

REPORT TO EXECUTIVE

Date of Meeting: 8th July 2025

REPORT TO COUNCIL

Date of Meeting: 22nd July 2025

Report of: Chief Executive

Title: Draft Corporate Plan 2025-2028

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Executive to recommend to Council

1. What is the report about?

1.1 This report seeks members' agreement to the draft Exeter City Council Corporate Plan ('The draft Plan') 2025-2028. The Plan outlines the key priorities and strategic outcomes for the next three years, focusing on the 4 priorities of Local Economy, Homes, People, and Sustainable Environment, underpinned by a Well-Run Council.

The report also presents the outcome of the corporate plan consultations, which includes feedback from residents and stakeholders.

2. Recommendations:

2.1 That Executive recommends that Council approves the Exeter City Council Corporate Plan 2025-2028 and endorses the strategic priorities and intended outcomes identified in the plan;

2.2 That Executive and Council note the findings from the consultation report and previous surveys; and

2.3 That any necessary drafting amendments before publication be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

3. Reasons for the recommendation:

3.1 The draft Plan represents the council's business plan, confirms the strategic priorities of the council and sets out the priorities for delivering those strategic priorities within available resources. The draft Plan aligns with the aspirations of the Exeter Vision 2040.

3.2 The priorities within the draft Plan have been subject to extensive consultation to ensure as much as possible that residents, members and other stakeholders were given the opportunity to understand and comment on the draft priorities.

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

4.1 The implementation of the new Corporate Plan 2025-2028 will require collaboration across the Council and through on-going engagement with residents and partners. Financial resources will be allocated to support the delivery of strategic priorities outlined in the plan, and these will be identified within the annual budget setting process and delivery of key outputs and outcomes will be monitored through a new corporate priorities performance management system.

5. Section 151 Officer comments:

5.1 The Corporate Plan, if approved, will be linked to the Council's medium term financial plan to assist members in understanding where they are prioritising their spend. The adoption of the plan itself does not commit Council to any additional funding.

6. What are the legal aspects?

6.1 There is no specific legal obligation for local authorities to publish a corporate plan. However, they are considered to be good practice and demonstrate effective governance. They are widely used by local authorities as a strategic management tool to set out a council's vision, priorities and objectives.

6.2 The main statutory duty that relates to corporate plans is the Best Value Duty which was introduced by the Local Government Act 1999. This requires local authorities to secure continuous improvement in how they carry out their functions '...having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness'.

7. Monitoring Officer's comments:

7.1 Members will note the legal aspects above. The Monitoring Officer has no additional comments.

8. Report details:

8.1 The draft Plan has been developed through consultation with residents, stakeholders, and Executive Member officer workshops. The plan outlines the key priorities for the next three years, focusing on Local Economy, Homes, People, and Sustainable Environment, supported by a well-run Council. The Executive has used feedback from surveys and consultations, including the Exeter Resident Survey 2024, the Exeter Budget and Corporate Priorities Consultation 2025 and the Corporate Plan Consultation 2025, to shape the plan.

Following initial consultation, the Executive Committee undertook a series of steps to produce the new Corporate Plan. This included reviewing consultation feedback to identify common themes and priorities, holding strategic planning sessions to align these priorities with the Council's long-term vision and objectives, and drafting the Corporate Plan based on this feedback. The draft plan was then subject to further consultation with the public and partner organisations.

8.2 Key priorities and intended outcomes outlined in the Corporate Plan 2025-2028 (Annex A):

Local Economy:

- A thriving, diverse, and resilient city which can adapt to changing conditions
- An increase in independent shops and a low level of empty shops
- Businesses will be reporting increase in footfall and business success
- A vibrant cultural and tourism offer
- A safe and thriving night-time economy

People:

- Health inequalities will reduce.
- Communities will be more resilient.
- More residents, including those from our priority neighbourhoods and communities, will be participating in leisure and cultural events and activities.
- A safe and thriving city with great things to see and do for everyone.

Homes:

- Better quality, energy efficient and more affordable homes to buy or rent.
- New housing developments that are well integrated into existing communities.
- Fewer people will be homeless or in temporary housing.
- The number of people on the social housing waiting list will reduce

Sustainable Environment:

- A city taking action to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.
- A carbon-neutral city.
- Well-maintained parks, open spaces and biodiversity across the city

8.3 Well-Run Council

These priorities are supported by operating a well-run council, with the following intended outcomes:

Well-Run Council

- A balanced budget achieved by focusing on priorities, efficient delivery of services and sustainable income-generation.
- Effective investment and maintenance programmes for the assets that underpin our business
- Delivery of cost effective and accessible customer focused services enabling more people to self-serve when and how they want, with a face-to-face offering for those who need it.
- Open and transparent decision making

8.4 Consultation Findings:

The consultation report, (Annex B), highlights both positive and negative feedback from residents. While there is broad support for the Corporate Plan, some concerns were raised about the feasibility of certain initiatives and the impact on local services. The Exeter Resident Survey 2024 [Resident survey results - Exeter City Council](#) and [Budget consultation results - Exeter City](#) also provided valuable insights into residents' priorities and perceptions, informing the new Corporate Plan 2025-2028.

8.5 Consultation Feedback Supporting the Corporate Plan:

Local Economy

Residents expressed positive perceptions about better retail and leisure options, which would incentivise visits to the City Centre more often, reducing the need to travel to other towns/cities. They also appreciated the idea of a vibrant and thriving high street/city centre, which would contribute to economic growth and make Exeter a more attractive city

Homes

Feedback indicated strong support for more/better housing, which can enable people working in Exeter but living outside to reside within the city. Residents also highlighted the perception that more housing would reduce homelessness. The idea of reducing housing waiting lists and providing more secure housing was also well-received.

People

The vibrant cultural offer was seen positively, making Exeter a better, healthier, and more interesting place to live. Residents believed that this would create jobs, attract businesses, and lead to better prosperity. The idea of making Exeter a city people are proud of and a better place to live and shop was also supported

Sustainable Environment

Becoming carbon neutral was perceived positively, with residents highlighting benefits such as better air quality and a greener, healthier, and safer environment. Maintaining green spaces and allotments was also seen as enhancing this priority.

8.6 Negative perceptions raised through Corporate Plan Consultation:

Some respondents highlighted negative perception of the corporate plan, including:

- Concerns about the economic viability of achieving a varied and diverse City Centre
- Concerns about safety at night, particularly for women
- Concerns about the location of new housing developments, the pressure on infrastructure and the loss of green spaces
- concerns about the effectiveness and feasibility of the sustainability initiatives proposed in the plan.

8.7 The Corporate Plan 2025-2028 addresses these concerns in the following ways

- The introduction of a city centre strategy that aims to create a thriving, diverse, and resilient city that can adapt to changing conditions. It emphasizes increasing independent shops and maintaining low levels of empty shops.
- Addressing anti-social behaviour through the Exeter Community Safety Partnership, to create a safer environment for all residents.
- Involving and engaging communities and key partners in delivering the Exeter Local Plan for future housing developments, ensuring that new housing projects are well-planned and considerate of green spaces
- Working in partnership to reduce carbon emissions and enhancing and maintaining green spaces and allotments. Outputs will be measured through a Corporate Performance Framework.

8.8 Feedback from InExeter

Extensive feedback was also received from InExeter, the business improvement district (BID) for Exeter city centre, (Annex C). Exeter's response to this can be summarised as follows:

- **City Centre's Role in Economic Success:** The Council fully agrees with recognition of the city centre as a pivotal driver of economic success for Exeter and the wider region. Council initiatives will continue to focus on enhancing the vibrancy and economic vitality of the city centre, as outlined in the Local Economy priority of the Corporate Plan 2025
- **Coordination with Exeter Partnership:** The Council acknowledges the importance of aligning our Corporate Strategy and the Exeter Partnership's objectives. We are committed to a coordinated approach to delivery, leveraging synergies to achieve our shared goals, as emphasized in the Delivering our Strategic Priorities section
- **Collaboration with InExeter:** The Council are enthusiastic about working collaboratively with InExeter to develop a comprehensive set of success measures. These measures may well extend beyond traditional metrics such as footfall and service delivery, incorporating broader indicators of success.
- **Addressing Anti-Social Behaviour:** The Council is committed to implementing a clear and effective plan to address the concerns of businesses and visitors around anti-social behaviour. This will include addressing anti-social behaviour through the Exeter Community Safety Partnership as outlined in the People section of the Corporate Plan.
- **City Centre Strategy:** This City Centre Strategy will be instrumental in shaping the future of Exeter's city centre, as highlighted in the Local Economy priority,

and The Council will be conducting further consultation on the emerging City Centre Strategy during 2025/

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

9.1 The decision to approve the Corporate Plan will ensure that the Council's strategic priorities align with the aspirations of the Exeter Vision 2040. It will focus the Council's efforts to enhance the quality of life for residents, support sustainable growth, and improve services provided by Exeter City Council, whilst also delivering a balanced budget.

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

10.1 Potential risks include:

- **Resource Allocation:** Ensuring adequate resources are allocated to implement the strategic priorities. As outlined, robust performance reporting is being developed alongside this plan which will align with budget setting processes
- **Resistance to change:** Maintaining ongoing engagement with stakeholders to ensure continued support and feedback is essential to delivery of the Plan. The recent Senior Leader restructure created a dedicated consultation and engagement function and a new consultation and engagement strategy is being developed.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** A corporate priorities performance framework is being developed to enable robust monitoring and evaluation of outcomes arising from the Corporate Plan 2025 - 2028

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 potential 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:

12.1 In light of the Council declaring a Climate Emergency, the new Corporate Plan 2025 - 2028 includes several initiatives aimed at reducing the carbon footprint and promoting sustainability, by working in partnership to reduce carbon emissions, by supporting the delivery of District Heat Networks, securing affordable clean and secure energy for the city and bringing forward an Electric Vehicle Strategy for the city.

13. Are there any other options?

13.1 There are no other options as the Council needs to plan its future direction based on the best strategic fit between the resources available to meet stakeholder needs and prevailing expectations and environmental conditions. Agreeing the Corporate Plan will provide a clear and structured plan, so that work is aligned with long-term goals and the Council is prepared to navigate any future.

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

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

Annex A
Corporate Plan 2025 - 2028

Annex B
Corporate Plan 2025 – 2028 Consultation Stage 2 Findings

Annex C
Feedback from In Exeter

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