

COUNCIL

Tuesday 14 October 2025

Present:-

The Right Worshipful the Lord Mayor Councillor Anne Jobson (Lord Mayor)
Councillor Gemma Rolstone (Deputy Lord Mayor)
Councillors Atkinson, Banyard, Begley, Bennett, Bialyk, Cookson, Darling, Foale, Fullam, Haigh, Harding, Holland, Hussain, Ketchin, Miller-Boam, Mitchell, K, Mitchell, M, Moore, Palmer, Parkhouse, Patrick, Payne, Pole, Read, Rees, Sheridan, Snow, Vizard, Wardle, Wetenhall, Williams, M, Williams, R, Wood and Wright

Also Present

Chief Executive, Strategic Director for Corporate Resources, Head of Legal and Democratic Services & Monitoring Officer, Democratic Services Officer and Democratic Services Manager

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MINUTES

The minutes of the Ordinary meeting of the Council held on the 2 September 2025 were moved by the Lord Mayor, taken as read, approved, and signed as correct.

The minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of the Council held on 18 September 2025, were moved by the Lord Mayor, taken as read, approved, and signed as correct.

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DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made by Members.

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Local Government Act 1972 - Exclusion of Press and Public

88

HONORARY RECORDER

RESOLVED that His Honour Judge James Patrick be formally installed as Recorder of the City.

His Honour Judge Patrick welcomed his appointment and returned thanks.

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OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS

The Lord Mayor advised Members of the following communications:

- she commended Andrew Finch, a Senior Engineer at Exeter City Council, who had been awarded the Recognising Excellence in Volunteering I the South West 2024-25 Award for his work as a STEM ambassador;
- @Thirty-Four had been named the AA College Restaurant of the Year for the second time;
- Exeter had achieved the Gold Award at the South West in Bloom Awards, and she congratulated the staff that had been involved;
- Guildhall Shopping Centre had won the Best Multi-Party Collaboration Award at the IWFM Impact Awards 2025; and
- she congratulated Mace Sergeant Grant Leitch who had been awarded the Superintendent's Certificate for leadership, and thanked him for his outstanding service during his 30 years as a police officer.

The Lord Mayor informed Members of the passing of Bernard Frowd OBE, who had served Exeter City Council for many years as City Treasurer and as Chief

Executive. The Lord Mayor paid tribute to his long and dedicated service to the city and conveyed sympathy to his family.

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PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Lord Mayor advised that no questions from members of the public had been received.

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AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE - 4 SEPTEMBER 2025

The minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee of 4 September 2025 were presented by the Chair, Councillor Wardle, and taken as read.

In respect of **Minute No. 82 Amendments to the Council Financial Regulations**, Councillor Wardle moved, and Councillor Atkinson seconded the recommendations. During debate Councillor Moore asked for clarity regarding community understanding of what assets were being lost by the council. Councillor Moore asked the Leader what actions he would take to make assets more readily available to the community and how organisations could better engage with the council.

The Leader responded to Councillor Moore making the following points:

- he believed officers engaged with communities when it came to community asset transfers;
- there would not be barriers to engagement but the responsibilities had to be met; and
- he would discuss with the Chief Executive, and if it was needed, provide clarity.

Following a vote the recommendations were CARRIED.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the revised Financial Regulations at Appendix 1 and 2 are approved;**
- (ii) that the thresholds for approving budget virements within each Strategic Directors service areas are increased;**
- (iii) that the thresholds for approving supplementary budgets are increased;**
- (iv) that the thresholds for approving debtor write-offs are increased;**
- (v) that the thresholds for approving disposal of assets are increased;**
- (vi) that other minor changes to the regulations are approved.**

In respect of **Minute No.83 Net Zero Risk Register Report**, Councillor Wardle moved, and Councillor Atkinson seconded the recommendation.

During debate Councillor Wetenhall asked for clarification on the word “enabler” in the context of the district heat network, and asked questions regarding how much officer time was being spent on this project, and what was not being done as a result.

The Leader advised that the Democratic Services Team would provide Councillor Wetenhall with clarification regarding the minutes of the meeting.

Councillor Patrick, as Portfolio Holder for City Development, responded to Councillor Wetenhall advising that officers did not keep timesheets so it would not be possible to provide an exact figure for officer time spent.

Following a vote, the recommendations were CARRIED.

RESOLVED that the updated Net Zero Risk Register is approved; and it is acknowledged that the Council’s Costed Organisational Carbon Footprint Projections to 2030 study will be reported to Scrutiny on 11 September, after which a further report will be considered by Executive. The report will address further work beyond the measures which have already been fully costed and committed and a revised Carbon Reduction Plan.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 4 September be received.

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PLANNING COMMITTEE - 8 SEPTEMBER 2025

The minutes of the Planning Committee of 8 September 2025 were presented by the Deputy Chair, Councillor Rolstone, and taken as read.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 8 September be received.

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STRATEGIC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 11 SEPTEMBER 2025

The minutes of the Strategic Scrutiny Committee of 11 September 2025 were presented by the Chair, Councillor Pole, and taken as read.

During discussion Members asked the following questions:

- how long had it taken for 20% of properties to have been retrofit;
- what was the timeline for installing secure bike storage for council homes;
- how long would the retrofitting continue, as it would take 16 years to achieve 100% at this pace;
- was it clear or an aspiration that all new council houses would be build to Passivhaus or A+++ standard; and
- was the priority level of installing bike storage being increased.

Councillor Vizard, Portfolio Holder for Climate, Ecological Change, and Communities responded to Members' questions in the following terms:

- the retrofitting had been ongoing since 2021 and was critical work;
- secure storage for bikes was part of a sequential workflow and currently awaiting the ECC Green Travel Plan, which had been delayed due to Local Government Reorganisation;
- the trajectory of the retrofitting, and the new council house standards would be responded to outside of the meeting as it was funding dependent and say outside his portfolio; and
- cycle parking was a priority for the Transport Working Group and it maybe possible that a question could be included in the Residents' survey in future.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Strategic Scrutiny Committee held on 11 September 2025 be received.

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HARBOUR BOARD- 29 SEPTEMBER 2025

The minutes of the Harbour Board held on 29 September 2025 were presented by the Chair, Councillor Williams, and taken as read.

During discussion Members asked the following questions:

- could an update be provided on when discussions with residents would begin regarding the Trews Weir project; and
- would the presentation received at the meeting of the Harbour Board be taken any further.

Councillor Williams, responded to Members' questions in the following terms:

- there would be a full public consultation beginning towards the end of the year; and
- the presentation given had increased the knowledge of Harbour Board Members, and she would be interested to know how this work would progress.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Harbour Board held on 29 September 2025 be received.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE - 23 SEPTEMBER 2025

The minutes of the Executive Committee of 23 September 2025 were presented by the Leader, Councillor Bialyk, and taken as read.

In respect of **Minute No.69 Annual Scrutiny Report 2024-25**, the Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendation and following a unanimous vote, the recommendation was CARRIED.

Councillor Rees spoke as Chair of Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee to thank the Democratic Services Manager for the work that she had carried out on the Annual Scrutiny Report.

In respect of **Minute No.70 Air Quality Annual Status Report and Revision of the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)** the Leader advised Members that this had been deferred.

In respect of **Minute No.71 Food Law and Health and Safety Enforcement Service Plan 2025-26**, the Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendations, and following a unanimous vote was CARRIED.

In respect of **Minute No.72 Housing Damp & Condensation Policy 2025-2030**, the Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded.

Councillor Parkhouse praised the introduction of this policy and believed it would show tenants that Exeter City Council were looking after them. The Leader responded to Councillor Parkhouse highlighting the positive impact the retrofitting had had. Following a unanimous vote the recommendations were CARRIED.

In respect of **Minute No.73 Housing Recharges Policy 2025-2030**, the Leader moved, and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendation, and following a unanimous vote was CARRIED.

In respect of **Minute No.74 Home Adaptations for Council Housing Policy 2025-2030**, the Leader moved, and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendation, and following a unanimous vote was CARRIED.

In respect of **Minute No.75 Housing Compensation Policy 2025-2030**, the Leader moved, and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendation, and following a unanimous vote was CARRIED.

In respect of **Minute No.76 Exeter City Council Housing Services Hate Crime Policy**, the Leader advised that this was a resolved matter. Councillor Moore asked the Leader when they could expect to see a revised policy and if the EQIA would be completed in consultation with those it would affect the most. Councillor Wright asked the Leader why this policy had been deferred.

The Leader advised Councillor Moore that the policy would be brought back to the Executive Committee as soon as it was ready, and that he agreed with Councillor Wright on the importance of this policy and it had been deferred as it was important to review the impact assessment.

In respect of **Minute No.77 Housing Allocations Policy 2025-2030**, the Leader moved, and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendation.

During debate, Councillor Moore felt that some groups with protected characteristics had not been considered and felt that it would be beneficial to consider what could be changed and why it was not possible to meet the need of some protected groups.

Councillor Wood advised Councillor Moore that the protected groups she had mentioned were covered in the EQIA and that there was no objective process to EQIAs.

The Leader advised Councillor Moore that a lot of work had been carried out by officers and he hoped the council would approve this recommendation. Following a unanimous vote, the recommendation was CARRIED.

In respect of **Minute No.78 Housing Complaints Policy 2025-2030**, the Leader moved, and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendation. Councillor Vizard welcomed this policy and felt it was useful to have clarification on the complaints process as it could be tricky to navigate.

Following a unanimous vote, the recommendation was CARRIED.

96 **COUNCILLOR APPOINTMENT TO EXETER CHURCH CHARITIES (OUTSIDE BODY) AND AMENDMENT TO THE SCHEME OF DELEGATION**

The Leader moved, and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendations.

The Monitoring Officer presented the report, making the following points:

- appointment to outside bodies typically took place at the Annual General Meeting of the Council but there were occasional in-year appointments; and
- it was recommended that in-year appointments be delegated to the Head of Service - Legal & Democratic Services and the Democratic Services Manager in consultation with Group Leaders during the course of the Municipal Year and that the constitution be amended accordingly.

Councillor Rees asked for clarity on whether Exeter Health & Wellbeing Board was in place, and the Monitoring Officer advised that this would be looked into following the meeting.

Following a unanimous vote, the recommendations were CARRIED.

97 **IMPLEMENTATION OF CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES AND APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES**

The Leader moved the recommendations, seconded by Councillor Wright.

The Monitoring Officer presented the report, making the following points:

- Members would be aware of the background to this report, including the reduction of committee sizes and the introduction of substitutes;
- Group Leaders had provided the names of those sitting on committees and those who would become substitutes; and
- appropriate training would be required to be undertaken before any substitutes were able to sit on a committee.

Councillor M Mitchell asked for clarification that the onus would be on Members to contact their substitute, and that this would not sit with Democratic Services. The Monitoring Officer advised that this was correct and would be communicated to Members.

During debate Councillor Wright thanked the officers for the work that had gone into the constitutional changes, the cross-party group that had given input, and the Group Leaders she had spoken with. She felt that in order to maintain smaller

committee sizes and personal commitments it was important to add substitutes. Councillor Wright felt that this would be used as a tool to aide democracy.

In summing up, the Leader advised that a number of other authorities had substitutes and that it would be a learning process.

Following a vote, the recommendations were CARRIED.

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**NOTICE OF MOTION BY COUNCILLOR WETENHALL UNDER STANDING
ORDER NO. 6**

Councillor Wetenhall moved, and Councillor Moore seconded a Notice of Motion under Standing Order No.6 in the following terms:

“This Council resolves that:

- full and transparent information about air pollution levels on specific roads and health impacts of living on or regularly using those roads whether as a pedestrian, cyclist or motorist.
- information on alternative walking and cycling routes or travel modes for known regular commuter and school run routes, avoiding the most polluted roads.
- Fuller information on the health impacts of air pollution from all sources, both inside the home (for wood burners, open fires, mould and damp) and outside and actions to take to reduce these impacts.”

In presenting the motion, Councillor Wetenhall made the following points:

- there was currently misleading information and information that was difficult for lay people to understand;
- 92% of nitrogen dioxide monitoring sites did not meet WHO guidelines;
- there was a simple solution, and it would not be very expensive; and
- she had attended the Exeter Futures Walk put on by the University and it was clear that there needed to be a simpler way to communicate scientific information in way that could be understood by everyone.

The Lord Mayor advised that an amendment had been proposed and invited Councillor R Williams to speak. Councillor R Williams moved, seconded by the Leader, Councillor Bialyk, an amendment that under Standing Order 7 (4) that his motion be referred to the Strategic Scrutiny Committee.

In proposing her amendment, Councillor R Williams informed Members that the Air Quality Report was going to the Strategic Scrutiny Committee as an item at the November meeting.

During debate on the amendment, Members made the following points:

Councillor Palmer:

- this amendment essentially squashed the motion; and
- vulnerable people could not wait for this to be deferred.

Councillor Read:

- she appreciated that scrutiny was able to look at things in depth;
- reports were often only noted at scrutiny;
- it would be helpful for Council to make a decision now, that would support scrutiny regarding air quality;
- the original motion enabled communication with residents and provided solutions residents on how they can solve their problem; and
- if this amendment was approved it would be a vote to not provide transparency.

Councillor Ketchin:

- the Strategic Scrutiny Committee would be assessing the reporting of air pollution in the city;
- the original motion was about simple measure to update information for the public; and
- this brought forward wood burners which had not previously been addressed.

Councillor Atkinson:

- Devon County Council were responsible for devising and putting into place an Air Quality Plan, the role of Exeter City Council was to put up monitoring equipment and collect data;
- Exeter City Council was creating plans to deal with mould and damp and that would be an issue for Customer Focus Scrutiny; and
- this motion should go to Scrutiny for an informed debate on these issues as they had a valuable role and informed policies.

Councillor Wetenhall:

- this was not about tackling air pollution, but about providing more information;
- the rest of the city would not be covered by the Air Quality Action Plan; and
- this motion was simple and quick, referring the matter to scrutiny was a poor use of scarce officer time.

Councillor Wood:

- this was an incredibly important subject that everyone was passionate about;
- this required partnership input, and experts were needed on communication and air quality as this was a complicated process;
- he supported the amendment as it would send this issue to the correct platform;
- he recognised the importance but also the complexity; and
- scrutiny had capacity to bring in external people to explore.

Councillor Rees:

- many cities across the UK were dealing with improving air quality;
- it was important that these issues were identified as cross-party and that the intention was to communicate with residents;
- it would be better to work together, even if views were different about how; and
- work must be done in partnership with Devon County Council.

Councillor K Mitchell asked for clarification from the mover of the amendment to this motion that it would be separate from the Air Quality Action Plan on the agenda at the Strategic Scrutiny Committee, as is stated in the Standing Orders. Councillor Mitchell also asked for clarification on what the considerations were for this being referred to the Strategic Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor R Williams advised that the Air Quality Action Plan was not coming to Strategic Scrutiny, but the Air Quality Status Report 2025, and alongside that would be a timetable for the Air Quality Management Area and information about Air Quality Action Plan timetable.

Councillor Moore:

- this was about science communication;
- this motion could have been dealt with now;
- Exeter City Council had an educational role with Denis the Dustcart;
- the Director of Public Health had been clear about the damage to health; and
- the best time to start communicating with residents was now.

Councillor M Mitchell raised a Point of Order on the amendment and asked for clarification from the Monitoring Officer on whether the matter would be referred from Scrutiny to the Executive Committee and then back to Council. The Lord Mayor advised that this would be the case.

Councillor Wright:

- this information could be difficult to understand unless you were a scientist;
- she would like to provide information that was easy for people to understand;
- the information provided would need to be looked into to ensure that it was full and transparent information; and
- this should go to public scrutiny to ensure it was the relevant information.

Councillor Pole:

- wanted to reassure Members, as Chair of Strategic Scrutiny, that this would be undertaken in a cross-party manner;
- the Air Quality Monitoring Report and Monitoring Area were prerequisites for the Air Quality Action Plan;
- she would look at all these items and meet with the Portfolio Holder to support this work which would be done in collaboration with stakeholders; and
- this motion appeared to be pre-empting a bigger piece of work.

Councillor Bialyk, Leader as seconder:

- the amendment was clear, and the motion would be on the agenda, the mover of the original motion would be entitled to speak and it would be debated;
- there were a number of councillors with severe respiratory diseases, and they were invested in improving air quality; and
- Exeter City Council was responsible for monitoring air quality.

In summing up, the mover of the amendment, Councillor R Williams made the following points:

- all were passionate about air quality;
- the Air Quality Status Report was 130 pages long and it was essential that it was read and considered alongside this motion;
- accurate and targeted communication was essential; and
- to ensure the best for the people of Exeter, she asked Members to trust that this could go to Strategic Scrutiny and be examined.

Following a vote, the amendment was CARRIED and became the substantive motion.

Councillor Wetenhall proposed an amendment which was ruled out of order by the Lord Mayor.

Following a vote, the substantive motion was CARRIED.

**QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL UNDER STANDING ORDER
NO. 8**

In accordance with Standing Order No.8, the following question was put by Councillor Read to the Leader:

"The swimmable cities movement is gaining more traction with every passing month, with more cities and councils signing up to its charter which aims to enable rivers flowing through cities to be swimmable by residents and visitors. But the south-west of England is notably absent; the nearest signatory to Exeter is in Stroud. Does the portfolio holder agree that it would be useful to discuss this concept for Exeter, and that this could be a useful matter for a future meeting of the Harbor board to discuss?"

Councillor R Williams, Portfolio Holder for City Management to respond to this question stating that she was open to consider this topic at the Harbour Board Visioning Day, and that she was open to having this as an item on a future Harbour Board agenda, subject to available time.

In accordance with Standing Ordner No.8, the following question was put by Councillor Banyard to the Leader:

"The Cathedral and Quay Car Park closes at 8pm because of anti-social behaviour. However, feedback from traders at the quay say the early closing time is harming their businesses. One venue told us, "We have received repeated feedback from customers that the lack of accessible evening parking has deterred them from attending. The change has therefore had a measurable negative impact on our trade and on Exeter's night-time cultural offering in general." What steps could be taken to begin a trial for some late opening at the car park, until 10:30pm on Friday and Saturday nights, to help out these businesses?"

The Leader responded to Councillor Banyard, stating that:

"Since the new opening times have been introduced, the incidents of severe vandalism have reduced from 18, in the preceding period to four.

However, we recognise the challenges of the reduced opening times and Officers are currently exploring a range of proposals to improve the offer at Cathedral & Quay amongst other Car Parks in the City.

If Members chose to proceed a full business case will be developed and put before Council."

In a supplementary question, Councillor Banyard stated that it was great to hear about the reduction of ASB, and asked the Leader what he would say to traders who felt their businesses were being harmed by the reduced opening hours?

The Leader responded that they were exploring a range of proposals and it was important to get this correct.

(The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and closed at 8.08 pm)

Chair