

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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INVESTMENT APPROVAL FOR NEW SOLAR PV SITES

The Leader moved the recommendations of the report, seconded by Councillor Wood, and invited the Head of Service – City Centre & Net Zero to present the report.

The Head of Service – City Centre & Net Zero presented the report, making the following points:

- this would deliver 511,000kw of solar power;
- it was expected to be operational by 2026; and
- the budget for this project was £1,000,000.

The Head of Service – City Centre & Net Zero responded to Members' questions in the following terms:

- there would be a more in-depth discussion about the Senate Court building in January;
- this had required a large business case for each building, and comments would be provided after the meeting regarding the differences in cost;
- a response regarding the provider of the loan would be given outside of the meeting;
- grid capacity and connection agreements with the National Grid had already been confirmed;
- works were being aligned with those for Wonford Community Centre;
- there was a working group considering development of the Mary Arches Car Park; and
- the solar panels had not yet been procured but the length of the warranty would be taken into consideration when they were.

During debate Councillor Vizard thanked the Head of Service – City Centre and Net Zero for her hard work on this project. He was delighted that this was moving forward and felt it was crucial partnership work with South West Net Zero Park, and that it was an investment in Exeter's future.

Councillor Moore thanked the Net Zero Team and hoped this would have a significant impact on the emissions at St Sidwell's Point. She felt it very important to clarify where the funds were coming from as soon as possible and asked the

Portfolio Holder to provide information about the impact this would have on gas boiler use.

The Leader advised that a response to Councillor Moore would be given after the meeting.

Following a vote the recommendations of this report were CARRIED.

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

Chair

Councillor Moore: will the solar pv mean a reduction in gas boilers and ASHP at SSP

When fully operational SSP only calls on back up heating (gas boilers) when there are incidents of extreme cold weather conditions. The solar PV will provide a renewable energy supply, and in turn contribute to the electricity consumed by the ASHP's.

Councillor Moore: Where is the money coming from and what are the interest rates

Borrowing costs are included in the business case. The interest rate to 6%, which is the current Public Works Loan Board rate for 25-year debt for Local Authorities.

Cllr Read: Why is The Senate so expensive?

The Senate includes the cost of replacing the roof covering which is required before solar PV can be installed.

Councillor Read: Mary Arches Car park solar array, what's happening to that?

The top deck of Mary Arches Car Park is structurally compromised, making it unsafe for vehicles and people to access. Consequently, any solar equipment removal will require craning operations, as direct access is not possible. A feasibility study concluded that the cost of removing the panels would be extensive, installing a new canopy array would be more economical than rebuilding the array. The Net Zero Team are working with Corporate Property on options going forward.

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