

REPORT TO EXECUTIVE

Date of Meeting: 8 July 2021

REPORT TO COUNCIL

Date of Meeting: 21 July 2021

Report of: Chief Executive & Growth Director

Title: Exeter Civic University Agreement

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Council

1. What is the report about?

The report informs members about the emerging Exeter Civic University Agreement (CUA) and seeks approval for its adoption by the council.

2. Recommendations:

That Executive:

- (1) recommends approval of, and Council approves, the adoption of the CUA; and
- (2) delegates acceptance of further amendments to the CUA to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council

3. Reasons for the recommendation:

To formalise the council's future relationship with the University of Exeter and to endorse formal arrangements with the university and other key agencies in the city.

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

The CUA in itself will not have implications for resources. Projects that are identified as part of the CUA will be considered and approved on an individual basis.

5. Section 151 Officer comments:

There are no specific financial implications for council to consider arising from this report.

6. What are the legal aspects?

There is no specific legal implications for the council to consider arising from this report.

7. Monitoring Officer's comments

The concept set out of the CUA does not present any issues. However, each project may present different issues which may require legal input.

8. Report details

Globally, there are growing calls for higher education Institutions to become more civically engaged and socially relevant and there is increased public interest in the impact of universities on their localities and regions.

The University of Exeter is working towards the development of a CUA with its Exeter partners: RD&E Trust, Exeter College and Exeter City Council. The CUA will comprise place-based institutions working together over shared issues/concerns/ambitions.

CUAs are not just about forging an agenda for action but about improving ways of working which enhance the strategic relationships between the partners. The CUA process provides a unique opportunity to reflect on current partnership arrangements, reflect on what works (and what doesn't), and develop a new relationship framework that will cement the relationships between the university and anchor partners and provide an effective vehicle to transform the impact of the relationship for Exeter. This also provides the opportunity to building on best practice, nationally and internationally drawing on research and collaborative projects that the University of Exeter is engaged with.

The purpose of CUPs is to free up the resources, skills and knowledge held within the university and combine these with the skills, knowledge, resources and energy of community and partners, for mutual benefit. The rationale for CUPs is that they:

- Support problem solving locally - Universities have untapped resources and assets, which could be immediately useful for localities and communities struggling to address their own problems. Such assets include academic knowledge and expertise, the skills of academics and students, and the time and resource of students.
- Create an infrastructure for engagement - The second major rationale driving CUPs is a desire to create an infrastructure to allow communities/partners and universities to engage in ways that can have an impact, be effective, and be mutually beneficial. They represent an attempt to create the infrastructure that can sustain joint-working for the long term.
- Broker relationships - between people and organisations in the 'community' (however defined) and people within the university, including students, academics and staff.
- Facilitate activity - Once partnerships have been initiated, work to support their development and maintenance by ensuring effective communication and developing mutual understanding, as well as helping to design and find funding for projects and initiatives.

A steering group, comprising the anchor partners has been meeting since December 2020 to develop the evidence base and needs assessment, which has been organised around a number of themes. These have not been finalised yet but are broadly:

1. Environment, climate change and Net Zero
2. Innovation and Business
3. Skills and Education

4. Culture and tourism
5. Health and wellbeing
6. Community and Students

A copy of the outline Exeter CUA is attached at Annex A. A consultation exercise is underway to seek views of organisations and communities across the city. Feedback from that exercise will inform the final version, which is expected to be launched in September 2021.

9. How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan?

The CUA underpins the strategic priorities contained in the corporate plan.

10. What risks are there and how can they be reduced?

There are no risks associated with adopting the CUA.

11. Equality Act 2010 (The Act)

11.1 Under the Act's Public Sector Equalities Duty, decision makers are required to consider the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct;
- advance equality by encouraging participation, removing disadvantage, taking account of disabilities and meeting people's needs; and
- foster good relations between people by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

11.2 In order to comply with the general duty authorities must assess the impact on equality of decisions, policies and practices. These duties do not prevent the authority from reducing services where necessary, but they offer a way of developing proposals that consider the impacts on all members of the community.

11.3 In making decisions the authority must take into account the potential impact of that decision in relation to age, disability, race/ethnicity (includes Gypsies and Travellers), sex and gender, gender identity, religion and belief, sexual orientation, pregnant women and new and breastfeeding mothers, marriage and civil partnership status in coming to a decision.

11.4 In recommending this proposal no adverse impact has been identified on people with protected characteristics as determined by the Act and an Equalities Impact Assessment has been included in the background papers for Member's attention.

12. Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications

Environment, climate change and Exeter Net Zero 2020 are key themes in the CUA.

13. Are there any other options?

There are no alternatives.

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

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

None

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