

Statement from Councillor D. Moore under Standing Order 44

Minute 59 – Exeter’s Recovery Plan

1. What is the purpose of the organisational change you wish to undertake within the Council?

Response

Covid-19 has profoundly challenged organisations in the way they deliver their transactional services. We have moved rapidly to support Council services through digital and agile working, therefore it is right and proper that officers and Members take the opportunity to look at organisational development for the future configuration of work during and post this crisis

2. At the Executive of July 2019 and the subsequent Council the establishment of a Board to oversee the Liveable Exeter Garden City programme was approved. The recommendation said the proposed composition of the Liveable Exeter Garden City Programme Board and the draft terms of reference be delegated to the Chief Executive & Growth Director in consultation with the Leader of the Council and be reported back to a future meeting of Executive. When will the terms of reference and membership of the Liveable Exeter Garden City Programme Board be reported back to the Executive? Is the Liveable Exeter Place Board the same or a different body or subcommittee to the Liveable Exeter Garden City programme Board and where are the minutes and work of these bodies published for the public and council to see?

Response

The Liveable Exeter Place Board is not a committee of the City Council. The original draft terms of reference agreed by Council have not been amended in any meaningful way. Hence we have not reported back to Executive. Commitments were provided at the Executive meeting on how decisions are made through the existing agreed procedures of the Council.

3. The report recognises the inequalities in the city and areas of multiple deprivation. There are now more people facing very different and challenging circumstances compared to the start of the year. What immediate work is going to be undertaken to understand and respond to immediate community needs, helping people to find new jobs, cope with reduced work and income, ensuring no one goes hungry and combatting the deep isolation that many feel as some move out of lockdown and others have to, or feel, they should remain?

Response

The small economic development team in the City Council is focused on our skills agenda and helping our residents fulfil their potential. It is important that everyone recognises the practical limitations on the City Council to respond to the scale of challenge. The recovery plan is rooted in a place based approach that endeavours to engage the key stakeholders to collectively respond to the challenges we face.

4. The report talks about Development finance and the work that has been done on the City Development Fund with the One Public Estate - please can you explain the outcomes of this work?

Response

The One Public Estate is currently funding work on a business case to test whether a sustainable development fund could be created for the city that would be capable of providing finance for the development needs of the city to meet our ambitions for quality development and providing infrastructure to support the transformational housing agenda. This is a unique concept, a city based fund backed by assets. It comes out of work supported by the Council as a concept but it needs to be modelled to make sure it was a viable proposition. When the modelling work has been completed it will be presented to the Council.

5. Various work groups are mentioned in the report - what role will Councillors have to contribute alongside any partners in the city to this work?

Response

The Leader of the City Council sits on the Place board. Portfolio Holders have a role in the recovery work with their relevant theme, such as Councillor David Harvey on transport and the city centre, Councillor Rachel Sutton on culture and visitor destinations and Councillor Amal Ghusain on community well-being. Many of the project based work will come through the regulatory systems such as planning and licencing. Clearly Scrutiny can act as a critical friend to the various work-streams.

6. In the principles of recovery it talks about working with communities to understand needs and co-delivery of the plan, but what role will residents, community organisations, charities, social and community enterprises play in the co-production of any plan?

Response

For many parts of Devon the recovery plan will be the plan that is put in place by Devon County Council through the Local Resilience Forum. Clearly that plan will also be relevant for Exeter. The Council could simply have settled for this. However, this will not be sufficiently place based for Exeter. Therefore the City Council has used its convening power to galvanise the key stakeholders to work collectively on putting together a plan. At this stage the political engagement has been light touch. The Leader has directed the approach and it has been agile and assembled at pace. In the future the individual work streams may well identify the need to engage individuals, organisations and businesses to contribute to the plan of action.

7. What specific recommendations or requests has the City Council made to Devon County Council for measures using the new statutory guidance for highway authorities to reallocate road space to provide safe spaces of roads for pedestrians, cyclists and people with disabilities?

Response

The Leader of the City Council and the Portfolio Holder for City Management have supported the urgent measures announced by Devon County Council's cabinet.

8. Is it your view that the Net Zero Exeter 2030 Plan should drive the recovery of the city or that it is something that will be looked at once the recovery plan is finalised?

Response

We have made it clear that a principal reason for reporting the Net Zero 2030 Plan to the Executive Committee is to ensure that it informs the recovery work.

Minute 60 – Net Zero Exeter 2030 Plan

1. Which action has the Leader of the Council identified as the priority for this Council to implement?

Response

I personally believe we should be seriously considering what we can do to support an extensive retrofit programme for homes. It is both a big ticket item in terms of carbon savings and also something we can do because it relates to council housing. But I also think we should be seeing what could be done to make this happen in the private sector.

2. Recommendation 2.4 says that when clarity has emerged on the financial position of the City Council, the Chief Executive & Growth Director will bring back a report to Executive on how the City Council will deliver the actions set out in the section “what Exeter City Council can do”. The Council is preparing an emergency budget in July, do you agree with me that such a report should be presented at the same time as the budget?

Response

I think we have to get real about the massive challenge facing the City Council in making the in-year savings. An unprecedented scale of reduction that will demand the full attention of the Strategic Management Board. All Councillors received an email from the Section 151 Officer detailing the extreme problems now facing the Council. We are unlikely to get clarity from Government until much later in the year, some speculate this could come when the comprehensive spending review is published, this could be late autumn. Also, I simply do not believe the Directors have the band-width to also address within the next three weeks the management structures also required to address capacity issues associated with delivering the road map.

Minute 61 – Priority Asset Investment Programme

1. Does the cost of the replacement of roofs include the installation of solar or thermal panels on them?

Response

The cost of the replacement of roofs does not include the installation of solar or thermal panels on them. This was not a matter considered in the report.

2. What consideration of provision of short-term transit sites for Gypsies and Travellers has been undertaken in order to provide proper alternative sites to public open space - the cause of the problem identified in the Equalities Impact Statement part of the report?

Response

In relation to traveller sites, we identified two temporary sites during the current crisis, Haven Banks Coach Park and Grace Road Fields. Permanent Traveller sites are being considered as part of the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan. This was not a matter considered in the report.

3. Does the CCTV replacement include facial recognition software and, if so, what assessment of the civil liberties issues associated with this has been undertaken?

Response

Facial recognition software is not included in the CCTV and was not a matter considered in the report.

4. Please can you provide an update on the funding gap for Mallison Bridge and why is this project not on that list?

Response

The target for funding Mallison Bridge has not yet been reached. There are scores of projects not included in this report. Those in the report are the highest priority in terms of preventing additional costs and those which require intervention to prevent assets degrading further.

Minute 62 Exeter City Group – Request for funding for new company business cases and additional financial support

1. When will the outcome of the business development, a report on viability and risks be presented to the Council as part of the due diligence of examining the business case?

Response

Issues of risk in relation to the business case will be addressed as part of the examination of the business case by Executive in July.

2. Will a report on the governance arrangements and appointments to the Exeter city group, dormant companies or new companies be brought to Council before any new business stream is taken forward?

Response

The intention is to bring forward a report on the governance arrangements for the Exeter City Group to the Executive meeting on the 7 July.

3. Will the Section 151 Officer comment on whether it is premature to earmark £300,000 as a priority before the emergency budget in July?

Response

The Chief Finance officer has concluded it is not premature.