

COUNCIL

Tuesday 9 December 2025

Present:-

The Right Worshipful the Lord Mayor Councillor Anne Jobson (Chair)
Councillor Gemma Rolstone (Deputy Lord Mayor)
Councillors Asvachin, Banyard, Begley, Bialyk, Cookson, Fullam, Haigh, Harding, Holland, Hussain, Ketchin, Knott, Miller-Boam, Mitchell, M, Moore, Palmer, Parkhouse, Payne, Pole, Read, Rees, Sheridan, Vizard, Wetenhall, Williams, M, Williams, R and Wood

Also Present

Chief Executive, Head of Legal and Democratic Services & Monitoring Officer, Democratic Services Manager, Head of Service - City Centre and Net Zero, Head of Service - Finance and Democratic Services Officer

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OVERVIEW OF THE GENERAL FUND BUDGET Q2

The Leader moved the recommendations of the report, seconded by Councillor Wood, and invited the Head of Service – Finance to present the report.

The Head of Service – Finance presented the report, making the following points:

- this was an update after six months of the financial year;
- the Section 151 Officer recommended that council take no action at this stage;
- the General Fund working balance was expected to return to the required level soon; and
- the Council would continue to receive a recovery grant.

The Head of Service – Finance responded to Member's questions in the following terms:

- an answer would be provided regarding the RingGo charges outside of the meeting; and
- the underspend on the Civic Centre relocation had been carried forward to pay an instalment of the compensation payment next financial year.

Following a vote the recommendations of this report were CARRIED.

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GENERAL FUND CAPITAL MONITORING Q2

The Leader moved the recommendations of the report, seconded by Councillor Wood, and invited the Head of Service – Finance to present the report.

The Head of Service – Finance presented the report, making the following points:

- this update came after 6 months of the financial year;
- the Chief Executive had set up a meeting of the Capital Programme Board on the 15th of December;
- the maintenance fee was close to being finalised;
- there had been a budget increase in 5 areas; and
- this proposal would be able to see through to the new unitary council.

The Head of Service – Finance advised Members that she would answer all their questions outside of the meeting.

During debate Members made the following points;

- they were pleased that the Chief Executive was taking action on the capital budget;
- what specific improvements were they looking for; and
- thanked Officers for their work on the playing fields in Pinhoe.

In summing up the Leader stated that they were focusing on the Materials Reclamation Facility (MRF) and information would be brought to meetings of the Executive and Full Council in due course.

Following a vote, the recommendations were CARRIED.

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HRA BUDGET MONITORING REPORT – Q2

The Leader moved the recommendations of the report, seconded by Councillor Wood, and invited the Head of Service – Finance to present the report.

The Head of Service – Finance presented the report stating that there was nothing significant to highlight.

The Head of Service – Finance advised Members that their questions would be answered outside of the meeting.

In summing up the Leader highlighted that this work was being done on top of the retrofitting work.

Following a vote, the recommendations were unanimously CARRIED.

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UPDATE OF EXETER CITY COUNCIL'S COMPANIES, ALTERNATIVE DELIVERY MODELS AND CHARITIES.

The Leader moved the recommendations of the report, seconded by Councillor Wood, and invited the Head of Service – Finance to present the report.

The Head of Service – Finance presented the report and advised that this report was to update Members and that 2 dormant subsidiaries had been dissolved. She advised Members that she would respond to their questions outside of the meeting.

During debate the Leader felt that it was beneficial that this report had come to Council and it had provided an opportunity for understanding and transparency.

Following a vote, the recommendations were unanimously CARRIED

(The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and closed at 8.10 pm)

Chair

Councillor Banyard: When did the RingGo charges go live, and how are we going to manage the forecast \$40k shortfall?

The RingGo contract change was implemented in November 2025 limiting the savings to be achieved in 2025-26. The shortfall in the budgetary reduction will be met from General Fund balances.

Councillor Moore: Clarification about the forecast overspend reported against 'major projects' in relation to the bust station; how much is the forecast overspend and when it will be completed.

The Bus Station Wider Options project is expected to be £16k higher than Budget in 2025-26 with planned works to be completed by the end of December. The spend over budget will be met from General Fund Balances.

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Councillor Moore: is the Council required to return the full amount of Brownfield Land Release Funding (BLRF) or the amount unspent in relation to sites no longer proceeding.

I can confirm that we are returning unspent monies for all three schemes as required.

Cllr Banyard: Were the footpath works at Bonhay Road/Andlaw House completed as planned, as an underspend was reported.

The capital allocation for Andlaw House represents a contingency provision to address any potential impact on the adjacent ECC leat should the adjoining footpath fail. It should be noted that the footpath itself is neither owned nor managed by Exeter City Council.

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Cllr Banyard: Are the additional £35k for consultancy support with the audit of Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund claims a one-off or a recurring need?

This was for a Low Carbon Expert to provide support to the Asset Maintenance team with lodgements and compliance around Wave 2.1 Social Housing Decarbonisation funding. Going forward we have moved away from the stringent funding regime and are self-delivering retrofit, there should not be any future requirement for consultancy fees.

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Cllr Fullam: Where would the significant investment for the next phase of Exeter Science Park growth be sought?

Investment will be sought from the private sector for the next phase of growth at Exeter Science Park.

Councillor Moore: clarification on whether consideration would be given by the Council to using the 6 residential units in the Guildhall Shopping Centre for other council housing purposes (e.g. temporary accommodation).

The 6 residential units are subject to a 10 year lease to ECL which expires 10 May 2032 and the properties are let with assured shorthold tenancies (ASTs). ECL have the overriding lease so that it is possible for the tenancies to remain ASTs rather than secure tenancies. No changes are currently proposed until the lease expires.

Councillor M Mitchell: Why is Exeter Science Park's lease commitments are reported at £1.240m in 25/26, reducing to £0.959m in 26/27 and £2.428m for periods of 1/4/25 (page 195).

The figures represent the total contracted rent payable for ESPL under all current ongoing leases as at 31st March 2025. The figures in each year differ because of the different length of leases. The first 12 months figure is higher than the second because some leases are only 12 months duration (and therefore there is no contracted rent/lease commitment for the second year). The figure for periods after April 27 is higher as a number of leases are long term and this final category captures all remaining rent due outside of the first and second years (25/26 & 26/27) which can be substantial given some leases are for 5 years more.

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