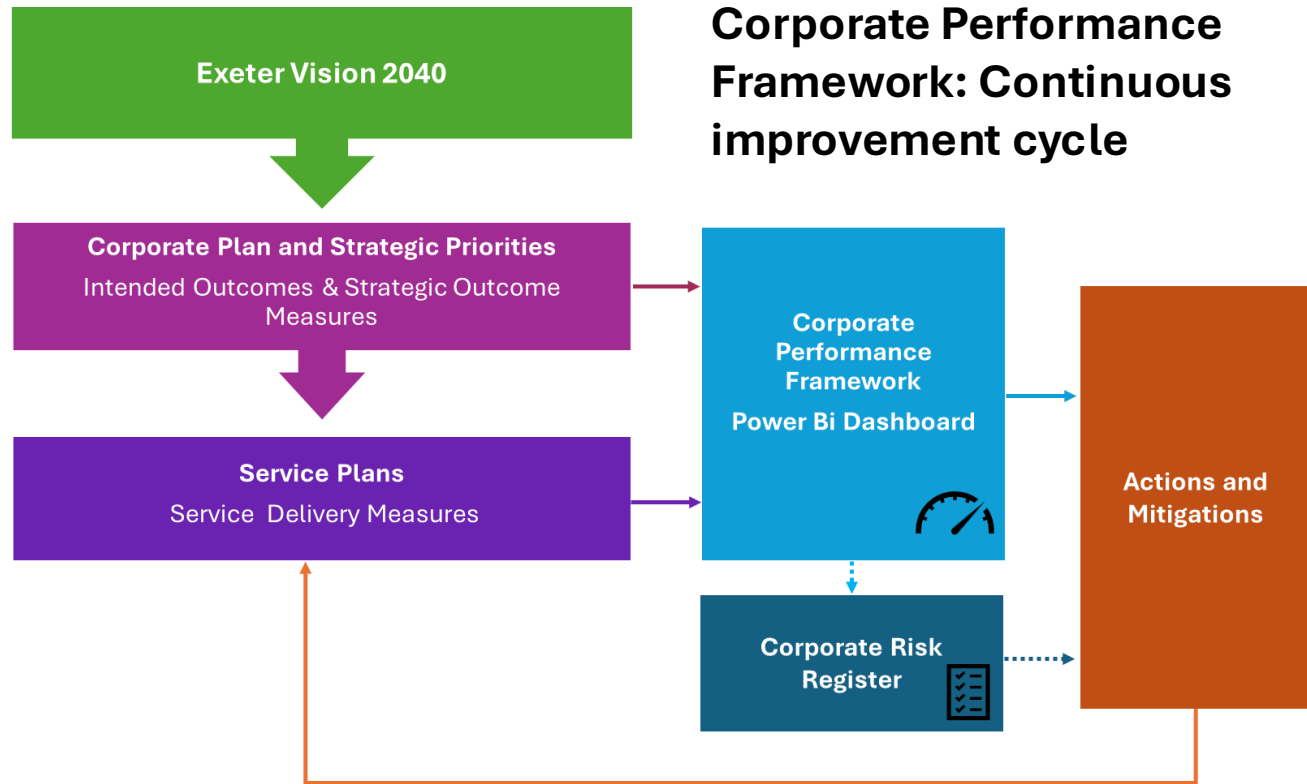
**Total Enquiries: 804      Closed: 726      Open: 78**

<b>Top 10 Enquiries:</b>	<b>Cases:</b>
HRA Housing	130
Waste Management	103
Parks & Grounds Maintenance	99
HRA Assets	65
Incorrect procedure	46
Cleansing	38
Development Management	23
Commercial Property	22
Environmental Health	22
Finance (inc. Revenues & Benefits)	15

# Actions and priorities

- **Health & Safety Compliance (Workforce)** - Action is being taken to address longstanding issues with AssessNET. HR is working with RiskEx and Digital/Data to update the council structure, improve system access through Single Sign On, explore automated data updates from iTrent, correct action-routing issues, provide staff communications and training, and strengthen reporting through BI reports to the Corporate Health and Safety Committee.
- **New Complaints Policy** with increased transparency in reporting.
- **Freedom of Information requests** - A new automation to the service will be introduced in June 2026 which will help improve the service.
- **My Exeter Accounts and Tenants' Portal** - New integrations including one with the Council Tax portal will take place in June 2026, a marketing campaign is planned for My Exeter this summer.
- **Web content** is being updated and overhauled with an updated template suite going live in July 2026.
- Targeted work underway to reduce level of **historic sundry debts**.
- **Strata Business Plan** – Strata are working with our Digital and Data team and services in the council continue to make good progress on completing projects within the agreed business plan.

# Continuous Performance Improvement



- Actions and mitigations to address measures will be added to Service Plans and progress monitored and evaluated
- Any corporate risks identified through this report will be added to the Corporate Risk Register and accompanying actions and mitigations added to Service Plans
- Quarterly Performance Reports will capture highlights and exceptions alongside updates on the above
- Measures and metrics will remain under review to assure the Corporate Performance Framework is robust.

