

## **CUSTOMER FOCUS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

30 January 2025

Present:

Councillor Josie Parkhouse (Chair)

Councillors Rees, Begley, Fullam, Harding, Holland, Hussain, Miller-Boam, Moore, Patrick, Pole, Read and Wardle

Apologies:

Councillor Darling

Also present:

Strategic Director for Corporate Resources, Head of Service, Customers and Communities, Head of Legal and Democratic Services & Monitoring Officer, Planning Solicitor, Head of Service - City Centre and Net Zero and Democratic Services Officer (LS)

In attendance as Portfolio Holder:

Councillors Bialyk, Vizard and Williams, R.

In attendance:

Councillor Williams, M.

**44 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2024 were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair as correct.

**45 Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made by Members.

**46 Questions from the Public under Standing Order No. 19**

There were no questions submitted by the public.

**47 Questions from Members of the Council under Standing Order No. 20**

The Chair reported that there were no questions submitted in advance from Members and invited questions to the Portfolio Holders present in accordance with Standing Order No. 20, the Leader and Councillors Vizard and Williams, R.

Councillor Vizard, Portfolio Holder for Climate, Ecological Change and Communities responded to a question from a Member making that the Chief Executive and responsible Director had met with Citizen's Advice and good progress had been made.

Councillor Williams, R, Portfolio Holder for City Management responded to question from Members' making the following points:

- the Council remained committed to procurement of electric vehicles taking into account budget and availability; and
- feedback from Visioning Day would be to Harbour Board.

48 **Portfolio Holder's Report - Cllr Wright**

The Deputy Leader, Councillor Wright presented her report as Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services and City Centre and responded to questions from Members' making the following points:

- there would be a full report on the new Community Safety Team in March;
- narrative response was that the Community Safety Team has had a positive impact;
- InExeter were also collecting data;
- no Fixed Penalty Notices had been issued due to the team undertaking appropriate training;
- data could be requested from Police as to how many Notices were issued to those of no fixed abode;
- she would enquire as to whether scrutiny would be broadcast once AV equipment had been updated;
- seconded car park staff were no having a negative impact on car parks as they were often dealing with ASB rather than car park issues;
- InExeter funding was confirmed for another year;
- the team would continue beyond the end of the trial as it could be funded through salaries;
- PCC funding had been for training and uniform therefore without this funding there would be a rethink of any planned expansion;
- there would be an outcome of the EDI improvement plan by the end of March;
- refreshments at meetings would be addressed as part of wider work to reduce the length of meetings and would take into account dietary requirements; and
- InExeter did not coordinate with buses specifically as their remit was to enhance footfall and was measured by cameras and to know why rather than how.

The Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee noted the update from the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services and City Centre.

49 **Update on Exeter Community Lottery first year of operation**

The Head of Service – Customers and Communities presented the report on the Update on Exeter Community Lottery first year of operation. The Chair requested that the report be taken as read and moved to questions.

The Head of Service responded to Members' questions making the following points:

- the lottery provider had given a best practice guide which covered promotion;
- it would be possible to share a list of all 47 organisations involved;
- an authority which was 30% larger had raised only 20% more;
- that he would investigate the difference between amount raised for good causes per pound in the original report and the update provided;
- he would investigate the feasibility of additional prizes; and
- more detail could be given on revenue and expenditure in future.

The Head of Service, Monitoring Officer and Portfolio Holder for Climate, Ecological Change and Communities agreed to investigate, outside the meeting, the difference in percentage given to good causes as reported.

The Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee noted the report on the Update on Exeter Community Lottery first year of operation.

## 50 Budget Public Consultation Process

The Strategic Director for Corporate Resources gave a verbal presentation on the Budget Public Consultation Process making the following points:

- the external auditor had raised that budget consultation had not taken place for a number of years;
- due to the restructure it had been important to progress improvements in a logical way;
- an officer had recently been appointed to co-ordinate consultations;
- the residents survey had been carried out using an LGA structure and was important to benchmark against in future;
- the consultation had been wider than the budget and included corporate plan questions which were also useful to budget-setting;
- Enventure Research had co-designed the questionnaire and used a number of approaches;
- computer-aided telephone interviewing had been used in the targeted consultation;
- the targeted approach reflected the local population (age, gender and area of the city);
- face-to-face interviewing on the street also took place;
- the average time to complete the questionnaire was 12 minutes which was the maximum for meaningful engagement;
- the consultation was also open to all online between 18 November and 9 January receiving a good rate of 597 responses;
- the interview-led questionnaire was undertaken with 18% from the South of the city, 38% from the North, and 39% Central;
- the consultation had been widely publicised;
- of the online responses 77% were completed by those aged over 45;
- results would be published on 4 February; and
- there were three areas covered; investment, reducing costs and raising money as well as the corporate plan which measured things against each other.

The Strategic Director for Corporate Resources and Head of Service – Customers and Communities responded to Members' questions making the following points:

- there would be a review after each corporate consultation;
- utilising an external agency was positive as this gave the ability to receive responses from a cross-sector of the population;
- the Council would consider how it engaged with businesses possibly through the BID and Chamber of Commerce;
- charities and community groups would also be considered;
- a summary of the results of the residents survey was on the website;
- the full results would be published in due course;
- improvement would be covered in at least one of the consultations;
- The Citizen published where council tax goes each year; and
- EDI monitoring questions were asked but not proportionate to the population.

## 51 Annual Scrutiny Report July 2023 - April 2024

The Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Board, Councillor Williams, M presented the Annual Scrutiny July 2023 to April 2024 making the following points:

- this was an interim report;

- the Scrutiny Programme Board had agreed to bring the timing of this report in line with the municipal year; and
- there would be a new format for future reports which would include the impact of scrutiny on items which had been scrutinised.

The Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Board, Chair and Deputy Chair of Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee responded to Members' questions making the following points:

- it was difficult to keep track of items without a scrutiny officer;
- that a response from Executive being included had been discussed at a recent Scrutiny Programme Board;
- the Board were exploring how to capture impact using a variety of methods including a case study; and
- Scrutiny Programme Board would discuss training from an external provider or LGA peer review.

The Chair moved and Councillor Fullam seconded the recommendations set out below and following a unanimous vote were **CARRIED**:

The Annual Scrutiny Report 2023/24 is noted; and

The Executive note the Annual Scrutiny Report 2023/24.

## 52 Scrutiny Work Plan

It was agreed that the item to be heard on 27 March 2025 on Performance and Service provided to Customers and Stakeholders of Stagecoach South West in Exeter request a report from the Portfolio Holder for Climate, Ecological Change and Communities as Chair of the Exeter Transport Member Working Group.

Following a unanimous vote the proposal from Councillor Mitchell on Anti-Social Behaviour in the City Centre – its causes and possible solutions was added to the work plan.

Following a unanimous vote the proposal from Councillor Palmer on Key People Activity Across the Council was added to the work plan.

Following a unanimous vote the draft Scrutiny Work Plan as amended was **AGREED**.

The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 7.25 pm

Chair