

EXECUTIVE
(HELD AS A VIRTUAL MEETING)

Tuesday 3 November 2020

Present:

Councillor Bialyk (Chair)
Councillors Sutton, Foale, Ghusain, Harvey, Morse, Pearson, Williams, Wright and Wood

Also present:

Chief Executive & Growth Director, Director Net Zero Exeter and City Management, Director Communications, Culture and Leisure Facilities, Director Finance, Service Lead - Environmental Health and Community Safety, Project Director – Liveable Exeter, Senior Environmental Technical Officer, Policy Officer – Community Safety, Safeguarding and Equality and Diversity, Democratic Services Officer (MD), Democratic Services Officer (SS) and Democratic Services Officer (HB)

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MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2020, were taken as read and approved as correct, for signing by the Chair at the earliest possible convenience.

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COVID-19 - SECOND LOCKDOWN

Following the recent Government announcement of a second National Lockdown scheduled for 5 November to 2 December 2020, the Leader stated that the City Council, together with its partners in the voluntary and community sectors across the city, would continue to support the public and businesses during the continuing crisis. Practical support would be provided through Wellbeing Exeter, the use of community buildings and the Covid Community Action Fund.

He thanked all community groups and organisations who were helping neighbours and the most vulnerable with meals distributed by local groups and through the Council's support network and Community Wellbeing. The Council would continue the assistance given to families during half term through the course of the Lockdown and into the Christmas period and that as much support as possible would be given to help Exeter come through the pandemic.

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EXETER CHIEFS

The Leader congratulated the Exeter Chiefs on their double success in winning both the Heineken Champions Cup and the Gallagher Premiership and emphasised the increased national profile this brought not only to Exeter but the wider South West.

JULIAN TAGG AND JO YELLAND

The Leader congratulated the following on being awarded British Empire Medals in the Queens's Birthday Honours:-

- Julian Tagg, Chairman of Exeter City Community Trust, for services to sport and the community in Exeter; and
- Jo Yelland, Director Transformation, for her service in reducing health inequalities in the city, through her work on Wellbeing Exeter.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests were made.

QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC UNDER STANDING ORDER NO. 19

A member of the public, Dr Gillian Baker, submitted the following question, related to Minute No. 114:-

- Air quality in Exeter improved until 2015 but since then there has been no improvement. Is it not misleading to say there is a long term downward trend when there has been no improvement in five years and is evidence that the mitigations in place are not sufficient?

The Portfolio Holder for Transformation and Environment responded:-

It is hard to determine trends in air quality levels over time periods of just a few years because of the influence of weather on annual concentrations. This means that there can be substantial variation between years even where emissions are stable.

Concentrations have fallen over a ten year time scale and in the last two years the previously persistent exceedance at the junction of Blackboy Road and Pinhoe Road has not occurred. This is good news for those living in these areas.

We will continue to review the data and progress in implementing the Action Plan. If changes are necessary, these will be reported in future Annual Status Reports.

Dr Baker put a supplementary question:-

Considering that 50% of the pollution in the Heavitree corridor is caused by commercial vehicles and buses do you think the Action Plan sufficiently addresses these causes or is it too reliant on individual behaviour change to cause significant reductions in CO2?

The Portfolio Holder for Transformation and Environment responded:-

Whilst there have been improvements, there remain hot spots including Alphington Street, Livery Dole, Fore Street, Heavitree and East Wonford Hill and there remains work to be done. The Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) concluded that the City Council's recent report was well structured and detailed providing the necessary information with the Action Plan including 30 key areas to continue to try to improve air quality.

BUILDING EXETER BACK BETTER – EXETER'S COVID-19 RECOVERY PLAN

The Executive received the report on the Exeter Covid-19 recovery plan submitted following the approval in June 2020 of a place-based recovery plan to support the city's recovery from the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. The work would be led and co-ordinated by Council officers, with input from other key city stakeholders, with the plan to be adopted by the Liveable Exeter Place Board.

The Project Director Liveable Exeter reported the following seven areas of focus for recovery:-

- Business Support;
- The City Centre;
- Community and Wellbeing;
- Construction and Development;
- Education;
- Transport; and
- Visitor Economy (Culture and Tourism).

Particular reference was made to the six guiding recovery principles as set out in the report, the intention to work with other recovery plans in the region, the need to support the 2030 zero carbon objectives and the following three priority areas:-

- investment in the city centre;
- investment in digital skills and training; and
- continued investment in wellbeing.

The Leader thanked the large number of partners, stakeholders and businesses across the city as well as regional bodies who had contributed significantly to the plan.

During the discussion the following points were made:-

- significant recommendations for the City Centre made by the City Centre Recovery Group which were also based around the need to reduce the carbon impact on the city and the Council's Net Zero 2030 target such as creating a zero-waste zone;
- the complexity of the plan with a number of overlapping areas and city wide issues;
- specific initiatives in support of sustainable development including Co-Cars, Electric Bikes and the investment bid already submitted in respect of an electric bus fleet;
- welcome support for digital training and skills for Exeter and the five year funding package to support continued community activity through Wellbeing Exeter; and
- welcome the involvement of the University and Exeter College with schools in supporting on line training and home schooling.

The Chief Executive & Growth Director emphasised the following:-

- immense range of stakeholders and people who have contributed to the plan across all sectors in the city;
- the alignment of sectors in providing immediate support through emergency measures to businesses after the initial lockdown, such as support for the aviation sector and the transport providers, Stagecoach and Great Western Railway, working with Exeter College to ensure students across Devon could get to the College;

- with all aspects of city life touched, the flexible approach of the Council itself working within regulatory frameworks to support local businesses;
- the Plan provides the evidence base to work with the Local Enterprise Partnership and through the Great South West brand in promoting the region to maximize the chance of submitting winning bids to Government. The city's Liveable Exeter strategy and its Net Zero agenda, which are twenty year visions, are central to the approach to tap into the potential funding pipeline to Government as part of the Region for Clean Growth vision;
- the plan builds on opportunities emerging from structural changes in response to the pandemic as well as recent significant investment in the city centre such as the Royal Clarence, re-development of the Harlequins and the Council's own investment in the Bus Station site; and
- the plan sets out a foundation to work in both the short and long term to ensure Exeter recovers from the pandemic.

RESOLVED that Executive note: -

- (1) the work undertaken by the seven recovery groups in developing a place based and sector-specific action plan, with associated 'asks', to counter the effects of Covid-19 upon the city;
- (2) the endorsement of the draft recovery plan document by the Liveable Exeter Place Board, on behalf of key stakeholders within the city; and
- (3) that the resources required to progress the various initiatives within the Recovery Plan will be a blend of funding sources ranging from asks of central Government, regional funding pots, a variety of local and national funding, city council and private sector funding; and

RECOMMENDED that Council adopt the Exeter Covid-19 Recovery Plan.

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LOCAL AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT

The Executive received the statutory Annual Status report on the air quality monitoring data from 2019, which had been submitted to the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), meeting the required standards. The report also provided a summary of the actions taken in 2019, to improve local air quality. Members noted that, although the report did not contain information on pollution levels during 2020 or of the impact of Covid-19 control measures, these would be detailed in the 2021 annual report.

Particular reference was made to the downward direction in the city's long-term trend in nitrogen dioxide levels and that there were fewer areas in the city that exceeded the objective levels than in previous years. Exeter City Council would continue to work with Devon County Council to implement the Air Quality Action Plan, reduce car use and reduce the impact of poor air quality on health.

During the discussion the following points were made:-

- monitors were strategically placed in the city's hotspots and busiest roads to ensure robust evidence obtained to capture the true position;
- review of existing monitors is in progress to ensure raw data is as up to date as possible to avoid over reliance on historical data and to effectively monitor trends;
- welcome exploration of different transport options; and

- DEFRA is encouraged by the Council's approach to amending and monitoring its programme and the 30 action points to improve air quality as set out in the report

RESOLVED that the Executive note the statutory annual status report; and

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes and approves the statutory annual status report.

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REVIEW OF POLICY FOR DEALING WITH UNACCEPTABLE CUSTOMER BEHAVIOUR

The Executive received the report which sought approval for the adoption of the revised Policy for Dealing with Unacceptable Customer Behaviour with associated documents, to ensure it was up to date and reflected the current processes.

RESOLVED that the revised Policy for Dealing with Unacceptable Customer Behaviour be supported; and

RECOMMENDED that the Council approve the Policy for Dealing with Unacceptable Customer Behaviour.

(The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 6.16 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.