

## STRATEGIC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

16 March 2023

### Present:

Councillor Rob Hannaford (Chair)

Councillors Leadbetter, Allcock, Asvachin, Atkinson, Knott, Mitchell, K, Read and Vizard

### Apologies:

Councillors Harvey, Jobson, Moore, J and Oliver

### Also present:

Director of Culture, Leisure and Tourism, Director of City Development, Service Lead - Active & Healthy People, Service Lead Net Zero & Business, Assistant Service Lead – Local Plan and Democratic Services Officer (SLS)

### In attendance:

Councillor Bialyk –	Leader
Councillor Parkhouse –	Portfolio Holder Leisure Services and Physical Activity
Councillor Wood –	Portfolio Holder Climate Change
Councillor D. Moore –	Attending for Minute 43 under Standing Order 20
Councillor M. Mitchell –	Attending for Minute 45 under Standing Order 44

#### 40 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2023 were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair as correct.

#### 41 **Declaration of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made by Members.

#### 42 **Questions from Members of the Public Under Standing Order No.19**

In accordance with Standing Order No.19, the following question had been submitted by a member of the public, Mr Cleasby and was circulated in advance to Members of the Committee. Councillor Wood, Portfolio Holder Climate Change attended the meeting and gave the following response as set out in italics below:-

**Will the Council please set out how it sees the future role of Exeter City Futures?**

#### **Answer**

*The two secondments to Exeter City Futures of the Chief Executive & Growth Director and Director for City Transformation have come to an end. As a result, it was the right time to reflect on the work undertaken by the City Council to support the Net Zero Exeter 2030 Plan. A review was being undertaken on the City Council's involvement in, and the future of Exeter City Futures in overseeing the Net Zero Exeter 2030 Plan. Once the review has concluded, a report would be brought to the Executive. The work continued to reduce the City Council's carbon emissions, which was the subject of a report on the agenda of this meeting.*

## **Supplementary Question and Answer.**

Mr Cleasby sought further information on the timetable for the conclusion of the review.

*The Portfolio Holder Climate Change stated that it was anticipated the initial work would come forward soon.*

### **43 Questions from Members of the Council Under Standing Order No.20**

In accordance with Standing Order No.20, the following questions were submitted by Councillor D. Moore in relation to the Portfolios of Councillor Parkhouse and the Leader. The questions were circulated to Members of the Committee. The responses of the Portfolio Holders were set out in italics below:-

#### **Question from Councillor D Moore to the Portfolio Holder for Leisure & Physical Activity (Councillor Parkhouse)**

##### **Question**

Why, when we are all supposed to be more inclusive of everyone in society, do I as a disabled person, have to travel outside Exeter to other towns and cities if I want to attend a "Disabled Only" swimming session?"

In support of the question, Councillor Moore advised that she had asked the question on behalf of a resident who had visited St Sidwell's Point. She was aware that the resident had met with the Manager to discuss his experience "that there were a large number of disabled people in and around Exeter who would like to swim in the city pools but who would feel anxious, overwhelmed and even fearful of attending a public swim simply because the environment could be very busy and noisy at times. Additionally, people feel very conspicuous when they have to use a hoist or enter and exit the pool with assistance. The whole experience can very often trigger feelings of overwhelming anxiety, whereas in a "Disabled Only" swimming session the environment is much calmer, quieter and people don't feel judged or threatened when they are swimming with like-minded people."

##### **Answer**

*St Sidwell's Point has been designed from the beginning to be fully inclusive and not segregate users at certain times, based on ability. The facilities included fully accessible changing places and rooms, toilets and wheelchair lifts and steps into the pool, were all part of the many ways where the facility had gone above and beyond. The leisure team have listened to charities along the way for both the design of the building and facilitation of users.*

*Where there are other disabilities every effort was made to work to individual circumstances where practically possible. The staff have worked with users, who may feel anxious or had special requirements to adapt the service. The Centre Manager has worked with families on a one to one basis.*

## **Supplementary Question and Answer**

Councillor Moore asked if the service would be willing to work with the residents to improve their confidence whilst at St Sidwell's Point.

*The Portfolio Holder referred to the competing use of the facilities, but the team would follow up the request.*

## **Question from Councillor D Moore –to the Leader of thr Council (Councillor Bialyk)**

### **Question**

Please can the Portfolio Holder provide and update on the repair of the Riverside Leisure Centre roof?

### **Answer**

*Elected Members have approved a £2 million capital repairs budget for leisure from April. Immediate repairs and priorities will be worked through by officers, including an updated condition survey and coordination from the Corporate Property Unit. Work on the roof of the Isca Centre would commence as soon as was practically possible and as a priority. With regards to Riverside, Exeter City Council had applied for over £6 million in funding to address both Net Zero, increased energy costs and repair issues for the roofs of both the Riverside Leisure Centre and the Royal Albert Memorial Museum. The matter would be discussed by officers next week.*

### **Supplementary Question and Answer**

Councillor Moore commented on water continuing to leak through the roof of the Riverside Leisure Centre and that remained an ongoing repair issue.

*The Leader responded and referred to the updated condition survey for the Riverside Leisure Centre and the opportunity to look at making the remedial works as well as achieving funding as part of the work to decarbonise the whole building. It was important to ensure that the public could continue to use the facility.*

## **44 Portfolio Holder Report**

Councillor Parkhouse reported on the Leisure & Physical Activity areas of her Portfolio and detailed the issues relating to achieving the Council's published priorities, major ongoing programmes of work, issues impacting delivery, financial performance, budget requirements and potential changes being considered.

The Portfolio Holder reported on the following key areas which included:-

- the decision to bring leisure operations in house which had offered a strategic and joined up approach linking with the Council's Live and Move Strategy to deliver activity across the city.
- the teams were working to address pockets of inactivity in the city.
- the teams were working with Devon Wildlife Trust to improve accessibility and signage in both the Valley Parks and the 13 Mile Green Circle.
- the updated Playing Pitch Strategy would protect those green areas of the city. Consultation with over 100 local sports clubs had enabled mapping of pitches to identify current and future use.
- energy price rises had impacted on the leisure sector overall, and whilst not such an issue for St Sidwell's Point (SSP), there would be an impact on the other five sites in the city.
- the national shortage of swimming instructors and lifeguards was exacerbated in Exeter as many staff were university students who left the city during the busier holiday periods.
- every effort was being made to ensure the changes in staffing levels had minimal impact on the customer experience with the high quality service was maintained and managed within budget.

- a concessionary offer similar to the former X Card may be considered.
- the Council's Net Zero team had submitted an application to the Decarbonisation Fund in respect of the Riverside Leisure Centre and the Isca Centre, and were awaiting the outcome of the bid.
- well being programmes such as 'This Girl Can' had offered free sessions at the Wonford Leisure Centre for women and girls living in Wonford; a NHS Staff well-being programme tailored to the shift patterns of the workforce was immediately oversubscribed, and a new 12 week well-being programme will be open to the wider population to encourage more activity.

The Portfolio Holder responded to the following questions from Members:-

- the crèche had a significant cost implication, despite there being no similar provision in the city and all options were considered.  
The Director advised that the original modelling for the crèche was based on the expectation of a maximum of 2,000 sessions, but even at capacity, the running cost of £45 a session was unsustainable.
- a request would be made to the Service Lead Active and Healthy People to contact ward councillors for St David's around increasing activity levels in areas of deprivation to discuss initiatives.
- following discussions with the Director, the technology used at a small data centre at Exmouth pool would be discussed at a meeting with the Net Zero team.
- Northbrook Pool was a fantastic asset, but managing the opening hours with limited staffing capacity posed some challenges. A trial of different opening hours would take place at the end of March, and the May half term to identify the needs of the local community.

The Director responded to the following questions from Members:-

- bringing the leisure service in house, had certainly resulted in more control and a better service for the customer.
- rather than focusing only on using social media for marketing, push notifications, direct email marketing, the team on site and word of mouth were all used.
- the pilots for social prescribing courses had worked well. A member of staff in a social prescribing role had been employed.
- SSP could be offered as a venue through Visit Exeter and Visit Conference Exeter, but there had to be a balance of the facilities for all users.
- two local authorities nearby had continued to outsource their leisure provision and had a higher price point.
- consultation to deliver the staff and structural changes was still taking place..
- work was taking place with sports science students at Exeter College to help overcome some challenges with recruitment, but there was still a wider recruitment issue across the country.
- the energy was purchased in bulk with the support of the Council's Procurement Officer to attract a better rate, but they were aware of the LGA National Energy Category strategy.
- the Pyramids site had been sold, with the disposal from the asset coming to the Council.

The Portfolio Holder responded to advance questions received from Councillor Jobson, which were asked by Councillor Leadbetter in her absence. The responses were set out in italics below:-

## Leisure membership

1. Was the target of 10,000 memberships based on the amount required to pay staff costs, running costs, maintenance and repair and interest/capital payments on the debt incurred?

*The 10,000 figure quoted was an internal sales target for all six sites. It was based on competitor analysis and potential use on a single price membership (£25 for all sites) where casual use was allowed, there was no joining fee or exit fee.*

*When the leisure service was brought in house a sector expert had been working with officers to review the wet side and dry facilities, and commercial activity. The teams work to targets in all areas. Annual membership was just one part of income to the leisure service across the six sites. Income also includes casual use, room hire, pool hire, food and beverage sales. The target was based on what membership it was thought the facilities could attract given the different dynamics. There was not a one size fits all across the six sites.*

2. If not, what no of memberships at current rates is required to pay such costs?

*Income was not just from monthly memberships. It was hard to model for a price rise, some people stop coming, so this also needs to be included.*

*For the leisure service to be operationally cost neutral you would need to increase all income streams to cover the £2 million leisure currently requires – if there was no attrition the membership would be £50 to £100 to reach a break-even point even with the 10,000 membership numbers.*

3. It is understood that in excess of 12,000 memberships was achieved in the first year, in view of the recently imposed increased membership charges how short was this number of memberships from achieving a break even position?

*The leisure service including SSP was still in its first year so the final position was not yet known. There are no joining or exit fees or contract so membership numbers varied from month to month and the trends and patterns have not yet been established. Only part of the income comes from monthly memberships. All centres require a subsidy given the way the service was designed to provide access to people at an affordable price, in-house staffing and the huge increases in energy costs.*

*In response to a further question on membership numbers, whilst there had been some attrition, the figures had levelled as other members had stayed for the spa facilities.*

## Potential changes to services/provisions being considered

1. If the crèche closes at St Sidwell's Point what assessment has been undertaken of the impact of that closure on a potential loss of memberships

*Officers had looked at the use of the crèche and modelled different variations of loss against probability. The crèche was a unique service but there had been a high level of subsidy required.*

2. What assessment has been undertaken as to whether the increase in Membership subscriptions will likely result in a reduction in the number of membership subscriptions.

*Modelling had been done and considered the impact of the cost of living increase on people's disposable income and the fact that Exeter Leisure does not charge a*

*joining fee or have a minimum contract. The modelling was commercially sensitive.*

3. The reports all talk of a £2 million subsidy from Exeter City Council to the Leisure Service – what does this subsidy cover – is it running costs/staff costs etc or the repayment of the debt or both?

*The subsidy included all expenditure associated with the service – such as running costs and now increased energy costs, and the high level of staff needed. Repayment of the debt came under another budget line.*

The Director added that in terms of bringing the service in house, the cost to the Council may have been less, but the cost to the consumer would be considerably higher.

The Portfolio Holder responded to an additional comment on the previous commitment made for free swimming lessons for children. The Director added that it had been anticipated that a commercial operator would run SSP. The impact of the impact and a shortage of qualified swimming instructors had resulted in a significant backlog and a post pandemic model of free lessons was no longer feasible. The Government was bringing in legislation for compulsory swimming lessons in schools and the Council anticipated working with schools to facilitate this. The Director also responded to a Member's question on subsidies for children in care, and care givers and confirmed that the Portfolio Holder had asked him to look at a model of concessionary membership as part of the service's budgetary work.

Members noted the report.

#### 45 **St. Sidwell's Point Project Contractual Arrangements**

The Director Culture, Leisure and Tourism presented the report, which followed a request from Councillor M. Mitchell and colleagues in the Progressive Group who sought further information on the contractual arrangements of the construction of St Sidwell's Point (SSP) in terms of any lessons to be learnt from managing such a large scale project.

Councillor M. Mitchell attended the meeting under Standing Order 44 and thanked officers for the excellent and detailed report, and wished to put the request for consideration in context. Following the experiences of the project, he proposed a Member Task and Finish Group to consider how as a local authority such large capital programmes could be managed effectively. He said that as Members they were mindful of ensuring accountability and matters of governance and he suggested a Task and Finish Group may offer the opportunity to consider a wide range of issues, including the structure of business plans, variability of costs, ensuring value for money, and managing any delays in the timetable.

The Director introduced Justin Pickford, who project managed and provided technical expertise throughout the entire period. He had worked with an exceptional external team working to a budgeted and resourced process. He noted the comments made and suggested that when the Wonford Health and Wellbeing Centre came forward, he would welcome any opportunity to incorporate the learning from SSP into that project.

Members made the following comments:-

- that such projects should be left to the appointed project manager.

- although being mindful of Member and officer time and commitments to convene a Task and Finish Group, the Member welcomed the opportunity to scrutinise the project.
- a Task and Finish Group would offer further guidance for any future projects.
- that some aspects of discussion of the management of future projects could be picked up in the work of the Exeter Development Fund Task and Finish Group.

Councillor M. Mitchell proposed a Task and Finish Group, which was seconded by Councillor Read and following a vote, the proposal was lost.

The Leader welcomed the report and reflected on the timetable, having chaired the cross party Leisure Complex and Programme Board, which oversaw the evolution of the project and which reported such to the Executive and Council.

Justin Pickford set out the key issues of the project as detailed in the report. He had worked on the scheme since its inception, with the appropriate level of professional support and specialist skills having been engaged, using standard industry recognised documentation to ensure there was no misunderstanding around the duties, roles and responsibilities. He highlighted four extraordinary changes within the contract which had been subsequently addressed:-

- the Section 278 highways works were far more extensive than originally anticipated, with resultant costs being higher than envisaged;
- the original building cladding material, although compliant with all building regulation was changed following the Grenfell fire;
- the Operator fit out works costs exceeded the allocated budget following the decision to bring the operator back in-house; and
- the effects of Covid 19 on the timetable, which had resulted in a separate settlement for the scheme.

He responded to a Member's question relating to the highway works and that in future, arrangements for the Highways Authority to carry out trial work beforehand would be suggested. There was recognition that it was important to ensure the right team and level of support was in place.

Councillor M. Mitchell thanked Mr Pickford for an excellent and informative report, but he suggested that it covered the project management aspects, rather than touching on Exeter City Council accountability and governance matters. He would be satisfied by an approach being made to the Exeter Development Fund Task and Finish Group to consider contractual and projects management issues as part of the consideration of future projects.

Strategic Scrutiny Committee noted the report and supported further discussion of project management be made at a future meeting of the Exeter Development Fund Task and Finish Group.

## 46 **Live and Move Programme Update**

The Service Lead Active and Healthy People presented the report which provided an update for Members on work undertaken and planned under the Live and Move Strategy, across Exeter and Cranbrook, with the aim of increasing health inequality and physical activity. The report also provided an opportunity to highlight the Council's programme of work around physical activity and well-being in local communities as well as an update on the Sport England delivery pilot. The Strategy targeted 12 locations across the city, supporting those communities that suffer from

the poorest health outcomes and the highest level of inactivity across the city. The three specific outcomes were to:-

- increase everyday physical activity
- increase walking and cycling use, and
- physical activity to improve community connectivity.

The team were about to oversee an Active Lives survey for 2023 which Sport England used to obtain a tangible benchmark. A review of the 2022 survey had already helped identify the levels of physical activity of residents in the priority locations. The Service Lead Active and Healthy People would share the survey results, but he wished to highlight three significant things that they noted from last year's survey:-

- Exeter had a stronger bounce back from Covid, with good levels of physical activity, testament to the investment made with local partners such as Exeter City Community Trust.
- the narrowing of the gender gap in terms of more women and girls being physically active in Exeter than the national average. Campaigns such as 'This Girl Can' had helped to raise activity levels.
- investment in a local charity had resulted in an increase physical activity rates in the city's culturally diverse communities using the Wonford Sports Centre.

Other areas of note included:-

- field work for the next Active Lives survey would be launched shortly.
- the Council will be invited to submit an application to secure a long term place partnership with Sport England later this year. Their investment and support would enable the Strategy to extend beyond the 2025 date to continue until 2030.
- a report to create a Wonford Community Wellbeing Hub with a proposed design and future management model would be presented to a future Executive and Council meeting.
- work was due to take place in Newtown on a low traffic neighbourhood project with local consultation on a design for the public realm and walking and cycling infrastructure as well as creating a new outdoor community space.
- a new 12 week well-being and social prescribing programme working with the NHS, for more vulnerable residents to have opportunity to connect and access the facilities with a broader programme than just relating to physical long term conditions.
- consultation by Devon County Council relating to the local walking and cycling offer to increase those activities through relatively low cost infrastructure projects.
- work on the Green Circle had improved signage, and access with a digital app to track the route, as well as looking at ways to improving ownership of local sections.

The Service Lead Active and Healthy People responded to the following Members' comments:-

- the Live and Move team have been involved throughout the development of the LCWIP (the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan) with colleagues from Planning and will make a formal response to the consultation. The Assistant Service Lead (Local Plan) advised that his team had worked with Devon County Council in preparing the LCWIP. It was an important transport policy document for the city, and may help to inform the routes and future development and the



location of some of the suggested priority routes. He made an offer to summarise comments received by a Member from the public, to capture those in the City Council's response.

- funding for the current Sport England Programme runs out in 2025, but it is anticipated that the Sport England delivery pilot will run into a longer term partnership, with bids being made up to 2030.
- the live surveys offered a wealth of data and information, and included a profile of age, gender, and levels of disability across the wards, which he was happy to share with Members
- applications could be made for placed based funding to offer a targeted resource to support programmes or develop ideas and activity coming through the community builders and community physical activity organisers.
- referencing activity levels the criteria for fairly active was 30 to a 150 minutes exercise and active levels were more than 150 minutes a week. The team will continue to invest in those areas of the city that identified will make a difference to the mainstream activity levels of the population across the whole of Exeter.

The Director stated that he had no further information on the Water Lane site, but the basic principles on active design and walking in terms of the Liveable Exeter sites would be adhered to. He invited Members to pass on any comments to the City Development and Live and Move teams.

The Chair thanked Officers for the report and proposed a further recommendation to support the aspirations for long term funding with Sport England.

Strategic Scrutiny Committee noted the following:-

- (1) progress made against the strategy, and its contribution towards key priorities in the City Council's Corporate Plan;
- (2) an update on progress be made to Strategic Scrutiny twice a year; and
- (3) support for the aspirations for long term funding with Sport England.

#### 47 **Exeter Plan: Outline Draft consultation: Initial reporting**

The Director introduced the report and referred to the extensive and inclusive public consultation in respect of the draft Local Plan. He thanked the Assistant Service Lead (Local Plan) and his team for their hard work in preparing for the consultation and their presence at a series of roadshows held throughout the city. The responses and level of engagement have created a good level of baseline data and the team were already preparing to commence the next consultation in October.

The Assistant Service Lead (Local Plan) provided an overview of the consultation carried out on the outline draft Exeter plan last autumn. A report would be presented to the Executive next month summarising the consultation which looked at 28 policies and sites. The team had made a significant effort over the 12 weeks extended consultation period. There had been a higher profile and digital presence, with a new engagement platform, 15 exhibitions as well as direct engagement with students from the University of Exeter and Exeter College as well as a number of community groups, press releases, banners, posters, digital screens, and an advertising campaign on Council vehicles being used.

There had been good levels of engagement with 1,500 individual respondents having provided more than 3,400 individual responses on a policy, site or issue; 700 comments were received as a result of a quick survey and more than 15,000 hits were made on the City Council's web site. More than 1,000 people attended the

exhibitions providing an opportunity for the team to engage with the community in some depth.

The key issues drawn from the consultation included:-

- Tackling climate change;
- Supporting development that would reduce the need to travel, and
- Providing good quality homes.

In general terms, over 50% of comments made were positive with clear support for brownfield development over green field sites as an overarching strategy. There was also support for other policies including the protection of valley parks, improvement of digital communication, particularly in relation to new development, and ensuring green infrastructure. There was no correlation between the scale of the 29 sites proposed and the number of responses.

Further detail on policy on a site by site basis would be published in the full consultation document, but the consultation undertaken had offered a good basis to move forward for the next draft of the Exeter Plan and future engagement.

The Assistant Service Lead (Local Plan) responded to the following Members' comments:-

- apart from the top three issues raised during the consultation, specific detail and statistics from the consultation would be included in the forthcoming report to the Executive.
- the quick survey on the development strategy resulted in a range of comments on a site by site basis which could explain why there was, in some cases, considerable local activity on particular sites and the team would take such comments on board.

Members welcomed the report with many comments including:-

- an appreciation of the effort made to engage with the public at a number of levels and with a more creative approach.
- affordable homes for local people, as well as quality homes were needed.
- turnout at the Beacon Centre roadshow was low and the Member hoped that such areas would be encouraged to participate in further consultation. The Member went on to comment on the demographic of respondents and suggested that younger people age groups had been less engaged in the consultation and if there were any plans to carry out consultation in schools, as the Plan would cover the generation that will inherit the city.
- whilst further detailed information from the forthcoming Executive report was awaited, a Member supported any opportunity to engage with the younger population.
- the consultation had noted the importance of having a safe and secure place to live, but capturing the comments of those with less of a voice should be recognised.
- there could be a greater level of engagement when larger developments were taking place, with consistent themes raised in relation to student accommodation, scale, design, affordability or the impact on services and infrastructure. The Member suggested there may be benefits in carrying out a similar consultation on a much smaller scale in such cases.

The Director appreciated the suggestion as it was important to be aware of local views and how to respond to a Local Plan. The next stage of the consultation will

pose a challenge, but will continue to shape the Plan to ensure it was effective and meaningful.

The Portfolio Holder City Development commented on the relatively low numbers from the consultation in Beacon Heath and would welcome looking at other ways to specifically engage groups within the community, as well as school students. The efforts to reach over 1,053 respondents should be congratulated and she was aware that the team continued to find ways to develop the consultation opportunities even further.

Strategic Scrutiny Committee noted the summary of the outline draft Exeter Plan consultation.

#### 48 **Working Towards Net Zero - Exeter City Council's Corporate Carbon Reduction Plan**

The Service Lead Net Zero and Business presented an update on the work of the Net Zero Team, and delivery of the City Council's Carbon Reduction Plan. The updated Plan included a mix of measures set out in the Council's Corporate Carbon Footprint Report produced in 2022, and actions in progress across all services to achieve a Net Zero Council. A summary of recent projects successfully delivered was also included within the report. The team were currently developing a separate methodology for the action plan to show low, medium and high priorities, which would give an emphasis of what action was needed to be undertaken as an immediate priority.

It should be acknowledged that delivery of the premise of Net Zero by 2030 for the City Council remained challenging. The Net Zero team continued to look at ways to create capacity, and they anticipated carrying out an exercise involving further research on the resources needed to deliver that for the City Council

The report highlighted some of the major projects of the team which included:-

- the completion of the Water Lane Smart Grid Project ;
- two members of staff have been delivering Carbon Literacy training across the City Council. This was an ongoing project, and the Council had already achieved bronze status with further plans to work towards a silver accreditation.
- a range of activity continued to reduce the Council's carbon emissions with the information and data available on a dedicated page on the City Council's web site .
- a review of the environmental accreditation scheme, Green Accord, included a relaunch at a Chamber of Commerce event at the beginning of April.

The Service Lead Net Zero and Business responded to the following Member's comments and questions:-

- she thanked the Member for comments on the attributes of an aerobic digestion plant and whilst there was no proposal to develop a facility, such as the one in the East Devon District Council area, it was not to say that such a facility could not be built in the future.
- an officer Task and Finish Group relating to procurement has been established to see how data relating to contracts could be collected. She would ask the Net Zero Project Manager to offer a more detailed response in relation to Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions and whether the connected and partnership companies were covered.

- the team were working to establish a costed plan for delivering Net Zero and she anticipated further detail would be available at the next meeting of the Strategic Scrutiny Committee in June.

The Portfolio Holder Climate Change welcomed the detailed report including the various projects and activity being carried out by the Net Zero team. He responded to a Member's question on sourcing information and data and referred to the Council's web site as referenced earlier in the meeting and a suggestion of a more visual aid, a virtual thermometer to chart the Council's progress in this regard.

Strategic Scrutiny Committee noted the following:-

- (1) an acknowledgment that progress made but of the scale of the challenge that remained;
- (2) the Carbon Reduction Plan, which was an evolving document, to be reviewed on a six monthly basis, to monitor progress, identify change and evaluate actions needed to deliver Net Zero; and
- (3) that in order to deliver Net Zero by 2030 will require an increase in capacity, financial investment and operational resource, both internally and from government at a national level. An investment Plan to establish recourses required had been added to the Carbon Reduction Plan.

#### 49 **Progress Report Shared Prosperity Fund - Update 2**

The Service Lead Net Zero and Business presented the report, and provided a second update on the Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) through from the Department for Levelling Up Housing & Communities (DLUHC). The City Council finally received confirmation of the Exeter Investment Plan in January 2023, with the Year One allocation made earlier this month, in March. To help facilitate this work, a Project Manager would be appointed on a temporary basis for two years to deliver various activities including the Exeter's Investment Fund.

Projects of note from the 2022/23 Investment Plan included a Design out Crime project, with the replacement of old analogue CCTV cameras in the city centre and the City Council's car parks, and the introduction of body worn cameras for the Council's enforcement teams; and a feasibility study in relation to the formation of the Exeter Passivehaus Training Academy would be commissioned early April.

The Service Lead Net Zero and Business referred to the revised Exeter Investment Plan attached to the report at Appendix 1 and highlighted a number of projects for 2023/24, commencing in April.

The following responses were given to Members' questions:-

- an activity in Year 2, would develop an Innovation Hub located within the city, working with the University of Exeter to undertake research specifically around climate change and Net Zero.
- the completion of carbon impact assessment on projects, was more of a policy requirement of the City Council rather than UKSPF.

The Portfolio Holder Climate Change also responded to a Member's comment on the lower level of funding through the UKSPF as opposed to the European Union (EU). He cited the example of the grant given to build the £3.5 million solar farm and battery storage facility at Water Lane, which was part European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) funded.

Strategic Scrutiny Committee noted the following:-

- (1) progress to deliver the Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) in Exeter which had been limited;
- (2) slight adjustment of the interventions, to address delays in delivery; and
- (3) the Service Lead for Net Zero and Business would provide an update to Strategic Scrutiny Committee every six months on the delivery and management of UKSPF, the next update being at the meeting on 21 September 2023.

50 **Forward Plan of Business and Forward Work Plan**

The Chair advised that the Scrutiny Programme Board would be considering the work plan of future business for Scrutiny.

Members noted the Forward Plan and draft Scrutiny Work Plan.

The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 8.50 pm

Chair