

## PORTFOLIO HOLDER'S REPORT TO SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

### REPORT TO STRATEGIC and CUSTOMER FOCUS SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

**Date of Meetings:**

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

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

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

**Council Committees:** Executive and Council

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

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

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

**Devon & Cornwall Police Cllr Advocate**

**Relevant training and CPD undertaken this year;**  
LGA Conference, Liverpool, July 2025

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

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

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

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

###### **City Centre Strategy**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **CCTV and Control Room**

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

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

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

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

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

A new camera has been installed in South Street.

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

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

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

## **Community Safety Partnership**

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

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

## **2. Sustainable environment**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **IT & Digital**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1. All covered in the sections above

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

### **CCTV**

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

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

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

<b>4. Potential changes to services/provisions being considered</b>
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<b>5. Other matters the Portfolio Holder wishes to raise with the Scrutiny Committee</b>
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1. <b>Devon &amp; Cornwall Police and Crime Commissioner Panel</b>
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A report on the last two meetings will come out with the next scrutiny bulletin.
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