

COUNCIL

Tuesday 19 July 2022

Present:-

The Right Worshipful the Lord Mayor Councillor Mrs Yolonda Henson (Chair)
Councillors Asvachin, Allcock, Atkinson, Bennett, Bialyk, Branston, Denning, Ellis-Jones, Foale, Ghusain, Hannaford, Harvey, Holland, Jobson, Knott, Leadbetter, Lights, Mitchell, K, Mitchell, M, Moore, D, Moore, J, Morse, Newby, Oliver, Packham, Parkhouse, Pearce, Read, Rees, Snow, Sparling, Sutton, Vizard, Wardle, Williams, Wood and Wright

27

MINUTES

The minutes of the Ordinary and Extraordinary meetings of the Council held on 19 April 2022 and of the Annual Meeting held on 17 May 2022 were moved by the Leader, seconded by the Deputy Leader, Councillor Wright, taken as read, approved and signed as correct.

28

APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Warwick.

29

OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS

The Lord Mayor advised that she had attended the following:-

- a formal dinner at the Guildhall on 19 May 2022 to celebrate with Chief Crowfoot and his delegation, the repatriation of the sacred regalia of the Siksia nation in Canada;
- lighting of the Beacon at Exeter Quay as part of Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee festivities on 2 June 2022 supported by the Exeter Sea Cadets, the La La Choirs and the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service Band;
- the University of Exeter Contemporary Choir Summer concert at St David's Church on 11 June 2022;
- her first Lord Mayor's Coffee Morning on 11 June 2022 to raise money for the Lord Mayor's chosen charity for this year, the Exeter Dementia Action Alliance, the next Coffee morning to be held on Saturday 23 July 2022;
- the 243 Field Hospital Freedom of the City Parade and Armed Forces Day at the Guildhall on 18 June 2022;
- congratulating Exeter College's Netball Academy 2021/22 Squad in the Lord Mayor's Parlour on 28 June 2022, on their success this season and achieving an unprecedented national treble; as well as the Exeter Chief's Ladies Rugby team who had achieved success in only their second competitive season, by winning the Allianz Cup;
- the Annual Formal Inspection of Royal Air Force Brize Norton on 29 June 2022;
- the Queen's Baton Relay on Exeter Quay on 4 July 2022, which passed through Exeter on its nationwide tour ahead of the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham later this month;
- the tradition of celebrating the Lammas Fair and the hoisting of the Lammas Glove on the balcony at the Guildhall on 7 July 2022;

- commemorating the 25 years' service of Alderman John Landers as a Trustee of Exeter Church Charities at the Lethbridge Almshouses on 15 July 2022; and
- the Freemanship Ceremony for Mr Philip Bostock OBE, DL, former Chief Executive of the Council on 18 July 2022.

30

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Lord Mayor reported the receipt of two questions from members of the public.

The Corporate Manager Democratic and Civic Support reported that, as Mrs Thompson was unable to attend the meeting to present her question and in accordance with Standing Order 19(4) (B) in the Council's Constitution, the question and answer would be published on the City Council website within five working days of the meeting. The question and answer is appended to the minutes.

Question from Mr Walton

Exeter's new Local Plan is an important document and we must get this right:

Can you confirm the timetable and process for how this consultation will take place, that we will follow Department for Transport guidance and incorporate the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan as a Supplementary Planning Document in the Local Plan and that Council will ensure that transport policies will be updated and brought into the new Local Plan?

The Portfolio Holder for City Development provided the following response:-

The consultation on the Local Plan will be held for eight weeks from the end of September until November 2022. This will be in accordance with statutory requirements, the draft Statement of Community Involvement (which is to be considered for adoption by Council at this meeting) and the Consultation Charter. The detailed arrangements for the consultation are currently being put together, however discussion about potential approaches to consultation took place at the Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee on 30 June 2022 and we will take these into account. We will present the consultation via a new online platform to facilitate more interactive community engagement but will also organise more traditional activities such as exhibitions to widen public interest.

The planning team is involved in ongoing discussions with Devon County Council over the Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). This has included discussion about policy format, content, potential walking and cycling proposals and consistent consultation. This will help to ensure the content of the LCWIP and Exeter Plan are consistent in terms of transport provision. However, the procedures and requirements for producing an LCWIP and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's) are not consistent. This, together with the proposals in the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill to replace Supplementary Planning Documents with other forms of policy, mean that the Council is not proposing to adopt the LCWIP as an SPD.

Mr Walton, asked a supplementary question as to whether he understood correctly that the LCWIP would not be included in the Local Plan.

The Portfolio Holder for City Development confirmed that this was the case.

31

PLANNING COMMITTEE - 25 APRIL 2022

The minutes of the Planning Committee of 25 April 2022 were presented by the Chair, Councillor Morse, and taken as read.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 25 April 2022 be received.

32

STRATEGIC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 16 JUNE 2022

The minutes of the Strategic Scrutiny Committee of 16 June 2022 were presented by the Chair, Councillor Hannaford and taken as read.

In respect of **Minute No. 9 (Questions from the Public Under Standing Order No 19)**, the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, in response to a Member's question, advised that the initial membership of the Exeter Transport Working Group had been agreed at the Annual Council meeting on 18 May 2021 and that the terms of reference had been presented and noted at the inaugural meeting of the Group on 16 February 2022. It was up to the respective Groups if they wished to change the membership. He confirmed that he had requested a date for the next meeting and that the focus of future meetings would be to seek solutions to the city's huge transport problems. He stated that he had made an error at the Strategic Scrutiny Committee in saying that the minutes would be published as it was not a public meeting. The minutes would only be available to those attending the meeting.

In respect of **Minute No. 10 (Questions from Members of the Council Under Standing Order No 20)**, the Portfolio Holder for City Development advised that she had been unable to answer the questions relating to the planning team at the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 16 June 2022 as she had been absent due to Covid and the answers had been provided by the Leader.

In respect of **Minute No. 11 (Progress Report from Exeter City Futures and the City of Exeter Greenhouse Gas Inventory)**, the Chair, in response to a Member's query, confirmed that it was the intention to establish a Standing Overview Group and that it would have a role in monitoring progress towards targets set for Net Zero 2030 and would seek to ensure progression on what was set out in the report within available resources. It would be undertaken in collaboration with the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and this approach had been welcomed by the Chief Executive & Growth Director.

The Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, in response to a Member's concern that not all of the University of Exeter's key monitoring targets were replicated in the Council's report, advised that this related to the Scope 3 element which covered materials with a carbon legacy being brought into the city. Whilst the City Council and its major partners could set a quality mark in respect of known materials and markets, a city wide greenhouse inventory was complicated because of the vast number of individuals, businesses, community groups and charities etc. who utilised materials from a huge range of sources. The scale of the challenge was illustrated by households being responsible for some 35% of greenhouse gas production in the city.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Strategic Scrutiny Committee held on 16 June 2022 be received.

33

CUSTOMER FOCUS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 30 JUNE 2022

The minutes of the Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee of 30 June 2022 were presented by the Chair, Councillor Vizard and taken as read.

In respect of **Minute No. 14 (Questions from Members of the Council under Standing Order No 20)** and the answer provided to the question relating to the recycling league table, the figures, although correctly recorded, should read “In Exeter this is 296kg (not 300kg) per person per year compared with the Devon target of 416kg (not 413 kg).” These would be amended at the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.

In respect of **Minute No. 16 (The Exeter (Local) Plan – Community Engagement 20)**, the Portfolio Holder for City Development undertook to respond in writing to a Member who asked when the second round of consultation on the Local Plan would occur in relation to the final draft version of the Plan being published.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee held on 30 June 2022 be received.

34 **COMBINED STRATEGIC SCRUTINY AND CUSTOMER FOCUS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 27 APRIL 2022**

The minutes of the Combined Strategic Scrutiny and Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee of 27 April 2022 were presented by the Chair, Councillor Vizard, and taken as read.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Combined Strategic Scrutiny and Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee held on 27 April 2022 be received.

35 **COMBINED STRATEGIC SCRUTINY AND CUSTOMER FOCUS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 6 JUNE 2022**

The minutes of the Combined Strategic Scrutiny and Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee of 6 June 2022 were presented by the Chair, Councillor Hannaford, and taken as read.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Combined Strategic Scrutiny and Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee held on 6 June 2022 be received.

36 **HARBOUR BOARD - 23 JUNE 2022**

The minutes of the Harbour Board of 23 June 2022 were presented by the Chair, Councillor Williams, and taken as read.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Harbour Board held on 23 June 2022 be received.

37 **EXECUTIVE - 31 MAY 2022**

The minutes of the Executive of 31 May 2022 were presented by the Leader, Councillor Bialyk, and taken as read.

In respect of **Minute No. 57 (Appointments to Outside Bodies)**, the Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendations and following a vote, the recommendations were carried unanimously.

In respect of **Minute No. 59 (Exeter Skills Strategy)** and during discussion the following points were made:-

- the retrofit programme should be an important part of the Building Greater Exeter programme with an emphasis on using local building contractors and providing training opportunities for young people;
- whilst Exeter had benefitted from the Government Levelling Up Funds of £1,4 million with Devon County Council receiving £3.1 million towards an Adult Numeracy Programme, additional support from the Government would be beneficial, for example in funding apprenticeship training between the ages of 16 and 18 in the same way as A level funding; and
- greater encouragement should be given to Small and Medium Size Enterprises (SME's) to take on apprenticeships.

The Leader referred to the following:-

- the retrofit programme was an important ambition of the Council as, apart from transport, houses were the biggest contributors to greenhouse gases;
- the Council was seeking, with the other Devon Districts, to create a Retrofit Company to extend retrofitting to private homes and it is the intention to submit a report on a feasibility study on setting up such a company to the Executive;
- 600 Council houses were to be brought up to Level B in the Government's Standard Assessment Procedure for Energy Rating of Dwellings (SAP) by the end of the year;
- the City Council had chosen to work with the University of Exeter and Exeter College to develop green construction skills in Exeter; and
- local contractors were used in the construction of the eco-friendly St. Sidwell's Point.

The Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendations and following a vote, the recommendations were carried unanimously.

In respect of **Minute No. 60 (New Statement of Community Involvement: Proposed Adoption)**, the Leader responded as follows to Members' queries:-

- the level of support for communities wishing to prepare a neighbourhood plan, similar to the St James' Neighbourhood Plan, would be dependent on available resources within the Planning Department; and
- issues raised on planning matters by residents of Topsham would be addressed.

The Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendation and following a vote, the recommendation was carried.

In respect of **Minute No. 62 (Summerland Street)**, the Leader, in response to a Member's question, stated that, although it was not possible to predict the nature of occupants, co-living provided opportunities for Exeter residents to rent homes and that the forthcoming Local Plan would address issues of unit sizes of properties.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Executive held on 31 May 2022 be received and, where appropriate, adopted.

The minutes of the Executive of 5 July 2022 were presented by the Leader, Councillor Bialyk, and taken as read.

In respect of **Minute No. 66 (Proposed Changes and Re-Procurement of Outreach-Led Rough Sleeping Services)**, the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Homelessness Prevention responded as follows to Members' queries:-

- it would be sensible, if possible, to dovetail the re-procurement process with the review of homelessness currently being undertaken by the Homelessness Task and Finish Working Group and that he would respond further to the Member in writing on this matter; and
- the widespread use of the "no fault" Section 21 Notice under the Housing Act 1988 by Landlords was the leading cause of the rise in homelessness and that, whilst those evicted did not necessarily become rough sleepers, it was highly regrettable that the Government was yet to implement its undertaking to outlaw this practice.

Another Member referred to the current Devon Home Choice Waiting List with approximately 3,000 people on the Exeter register (a small proportion of whom lived outside the city boundary) and the lack of Government funding to enable Councils to build more houses which was also contributing to the abhorrent rough sleeping crisis in the country. The Leader undertook to secure the support of Exeter's two MP's in contacting the relevant Government Minister to ensure that the Government honoured its pledge to outlaw this practice.

The Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendations and following a vote, the recommendations were carried unanimously.

In respect of **Minute No. 67 (Allocation of the One Off Net Zero Budget)**, the Leader, in response to the following Member questions as to whether:-

- the carbon and biodiversity impact of current and future Council policies would be assessed; and
- a rigorous value for money exercise would be undertaken on all elements of the budget to ensure value for money,

would keep Members updated on the progress of the many initiatives within the budget as part of the Council's commitment to achieving a greener city, a commitment which would be reflected in many of the policies embedded within the forthcoming Exeter Plan (the Local Plan)

The Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendations and following a vote, the recommendations were carried.

In respect of **Minute No. 68 (UK Shared Prosperity Fund)**, the Leader, responding to a Member's request for decisions on how Exeter's allocation of £1,403,000 would be utilised to be both accessible and transparent, confirmed that decisions on the use of the fund would be made by the Executive and that it was appropriate to consult the business community through the Liveable Exeter Place Board as the chosen consultative body. He also suggested that the Bus Station and St. Sidwell's Point developments and Council plans for the Guildhall Shopping Centre were examples of Exeter undertaking its own Levelling up process.

The Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendations and following a vote, the recommendations were carried.

In respect of **Minute No. 70 (Progress Update from Exeter City Futures and City of Exeter Greenhouse Gas Inventory)**, and during discussion the following points were made:-

- whether a goal of connecting homes and non-residential buildings to a district heating network was appropriate in view of the Exeter Incinerator being the single highest contributor of carbon emissions in the city; and
- there was a need to consult with many organisations including Housing Associations, the voluntary and community sector, suppliers and small businesses prior to progressing plans to creating a Retrofit Company.

With regard to the consultation process on widening the Council's retrofit ambitions, the Leader stated that this mechanism was embedded in the role of the Liveable Exeter Place Board and that it was the intention to progress these plans as part of a wider Devon Districts' initiative.

In respect of **Minute No. 71 (General Fund Capital Monitoring 2021/22 and Revised Capital Programme For 2022/23 and Future Years)**, the Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendations and following a vote, the recommendations were carried unanimously.

In respect of **Minute No. 72 (Overview of General Fund Revenue Budget 2021/22)**, the Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendations and following a vote, the recommendations were carried.

In respect of **Minute No. 73 (2021/22 HRA Budget Monitoring Report)**, the Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendations and following a vote, the recommendations were carried unanimously.

In respect of **Minute No. 74 (Treasury Management)** the Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendation and following a vote, the recommendation was carried.

In respect of **Minute No. 75 (Implications of the Elections Act 2022)**, and during discussion the following points were made:-

- the Act was discriminatory and would adversely impact the young, the elderly, those in houses in multiple occupation, ethnic minorities, those without English as their first language and those without driving licences and/or passports;
- the Council should maximise all opportunities to promote participation in the electoral process to ensure free and fair voting in the city;
- the new process was far from transparent and would reduce the right to participate. A review should be undertaken after the Local Elections in May 2023 to assess the impact on turnout;
- many elderly people who no longer drove and did not have a driving licence and/or those who no longer travelled and did not possess a passport could be discouraged from participating;
- during a test pilot in London, approximately 1,000 voters had been turned away from the polling stations and had not returned;
- of the 58 million who had voted in the 2019 elections, there had been 33 suspected voter impersonations, representing 0.0001% of the total numbers voting;

- publicising the opportunity for voting by post would help combat the disadvantages of the Act; and
- the Act was contrary to the Government commitment to reducing red tape and bureaucracy.

The Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Culture, Corporate and Democratic Services shared the concerns expressed by Members and confirmed that a review would be undertaken after the May Elections to assess how many were turned away because they were unable to provide identification.

In response to a Member's question, the Corporate Manager Democratic and Civic Support advised that the Act would not impact immediately on postal vote applicants. At present, postal vote applications were verified via signature and date of birth. In future, however, those recorded as postal voters would be required to refresh their applications every three years as opposed to the current five year requirement.

The Leader highlighted that the recommendations were seeking supplementary funding to ensure necessary budgetary plans were in place so that the Council could meet its obligations to undertake the required work to ensure staff and resources were available.

The Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendations and following a vote, the recommendations were carried unanimously.

In respect of **Minute No. 76 (Former Exeter Bus Station)**, and during discussion the following points were made:-

- there were implications of an unsuccessful funding bid to the Government;
- whether forthcoming income from new uses of the site would exceed demolition costs;
- it was vital to de-risk the site and to prevent it from falling into disrepair as failure to do so could lead to anti-social behaviour in a key city centre site;
- the Exeter BID team would be consulted on proposals including imaginative shorter term uses whilst the CityPoint scheme moved forward;
- as had been the case in respect of St. Sidwell's Point, the final use would take time to come to fruition; and
- due regard would be given to existing utilities and facilities.

The Leader undertook to keep Members apprised of progress.

The Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded the recommendation and following a vote, the recommendation was carried.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Executive held on 5 July 2022 be received and, where appropriate, adopted.

The meeting adjourned at 7.35 pm and re-convened at 7.45 pm.

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

Councillor Williams, seconded by Councillor Wright, moved a Notice of Motion in the following terms:-

Local Authority Remote/Hybrid Meetings

This Council notes that:

On 5 January 2022, the Association of Democratic Services Officers (ADSO) and Lawyers in Local Government (LLG) launched a petition calling on the Government to change the law to give Councils (ranging from County, Districts and Unitary Authorities, through to Town and Parish Councils) the freedom to hold remote meetings when local circumstances suit. This includes hybrid meetings.

This follows the unsuccessful High Court action in 2021 and the subsequent judgement that it was for Parliament to change the law not the courts - as indeed the devolved administrations have done in Wales and Scotland to allow for on-line meetings.

This Council believes that:

We do not wish to impose remote meetings on Exeter City Council, or indeed any Council. We should have the choice to decide how to run our meetings depending on local circumstances. We also accept that some meetings (for example full Council) are more suited to physical attendance.

You will be aware that the Government issued a call for evidence on 21 March 2021 in relation to remote meetings. We are still awaiting their response to the large number of submissions from local authorities, relevant organisations and the public.

The period of lockdown showed that remote meetings bring so many benefits to local democracy and residents, apart from the obvious public health safeguards. It is no longer just a response to Covid, although we are aware that some Councillors are still not able to attend meetings for health reasons either relating to them or their families.

The wider benefits are:

- Increased attendances at remote meetings by both Councillors and the public
- Significant cost savings for some Authorities arising from much less travel to meetings.
- The environmental benefits of less travel, particularly in the large County authorities.
- A better work-life balance.
- Improved equality of access to meetings for all and opening up opportunities for more people to stand for election as Councillors.
- More transparency and openness for the public to see Council meetings.
- An option to move meetings online where there are constraints, for example bad weather such as snow or flooding.

The Council resolves:

To write to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to express our support for the petition launched by ADSO and LLG on 5 January 2022 with regard to remote and hybrid meetings. We call on the Government to change the law to allow Councils the flexibility to hold such meetings when they deem it appropriate within agreed rules and procedures.

Councillor Rees moved and Councillor D. Moore seconded the following amendment:-

“The Council write to Exeter’s two MP’s to refer them to the early Day Motion 264 “Accessible Council Meetings””

In presenting the amendment, Councillor Rees stated that the Early Day Motion had been tabled at Parliament by Caroline Lucas MP on 11 July 2022.

Councillors Williams and Wright accepted the amendment which became the substantive motion.

Councillor Jobson, as the leader of an opposition group, stated that her group would not be supporting the substantive motion. She asserted that Council meetings should be in person so that members of the public could be present in person to witness decision making which was not possible through Zoom, Teams or any other social media platform. Whilst certain meetings, such as briefings, could be held on Zoom, meetings where decisions were to be made should always be in public. This was particularly applicable in respect of Planning Committee meetings where up to 50 plus people could attend and only if individuals were presenting their case in person could Members appreciate the passion of their arguments and the eloquence of their reasoning. She believed that it would be a retrograde step to reintroduce remote meetings.

Councillor D. Moore, as a co-leader of an opposition group, stated that permitting hybrid meetings would open up democracy to many more people and a failure to allow this would be a barrier to participation in modern, local democracy. Going forward, she expected that the meetings will be appropriately managed as had been the case with City Council meetings during lockdown.

Councillor K. Mitchell, as a co-leader of an opposition group, stated that other institutions such as the NHS and big business had adapted and held many meetings remotely, sometimes more often than face to face and that, in his experience, worked well and were often more productive. Continuing with only in person meetings would effectively disenfranchise people from participating in the democratic process.

Councillor Wright, in seconding the Motion, advised that reference to coverage of meetings via social media was misleading as the platforms used such as Zoom were more accurately described as a livestream communication media. She stated that the public had voted Councillors to represent them and that there were varying ways in which this could be achieved as well as through in person meetings. Councillor Wright expressed her disappointment that, whilst Councils were required to meet in person, Parliamentary meetings had continued remotely in some cases. She also reminded Members that the City Council had been the first authority to hold on-line meetings after the outbreak of the Pandemic.

Members made the following comments:-

- whilst the Government's call for evidence on 21 March 2021 had closed in June 2021, it was yet to share the results of that consultation nor issue guidance on the way forward;
- a Local Government Association survey had shown that, since resuming in person meetings, there had been a 72% drop in Member attendance and a 73% drop in public attendance. Hybrid models should therefore be the way forward and a recent survey showed that 72% of Councillors felt that a hybrid model would attract more ethnic minorities and younger people and encourage them to stand in local elections. It would also assist people with caring responsibilities, disabilities and chronic illness to view and participate in meetings. The Government should bring democracy into the 21st Century;
- remote meetings would help diversify the demographic profile by overcoming existing barriers and encouraging increased participation by women in local democracy. It would be important therefore for flexibility in the system;
- the Pandemic proved that remote meetings were workable and successful and, in some cases, as with the Planning Committee, improved the ability of the public to view documentation being put forward as part of planning applications and also provide greater visibility on the speakers themselves;
- failing to enable Councils to opt for alternative means of holding meetings was discriminatory and could exclude groups such as young people, ethnic minorities, those with disabilities or health issues, those in employment or with inflexible work patterns who, accordingly, found it difficult to attend meetings in person;
- a number of people who were vulnerable and at risk would have been able to participate in meetings during the Pandemic outbreak via remote means and this would still be the case if another Pandemic occurred;
- the Government's failure to date to permit remote meetings discriminates against the vulnerable and the immune impaired;
- young people in the 21st Century are familiar with new technology and, potentially, are more likely to view meetings on Zoom rather than attend in person;
- hybrid meetings would enable those Councillors who encounter health issues to continue as Members;
- the Motion acknowledges that in person meetings would also remain appropriate as there was a benefit for the majority to be in a room together, whilst at the same time, allowing others to participate remotely;
- hybrid meetings would be particularly beneficial to single parents as parental responsibilities could limit attendance at meetings;
- on line coverage of Scrutiny Committees would also help the democratic process; and
- hybrid meetings would also facilitate Members of the public submitting and asking questions without having to attend.

The Leader stated that it was to be hoped that this matter would be progressed through Parliament for an early decision. Whilst it was to be expected that Councils would seek to follow national guidance, it was hoped that there could be a degree of local latitude in respect of decisions whether Committees, Working Groups etc. could be hybrid or otherwise.

Councillor Williams, in concluding, stated that it would not be a retrograde step to hold hybrid meetings. Virtual meetings had worked exceptionally well during lockdown, particularly the Planning Committee and the Council had ensured that its formal meetings had remained fully accessible to the public. She congratulated Councillor Holland, the Lord Mayor at the time, who had successfully chaired

Council meetings under the new procedures put in place during that time, as well as the Council's Democratic Services team, for its work to successfully deliver on-line meetings. It was important to plan for the future and hybrid meetings should be a part of that process. Councillor Williams commended the Substantive Motion to Council.

The Notice of Motion, as amended, was put to the vote and CARRIED.

40

**DECISION OF THE COUNCIL'S SHAREHOLDER REPRESENTATIVE FOR
EXETER CITY LIVING LIMITED ON THE ACQUISITION OF RESIDENTIAL UNITS
AT THE GUILDHALL SHOPPING CENTRE.**

The Chief Executive & Growth Director presented the report asking Members to note the decision he had made as the shareholder representative in respect of the Council's wholly owned company Exeter City Living Limited and his decision for it to take an overriding lease of the Guildhall residential units from the Council in advance of the shopping centre acquisition.

The Leader moved and Councillor Wright seconded the noting of the report.

(The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and closed at 8.20 pm)

Chair