

1

Contributing to the aspirations of the Exeter Vision 2040



2

Delivering our strategic priorities



3

Leading a well-run council



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Exeter Leisure staff celebrate the opening of St Sidwell's Point Leisure Centre

Introduction by Cllr Phil Bialyk, Leader of the council

I am pleased to introduce our corporate plan for 2022 to 2026.

This plan has never been more important as we face up to complex and unprecedented challenges. Some of these followed directly in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic and our exit from the European Union. Others - the climate emergency, the housing emergency, the decline of the High Street and health inequalities – are more embedded.

These are significant challenges affecting the whole nation and requiring interventions and significant investment from central government. Exeter City Council and its partners have an equally important role to play in addressing them and in improving the lives and wellbeing of people who live in, visit and work in Exeter.

Likewise, we mustn't lose sight of the inspiring and ambitious aspirations of the Exeter Vision 2040, and our contribution to the future success of the city. And, of course, we need to run an organisation and deliver essential services that people rely on as part of their everyday lives - providing leisure facilities, emptying the bins, cleaning the streets and cutting the grass - are just a few examples.

With extensive roles and responsibilities, we're always mindful that we need to fulfil them with a dwindling financial envelope. Government funding cuts mean we must reduce our budget by £6.6m by 2026. Inevitably this involves taking some difficult decisions and prioritising what we do. Focusing on the council and achieving savings is critical and will inevitably have an impact on the resources that we can contribute to achieving the outcomes that are owned and shared by all stakeholders in the city. Delivery of this plan will be very much dependent on the rapidly-changing economic climate, the availability and the prioritisation of our resources.

We are still aspirational for our city so innovative and creative working with the private sector and our partners will be critical as we articulate a voice for the city and lobby for new investment. We can't take sole ownership of issues that we don't have sole control of, or responsibility for, but we will play our part, galvanising support and activity from others.

Against this backdrop, we'll be focusing on:

- 1 Contributing to the aspirations of the Exeter Vision 2040
- 2 Delivering our strategic priorities
- 3 Leading a well-run council



Cllr Phil Bialyk celebrating Exeter City Football Club's promotion to League 1 with Matt Jay, ECFC captain

Of course, the scale of our activity means that this document can only be a snapshot and I look forward to reporting on our progress and achievements.

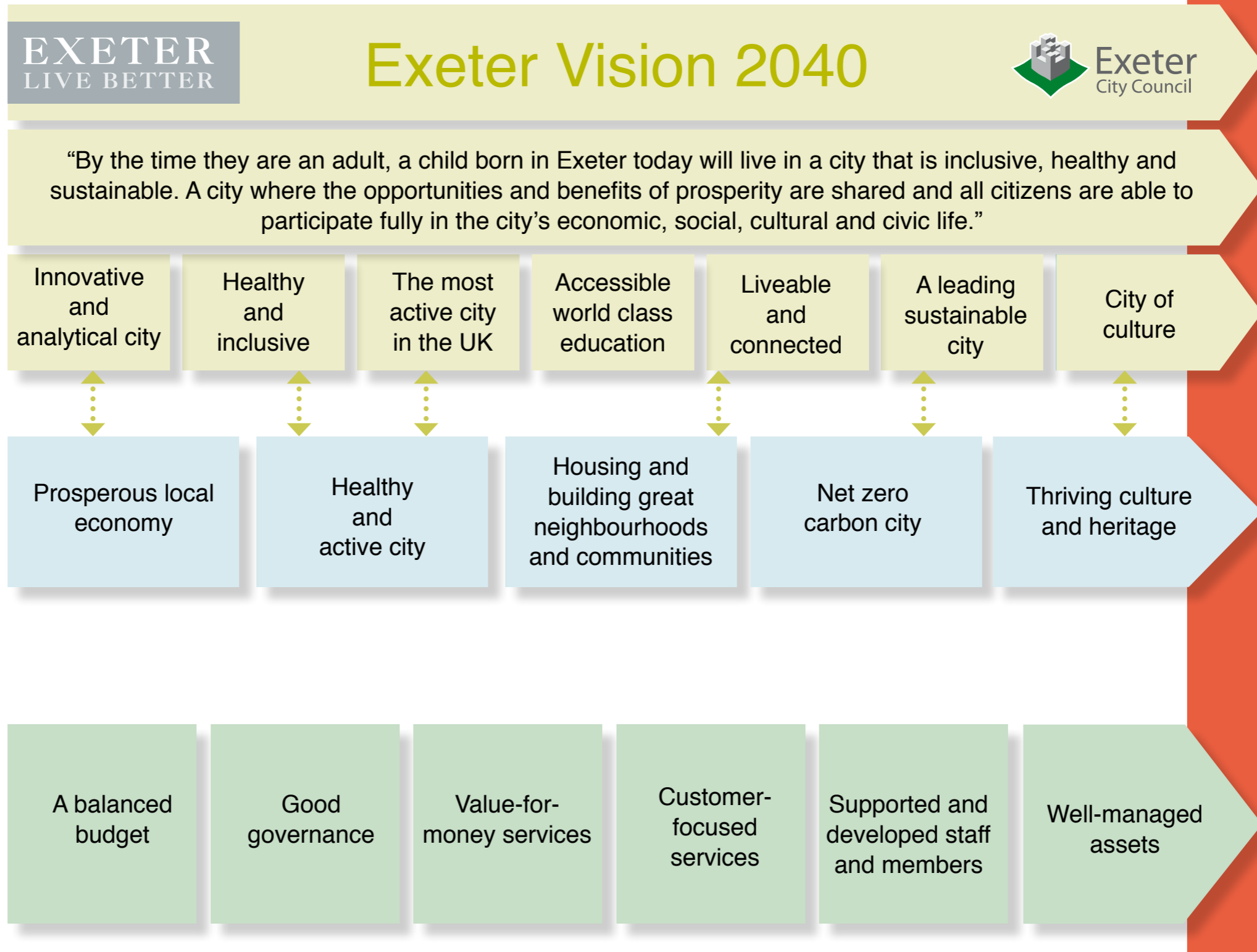
Cllr Phil Bialyk
Leader

Our plan on a page

1 Contributing to the aspirations of the Exeter Vision 2040

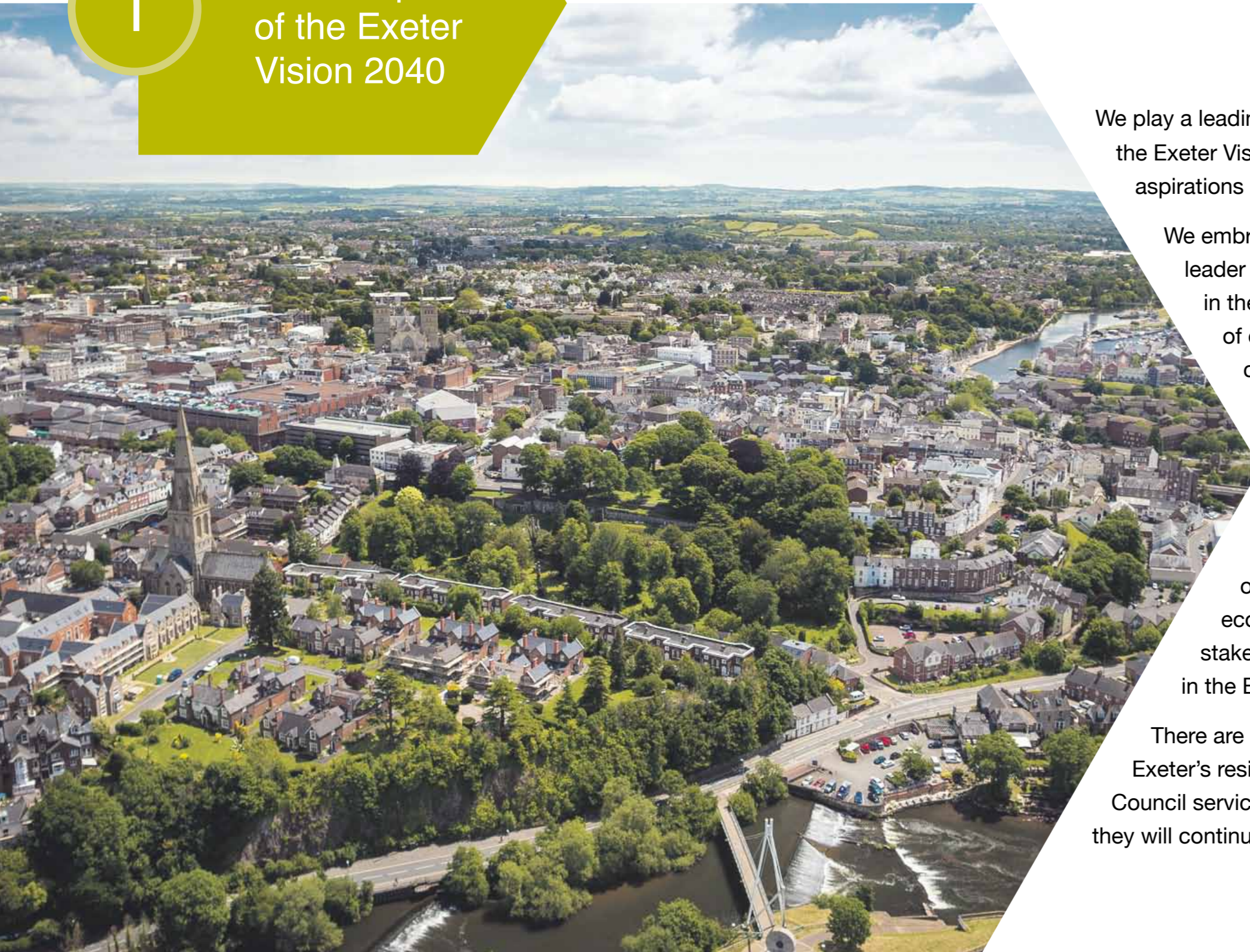
2 Delivering our strategic priorities

3 Leading a well-run council



1

Contributing to the aspirations of the Exeter Vision 2040



We play a leading and significant role in delivering the aspirations of the Exeter Vision and our five strategic priorities align directly with the aspirations of the Exeter Vision.

We embrace our role as a community leader – as a shaper and leader of place that works successfully with stakeholders in the city, across the region and nationally. We are proud of our record in articulating the needs of the city and its communities, galvanising the support of public and private sectors, securing investment and finding innovative solutions to problems and ambitions.

This often involves expanding our remit beyond that of a typical district council and venturing into areas that many district councils would see as the business of others. But we see this as essential for achieving the social, economic and environmental outcomes that the city, its stakeholders and communities aspire to and which are spelt out in the Exeter Vision.

There are numerous examples of how the services provided to Exeter's residents and communities make an important contribution. Council services will be setting out in their own detailed plans of how they will continue to contribute to these aspirations.

Exeter Vision 2040



In December 2019 the Liveable Exeter Place Board adopted the Exeter Vision 2040. Working together to bring about transformational change and sustainable growth, the Liveable Exeter Place Board is made up of representatives from leading public and private sector organisations from within the City of Exeter and Greater Exeter region.

“By the time they are an adult, a child born in Exeter today will live in a city that is inclusive, healthy and sustainable - a city where the opportunities and benefits of prosperity are shared and all citizens are able to participate fully in the city’s economic, social, cultural and civic life.”

Innovative and analytical city

Exeter will be a model of strong local democracy. Communities will organise themselves and use their assets and resources to reduce inequalities and create a sense of belonging. The city’s anchor institutions will drive local impact. Active, engaged citizens and communities will be empowered to create, share and use data to respond to shared problems and needs. Exeter will be a young people-friendly city and young people will have a meaningful voice in the decisions that affect them and their communities.

An innovative and analytical culture will support communities, businesses, civil society and public bodies to work together to solve the city’s challenges and achieve its ambitions. The city institutions work collaboratively with a coherence in pursuit of the city’s vision.

Healthy and inclusive

Exeter will be healthy and happy and local services will support people to live their lives well, in the ways that matter to them. Every resident will have a home that is secure, affordable and healthy in a balanced and connected neighbourhood that supports wellbeing and reduces social isolation.

Access to clean, secure and affordable energy will help to eliminate fuel poverty. Health, care and wellbeing services will be designed and delivered in partnership with the communities who use them.

The most active city in the UK

Exeter will be the most active and accessible city in England. Transport will not be a barrier to economic or social activities. Sustainable means of travel will be cheaper, quicker and more convenient than private car ownership. Land currently dominated by driving and parking will be freed up for social, economic and environmental uses. Air will be clean and healthy. A high-quality and accessible built environment and green spaces, with great arts and cultural facilities, will encourage healthy, active lifestyles. A comprehensive network of safe routes will ensure that most everyday journeys are made by walking and cycling.

Accessible world-class education

Exeter will be agile and innovative. Economic growth will be clean, inclusive and resilient. Local supply chains will be stronger. Supporting the city’s businesses and social enterprises and keeping more money within the local economy. All residents will have access to world-class education and training, and meaningful, high-quality employment with fair wages. The life-changing benefits of access to and participation in arts, culture and physical activity will be realised. Employers will be able to recruit, nurture and retain a skilled local workforce as well as attracting the best global talent.

Liveable and connected

Exeter will be a liveable city, with a thriving city centre, within a network of thriving rural and coastal towns and villages. The impacts of growth will be managed and mitigated. Communities will lead development, helping to create a city. A city where everyone has access to the places and services which enable them to meet their needs and lead fulfilling lives. Urban planning will protect and enhance Exeter’s exceptional natural and historic environment, safeguard its iconic landscape setting, and encourage high-quality contemporary design that complements and enhances the city’s heritage.

A leading sustainable city

Exeter will be a carbon neutral city by 2030 and recognised as a leading sustainable city and a global leader in addressing the social, economic and environmental challenges of climate change and urbanisation. The Exeter of the future will have grasped the opportunities ahead of us today.

City of culture

Exeter will be known nationally and internationally as a city of culture. It will innovate and lead in the area of the environment, wellbeing, cultural literacy, creative making and heritage innovation to build a living city where everyone thrives. Under its UNESCO City of Literature status Exeter will become a destination for writers and a city of readers. The city will use the power of literature and words to pursue a set of wellbeing goals to improve life for all.

Our values and behaviours - how we work

We know that only the exemplary behaviour and positive attitude of our employees will deliver outstanding results for those that visit, work in and live in the city.

We are developing a Values and Behaviours Framework, which represents how we will deliver the planned outcomes of this plan. Our values and behaviours are central to who we are as a council and they help to develop the right working environment to deliver our ambitious goals for the city.

These are our initial thoughts, developed through working with a small group of staff. Over the coming months, we will work with staff more widely and elected members to seek further feedback and to refine the framework.

Equality and diversity

As a service provider, community leader and employer we are committed to being an exemplar in promoting equality and tackling social exclusion. We demonstrate this commitment through our corporate equality group, corporate equality plan, our equality objectives and our values and behaviours. We also undertake equality impact assessments of our policies, programmes and plans to ensure we are considering their impact on equality groups.



- We practice health, safety and wellbeing of self and others
- We strive to deliver continuous improvement
- We are creative and innovative to build a better future for all
- We make a positive contribution towards a sustainable environment
- We act as a role model
- We are always accountable for our own actions
- We consistently show trust and respect
- We always lead by example
- We consistently show flexibility and are open to change
- We are ambitious for the city and the council
- We have a can-do attitude
- We take account of other people's views
- We respond positively to feedback
- We are open and honest
- We are always inclusive and considerate of others

2

Delivering our strategic priorities



Our five strategic priorities

These enable us to focus on and invest in issues that are of national concern, are important to the city and its communities and which reflect political priorities.

- A Prosperous local economy
- B Healthy and active city
- C Housing and building great neighbourhoods and communities
- D Net zero carbon city
- E Thriving culture and heritage

For each strategic priority we have set out the challenges we face, the role we play in addressing those challenges and a summary of our headline actions. Service plans and our performance framework set out more detailed actions and measures of success and will be reported regularly.

A

Prosperous local economy



“ The City of Exeter is the most significant urban asset in the region. It is uniquely placed to attract innovative businesses and high skilled workers. The challenge is not only to unlock this potential but to enable a new path creation that can stimulate growth in neighbouring and peripheral areas.

Exeter has many strengths which indicate the capacity for future development and growth. However, here are a number of key challenges which must be addressed, if the city-region is to maximise its economic potential.”

Devolution for Exeter and the South West - A ResPublica Report for Exeter City Council (March 2021)

Introduction

Exeter has faced economic challenges over the past couple of years, due mainly to the impact of Covid-19.

Around 30,000 (30%) of Exeter’s workforce were furloughed. Universal Credit claimants peaked at 4.2% in May and August 2020, the first time this had been more than 4% since May 1997. The numbers dropped to 2.2% in April 2022 and, whilst not yet back to pre-pandemic levels, those claiming often face a range of complex barriers preventing them from entering the labour market.

Job vacancies remain consistently high across the city and wider area, with around 3,000 vacancies within a 5 mile radius of the city. Vacancies far outweigh the number of people searching for work. Employers are reporting recruitment problems and the nature of the labour market drives up demand for skills and salaries.

Our young people have experienced a particularly difficult time, with those aged 16-24 considered to be most impacted by the pandemic. The number of young people claiming Universal Credit in Exeter more than doubled between February and August 2020. Our schools have also worked through challenging times, adapting to home learning, virtual work experience and the cancellation of exams. Supporting them and our young people as we move on from the pandemic will be crucial to developing our future workforce.

Footfall within the city centre dropped dramatically during lockdown periods. It is now recovering, remaining 5% down on 2019 levels, but in a significantly better place than both the South West (18.6%) and UK (22%) averages. It is estimated that 35 weeks of retail sales were lost from March 2021 to September 2021, and there were approximately 45 retail closures within Exeter during 2020/21. Whether pre-pandemic footfall levels will be achieved remains to be seen, particularly in light of new ‘hybrid’ working arrangements being adopted across a number of businesses.

The biggest economic transformational opportunity for Exeter and the region is to realise the economic impact of having some of the world’s leading experts on climate sciences based in Exeter. Supporting the University of Exeter in its plans for a Net Zero Plus Innovation hub, preferably located in the city centre, would support regional businesses and organisations with their climate and environment action plans.

It should attract start-ups and entrepreneurs to the region, providing skills development for green and digital transformation and building the South West into an international leader in climate action, biodiversity and natural capital. Work on the Civic University Agreement will align ambitions for Exeter to be a globally significant location for addressing the challenges of climate change.

A

Prosperous local economy

Key challenges

- Retention and recruitment, with some difficult-to-fill vacancies, which is stifling business growth.
- A rise in residents becoming economically inactive, particularly those in the 50+ age groups.
- Matching the learning and skills opportunities for residents with current and future job opportunities.
- Low levels of graduate retention from the University of Exeter.
- Levels of aspiration amongst our young people and limited awareness of opportunities.

How we will address this priority - headline actions

- We will launch a Net Zero Plus Innovation Hub for the South West, supporting regional businesses and organisations with their climate and environment action plans. We will attract start-ups and entrepreneurs to the region, providing skills development for green and digital transformation and building the South West into an international leader in climate action, biodiversity and natural capital.
- Capitalise on St Sidwell's Point leisure centre as a catalyst for regeneration.
- Launch and implement the revised Exeter Skills Strategy.
- Publish a new business plan for Exeter Works, including a one-stop shop for business engagement.
 - Develop partnerships with the University of Exeter (Civic University Agreement), Exeter Chamber and city organisations, to provide training and to support high-growth potential businesses and start ups.
 - Launch Empowering Girls to raise the aspiration levels of young girls in our schools.
 - Support our most excluded residents to participate in economic and civic life moving them into learning, work, training or volunteering.
 - Raise awareness of internships, mentoring, graduate placements and permanent positions to retain talent.
- Launch a revised City Centre Strategy addressing changes in shopping, working and travel habits.



B

Healthy and active city



“ While activity levels have stabilised following the height of the pandemic and, in many instances, are starting to show signs of recovery – including a welcome return to team sports since July 2021 - this masks a concerning underlying picture.

Some groups, such as our youngest adults, continue to see activity levels fall at a worrying rate while our physical spaces, such as gyms and leisure centres, are seeing slow recovery in numbers – with those taking part in fitness activities remaining notably below pre-pandemic levels.

There are also widening inequalities, with the least affluent being the most impacted. ”

Active Lives Adult Survey, November 2020-21 Report, Sport England (April 2022)

Introduction

Exeter is one of the healthiest places in the UK to live, however there are some areas in the city that have high levels of deprivation and some of the poorest health outcomes in England. There is a significant health inequality gap with a wide range of life expectancy between the most affluent and most deprived wards in the city.

Our approach to tackling these stubborn health inequalities includes investing in partnerships to develop skills and economic prosperity for all and taking a lead in supporting communities through an Asset-Based Community Development Approach (ABCD).

This is embodied in the pioneering Wellbeing Exeter network that provides community organisers in every ward in the city, working within their neighbourhoods on the issues that matter to people with the aim of enabling communities to thrive. Individuals and families are supported by community connectors linked to every GP surgery, community healthcare and council services who are able to refer people who would like help and support tackling practical social and lifestyle concerns. The council leads the Wellbeing Exeter programme, pooling funding from a range of partners including Devon County Council, NHS Primary Care Networks and Sport England.

In 2016, Exeter and the neighbouring new town of Cranbrook were selected by Sport England as one of twelve National Local Delivery Pilots. This reflected a brave new approach by Sport England to invest in key places using whole system thinking to encourage those who are less active to become more active in everyday life. This recognises the overwhelming evidence base of the health benefits of leading active lifestyles.

Our theory of change is that if we can encourage the least active to become more active in everyday life we will not only improve health outcomes, but we could also reduce congestion and improve air quality by encouraging more active travel for work, education and leisure.

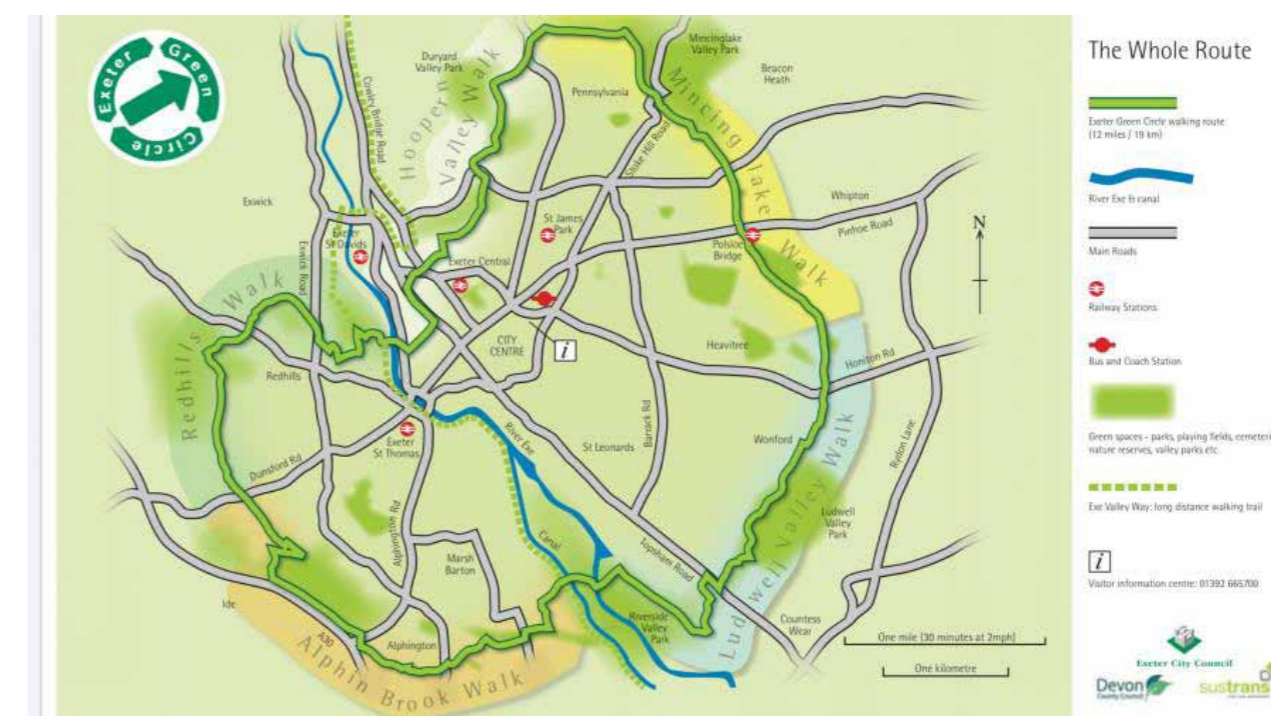
Our work with Sport England has shown that, whilst overall activity levels in Exeter are high compared to local authorities across England, in some areas in the city physical activity for some communities is far lower than the average for Exeter and in comparison with other areas in the country. Our focus in addressing these issues is two-fold: strategically through our aspirational Liveable Exeter vision of future neighbourhoods designed around active living through low-traffic, low-car use neighbourhoods designed to promote walking and cycling in all aspects of daily life. Secondly, through practical, community-based projects under the Live and Move programme. An example of this approach is the Exeter Green Circle where we are opening up valley parks and green spaces with improved infrastructure and signage, whilst simultaneously working with communities to find ways to encourage greater use of these brilliant community assets.

We have some confidence that this place-based approach may be having a positive impact as the National Audit Office (2022) have reported that prior to the pandemic inactivity levels were reducing at a higher rate in the Local Delivery Pilot areas than in comparative areas in England.

However in Exeter and elsewhere, the impact of the pandemic on activity levels, health outcomes and widening inequalities is significant. Our fieldwork has identified that residents in our poorest neighbourhoods are three times more likely to be inactive than the mainstream population. There has been a fall in activity levels and a decrease in general health and wellbeing for those on low incomes and from culturally-diverse communities.

A further factor that has impacted on physical activity levels is the closure of leisure centres and pausing of community sports during the pandemic. Community sports and informal activity organisers are regrouping, delivering activities and finding new ways of engaging with people after long periods of isolation and uncertainty. However, in some localities there has been a lasting impact of Covid on the leisure sector with around 30% of leisure centres and swimming pools unable to re-open following the pandemic closures.

Due to our long-standing investment in council-owned leisure centres and swimming pools, and our decision in 2021 to take back direct management of our leisure estate in response to pandemic challenges, we have reopened existing centres, including a fully refurbished Riverside Swimming Pool and Leisure Centre. In April 2022 we opened St Sidwell's Point, our flagship leisure centre, the UK's first ultra-low energy, Passivhaus leisure centre and swimming pool complex. This facility, and five other leisure centres under our direct management, symbolise our ambition to increase activity levels and improve the health of communities across the city.



B

Healthy and active city



Key challenges

- Responding to the post-pandemic impact on health inequalities and deprivation including a decrease in physical inactivity for those on low incomes or from culturally-diverse communities.
- Increasing socio-economic challenges and their impact on health inequalities and wellbeing with fuel poverty for example, resulting in reduced mental and physical wellbeing, with people in particular groups increasingly feeling isolated and unable to cope.
- Finding a sustainable funding model for Wellbeing Exeter, which we know makes a difference to the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities at a time of increasing pressure on public sector budgets.
- The ongoing risks to public swimming pools, gyms and leisure centres nationwide as a consequence of the Covid pandemic and increasing costs.
- The impact of the increasing cost of living, wage bill and energy on costs, whilst trying to keep costs to Exeter residents low and fulfil our aim of running cost-neutral Exeter Leisure services.

Wellbeing Exeter

Through Wellbeing Exeter we lead a unique partnership that employs community builders and connectors across the city who work with individuals and communities to identify what matters to them and then plan a forward together.

We will:

How we will address this priority - headline actions

- Develop a sustainable funding and delivery model for Wellbeing Exeter in partnership with its strategic funders and operational delivery partners.
- Increase referrals so more residents can improve their physical and mental health through conversations with Wellbeing Exeter Community Connector team.
 - Encourage and support Community Builders working with communities keen to address local and city challenges of Net Zero.
- Increase connections for people in communities to access local activities on their doorsteps through working with Wellbeing Community Physical Activity Organiser team.
- In partnership with Exeter Leisure Services, develop a wellbeing programme for those on low incomes or experiencing challenging circumstances to enjoy our leisure facilities.
- Increase the number of residents from our most challenged communities accessing introductory and beginner activity opportunities through community-based and Exeter Leisure programmes.

B

Healthy and active city



Live and Move (Sport England Local Delivery Pilot)

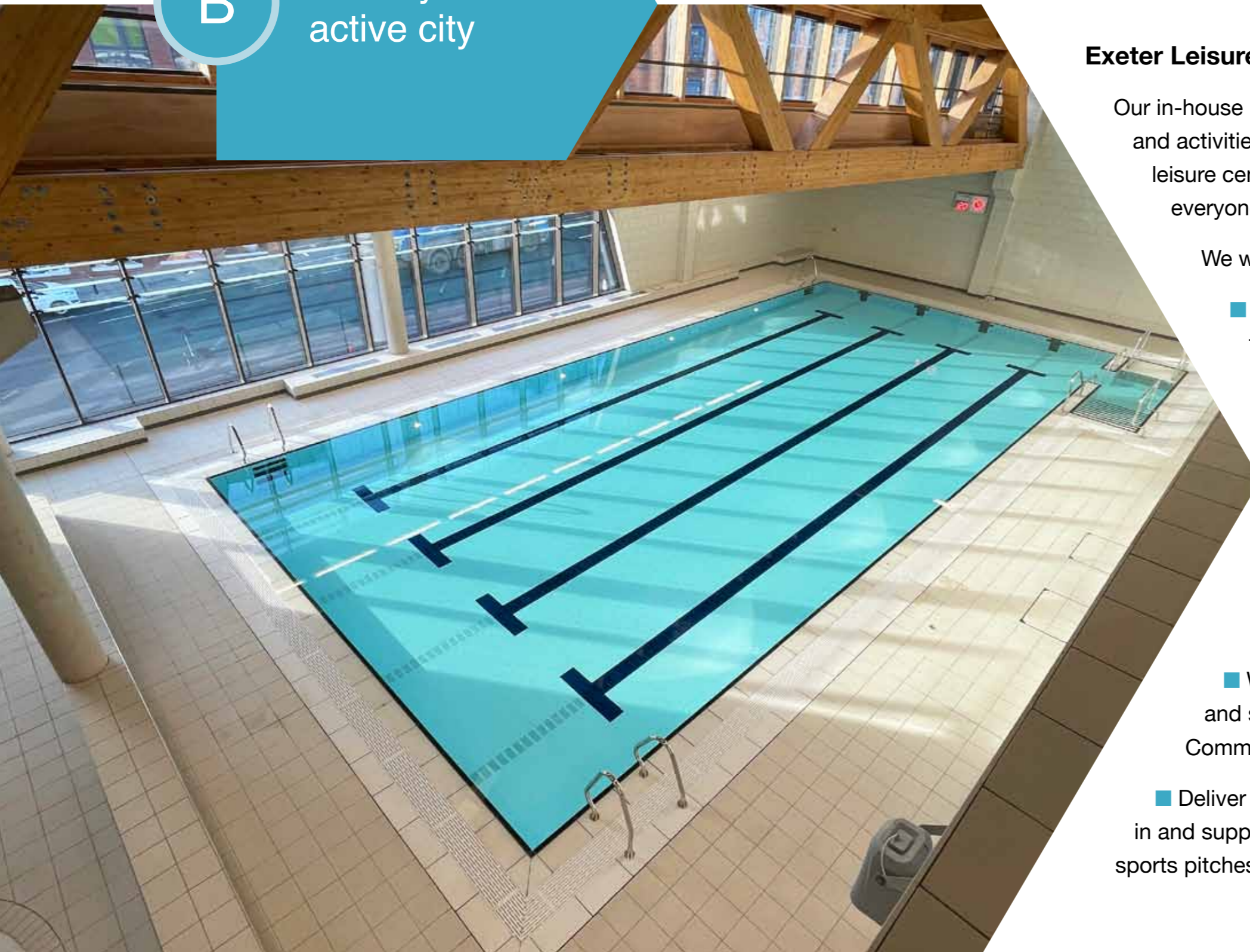
We run a programme funded by Sport England called 'Live and Move', supporting people to walk and cycle more in their everyday lives.

We will:

- Work with Devon County Council to consult on and launch the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan to tackle congestion, improve physical and mental health, and support community economies in the city.
- Encourage more residents to access strategic cycle routes across Exeter.
- Launch the Exeter Green Circle with a new digital app and improve a network of short walks connected to the 13 mile circular route.
- Consult on and finalise designs to deliver public realm and highway improvements in Newtown, developing a low-traffic neighbourhood.
- Develop Active Design standards within the council's planning service to embed low-traffic neighbourhoods within Liveable Exeter developments and the future Exeter Local Plan.
- Deliver a new green travel plan for the council with walking and cycling to work as the main mode of transport.
- Deliver a planning application for a new Wonford Community Wellbeing Hub.

B

Healthy and
active city



Exeter Leisure Services

Our in-house leisure service 'Exeter Leisure' offers leisure facilities and activities at six sites in the city, including our world-class leisure centre, St Sidwell's Point, helping and encouraging everyone to lead active and healthy lifestyles.

We will:

- Ensure a successful first year of operation for St Sidwell's Point, maximising take-up of leisure activities.
- Operate an effective, cost-neutral leisure service.
- Explore commercial opportunities for Exeter Leisure.
- Review the operation of the leisure service, the use of our wet and dry facilities and identify options for improvement and investment.
- Work with Sport England to develop our leisure strategy and secure external investment to deliver the Wonford Community Wellbeing hub.
- Deliver a new playing pitch strategy for the city that invests in and supports residents to access green spaces, grass and artificial sports pitches.

C

Housing and building great neighbourhoods and communities



“

The housing emergency is millions of people denied a safe home. The housing emergency is thousands of families stuck in temporary accommodation. The housing emergency is people living on the streets.

Shelter (2021) 'Denied the Right to a Safe Home: Exposing the Housing Emergency'

”

“

Neighbourhoods are the building block of a city. The improvement and creation of new urban communities combining new homes with meaningful and high-value jobs and services is at the heart of the Liveable Exeter vision. Neighbourhoods that promote wellbeing and physical activity can be achieved through the implementation of a transformational plan for delivering homes in the city.

Liveable Exeter

”

Introduction

Exeter has always ranked very highly as a great place to live in comparison with other cities in the UK. It is the quality of the environment, the friendliness of local people and the quality of life that make it so. Its popularity and its attractiveness as a place, drive growth and investment. This fuels demand for more housing, placing greater pressures on an overloaded infrastructure including hospitals, schools and other public services.

The challenges

- A shortage of social and affordable one and two bedroomed homes, with over 2800 people waiting for social housing (as at 6 June 2022).
- Between 15 and 25 people are sleeping on the streets of Exeter on any given night.
- Over 600 households (individuals and families) are homeless in Exeter, stuck in temporary accommodation - homelessness hostels and shared accommodation plus hotels and bed and breakfasts.
- Renters face insecurity, the threat of unfair eviction and unsustainably high rents in the private sector.
- In 2021, an Exeter home typically cost an average of 9.1 times earnings – up from 7.9 in 2020
- Annual house price inflation is up to 13.4%, with by far the strongest quarterly growth (3.5%) of any region (average house price of £293,968
- Private rents paid by tenants in the South West rose by 3.5% in the 12 months to February 2022

C

Housing and building great neighbourhoods and communities



The Exeter Plan (the local plan) - Will shape the future of Exeter for the next 20 years, setting out how the city continues to evolve and meet the needs of the community. As the main planning policy document, it will set out where development should take place and will be vital in making decisions on planning applications. Further information on progress with the plan is available at www.exeter.gov.uk.

Liveable Exeter - Will create new homes for the city guided by Garden City principles, working in close collaboration with local architects and partners. These principles have been built into the Exeter Vision 2040.

Liveable Exeter will encompass eight sites around the city including Water Lane and St David's and will deliver 12,000 new homes in new urban communities on existing brownfield sites.

The programme will address major challenges of infrastructure and renewal, low carbon development as well as drawing together the core threads of the Exeter Vision 2040. You can find out more about the programme, the sites and community engagement plans at www.liveableexeter.co.uk.

Property development - As the owner of the Exeter City Living property development company, we build, high-quality, energy-efficient, safe and affordable homes across a range of tenures.

We will:

- Create a business case for our own new Residential Property Company to build and acquire rented homes with the security of an ethical landlord and a security of tenancy not seen in the private sector.
- Use funding from the Housing Revenue Account to deliver 500 new council homes over the next 10 years.

Property owner and landlord – As the landlord of houses and flats in Exeter, we manage homes that tenants can be proud of and enable them to sustain their tenancies.

We will:

- Update the 30 year business plan for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), setting out how the council will manage its HRA resources to support the delivery of high-quality council housing in Exeter.
- Review our Tenancy Policy and Strategy.
- Ensure that all housing services comply with regulatory standards and procedures to be introduced by the new Social Housing Regulator in March 2023.
- Bring Edwards Court (Extra Care) into housing management.
- Introduce a Neighbourhood Strategy that enables tenants to be part of their community and provides safe, well-managed estates.
- Publish and implement a new Asset Management Plan, which includes our plans to shift capital investment towards carbon neutrality and to focus on emerging government legislation such as the Future Homes Standard and Building Safety Act.
- Improve the energy efficiency of our own properties reducing carbon emissions and fuel costs by continuing the retrofit programme for our housing stock (4,800 properties).
- Ensure the safety of all tenants and leaseholders via compliant management of gas servicing, electrical testing, asbestos management, legionella testing, fire risk assessments and lift servicing.

Housing advice and homelessness support - We play a leading role in ensuring that the most vulnerable citizens receive the best advice and, where possible, an accommodation offer at the earliest opportunity with ongoing bespoke support.

We will:

- Publish and implement a new Homelessness Strategy that supports our ambition to reduce rough sleeper numbers, and end rough sleeping where possible by 2025.
- Increase integrated offers of accommodation and treatment to build better recovery from homelessness as well as homelessness prevention in the first place.
- Continue co-production and partnership work with the voluntary sector to provide accommodation units with tenancy training and support where needed.
- Explore setting up strategic forums for local providers and commissioners to better join up services and deliver improved outcomes around acute homelessness need.
- Invest £4M in new “stepping stone” homes for rough sleepers, plus annual £1.5M investment over next 3 years in new accommodation and support interventions.

D

Net zero carbon city



“ Limiting global warming will require major transitions in the energy sector. This will involve a substantial reduction in fossil fuel use, widespread electrification, improved energy efficiency and use of alternative fuels (such as hydrogen).

Cities and other urban areas also offer significant opportunities for emissions reductions. These can be achieved through lower energy consumption (such as by creating compact walkable cities) electrification of transport in combination with low-emission energy sources and enhanced carbon uptake and storage using nature. There are options for established, rapidly growing and new cities. ”

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Sixth Assessment Report Climate Change 2022: Mitigation of Climate Change the Working Group III contribution (April 2022)

Introduction

In 2019, Exeter City Council declared a climate emergency, with the aim of becoming a carbon neutral city by 2030. In response to this bold ambition, Exeter City Futures (ECF), a community interest company led by key organisations in the city including the City Council, launched “Towards a Carbon-Neutral Exeter” a Net Zero Exeter 2030 Plan.

In 2022 Exeter University’s Centre for Energy and the Environment published a baseline greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory for the city, which shows the scale of the changes needed in Exeter to meet Net Zero targets for 2030. The GHG inventory reports emissions and identifies specific metrics for monitoring progress towards carbon neutrality in each of the eight emissions sectors: power, buildings, industry, transport, agriculture, land use, waste and fluorinated (F) gasses across the city.

The challenges faced by the city to achieve its ambitions are daunting but there is huge potential, through greater collaboration and innovation to make significant in-roads into decarbonisation by concentrating our efforts in areas where we can have the most impact.

It is clear that the council, as an organisation that owns property, vehicles and uses significant amounts of energy and water, has a clear responsibility for reducing its own energy use and carbon emissions and we have a good track record of doing so, for example:

- St Sidwell’s Point, a new city bus station and new Council owned homes built to Passivhaus standard
- Solar PV estate of 4.7MW installed on Council owned land and property
- Over 220 Council owned homes retrofitted, to improve their energy efficiency and reduce their carbon emissions
- Net Zero team and budget established focusing on reducing council carbon emissions

D

Net zero carbon city



Key challenges

- GHG emissions in Exeter are on a downward trajectory with emissions 2008 declining by a third 2019. However, this reduction is due to the reduction in the carbon intensity of the national electricity grid: there has been a 64% reduction in emission from the power sector (with most generation plant located outside Exeter) between 2007 and 2019.
- Emissions from buildings and transport are exceeding targets set for 2020 and the lack of progress in these sectors is particularly concerning, with growth in the city leading to increases in emissions in recent years. The city needs to make significant progress in reducing emission from buildings and transport to deliver net zero.

How we will address this priority - headline actions

City leadership for Net zero

We have already established a new Net Zero team to co-ordinate work to reduce our own carbon emissions aiming, as an organisation, to achieve net zero by 2030, however we cannot meet the City challenges of climate change alone.

“Towards a Carbon-Neutral Exeter”

Roadmap provides the City with a clear, detailed and compelling roadmap to carbon neutrality.

The GHG inventory provides a robust baseline from which we can plan and monitor actions to achieve Net Zero. Through the Exeter Vision 2040, Liveable Exeter, the Civic University Agreement, Place Board and ECF we have both the strategies and the collaborative delivery vehicles to achieve outstanding solutions for our city.

In recognition of the need for a whole system approach, we have taken the decision to temporarily second our Chief Executive and Director, City Transformation to head up and lead the ECF delivery team. This enables us to provide strategic leadership to organisations in the city and to dedicate resources to delivery of the Net Zero Exeter 2030 Plan.

D

Net zero carbon city

The ECF approach will be two-fold: a strategic influencing and collaborating role aiming to draw in significant investment from new partners with an interest in city-wide test beds for innovative solutions to decarbonisation. And a supporting delivery programme of practical demonstrations projects showing how whole system approaches could be scaled up to deliver sustainable city-wide benefits.

The priorities for the ECF delivery plan are to:

- Continue to develop the Exeter Development Fund concept, supported by grant funding from central government, to create a model for funding sustainable carbon neutral communities into the future as part of the Liveable Exeter housing development programme.
- Map organisations' current Net Zero plans against the GHG inventory baseline to assess to what extent current plans will contribute to the sector targets, identify gaps and highlight areas for further collaboration and attention.
- Deliver a Net zero city Dashboard and Monitoring System: once we have assessed current plans across ECF partners: we will need to consider what all our plans add up to in the city context. Are there opportunities to do more together? What are the gaps? Are supply chains for common developments geared up to enable plans?
- Review Exeter Transport Strategy to understand the potential impacts various proposals will have on Net Zero and consider which proposals could be most effective and could be accelerated or enhanced benchmarking against innovations in other cities.
- Convene key stakeholders to consider the role hydrogen and district heating networks could play in the decarbonisation of the city.
- Expand community energy schemes: collaborating with Exeter Community Energy and Wellbeing Exeter design and test hyper local energy efficiency partnerships to understand and overcome the practical barriers to delivering renewable energy and reducing fuel poverty in key areas of the city.
- Use the data and insights gained to identify external funding and investors to assist in solving key infrastructure and de-carbonisation challenges.

D

Net zero carbon city

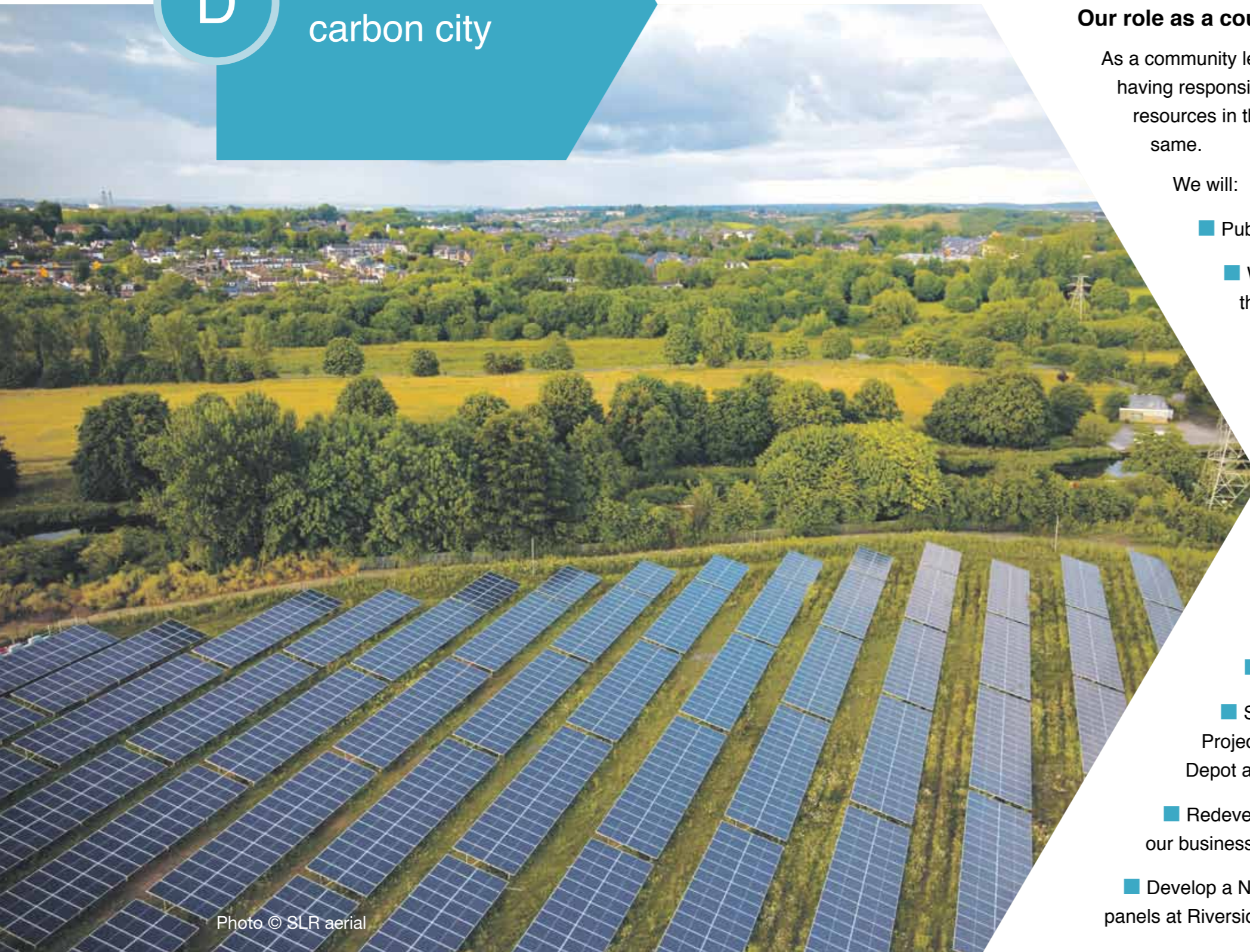


Photo © SLR aerial

Our role as a council

As a community leader, as an owner of significant land, property and assets and having responsibility for developing and maintaining the public realm we can invest resources in the delivery of Net Zero and encourage and influence others to do the same.

We will:

- Publish a City Council Carbon Reduction Plan.
- Work with our partners to support and implement the Devon Carbon Plan.
- Research and launch a new Electric Vehicle Strategy for the City using council-owned land and assets.
 - Continue to roll-out kerb-side food waste collection across the city.
 - Roll out the electrification of the Council's operational fleet – starting with three new electric refuse collection vehicles.
 - Launch a new campaign in partnership with Great Western Railways to encourage visits to Exeter by train.
- Publish a Royal Albert Memorial Museum decarbonisation plan.
- Switch on the £3.5million Water Lane and Smart Grid and Storage Project, providing a renewable energy supply to the council's Operations Depot at Exton Road.
- Redevelop and relaunch the Green Accord to address carbon emissions in our business and supply chain.
- Develop a Net Zero plan for the leisure service estate, including installing solar panels at Riverside Leisure Centre.

E

Thriving culture and heritage



“

Exeter's culture is unique and constantly evolving. It encompasses our shared histories, our personal identities and stories and our city's heritage from the Iron Age to present day along with our thriving community of creative art practitioners.

We will do everything we can within our scope to celebrate, support and enable our shared culture to thrive.

”

Cllr Laura Wright, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Culture, Corporate & Democratic Services



Introduction

For a city of its size, run by a district council, Exeter has a high proportion of National Portfolio Organisations. It has received consistently high levels of revenue investment for cultural facilities and activity from Exeter City Council and Arts Council England. It is home to one of the best regional museums in the country. Exeter has also recently been given Cultural Compact status, which delivers cross-sector engagement and helps unlock opportunities to those working in the cultural sector.

There are challenges ahead, but Exeter is well placed because of its strong roots, core investment and flourishing partnerships. Those working in the Creative Arts, Culture and Heritage have shown perhaps the highest level of innovation and resilience in recent times. We must continue to support those working in culture with matched enthusiasm.

On large scale projects, The University of Exeter's Civic University Agreement and Creative Arc investment is leading the way. Through this work and a potential uplift in funding for the Liveable Exeter programme, the city is on track to embrace the culture of our community in ways a public body hasn't done before.

Under its UNESCO City of Literature status Exeter has become known nationally and internationally as a city of stories. We will work with the charity in new ways so the written word will be used to improve life for everyone.



In 2019 the city was awarded UNESCO City of Literature status, recognising 1,000 years of unbroken history around reading.



E

Thriving culture and heritage



Key challenges

- Funding
- Arts Council 'Priority Place' designation
- Moving from delivery to enabling and facilitation
- Uncertainty around National Portfolio Organisations
- A flourishing night-time economy
- A need to balance cultural ambition with the national funding picture and local financial challenges
- A need to support Visit Exeter as a vital mechanism for promotion of our events, business and cultural offer.



We will:

- Continue to support the Exeter Heritage Partnership Network to be the voice of Exeter's heritage institutions, working in partnership to lead inclusive, inspirational and thought-provoking heritage activities, which encourage both residents and visitors to engage with the story of Exeter's 20000 year history.

- Apply for the next year of National Portfolio Organisation funding and an uplift for our work with the University of Exeter on the Creative Arc.

- Deliver the Royal Albert Memorial Museum's strategic plan.

- Listen to what is important to our communities and amplify those voices into planning strategy, including Liveable Exeter locations and the City Plan.

- Publish a public art strategy and deliver on the actions.

- Support the Northcott Theatre with their use of The Barnfield Theatre as an additional city centre attraction.

- Create and deliver a new tourism strategy for Visit Exeter members.

- Deliver a new service level agreement for The Custom House and utilise its potential through Exeter Canal and Quay Trust.

- Provide a varied programme of events at The Corn Exchange and improve the building and facilities.

- Fully understand Exeter's night time economy and bring that understanding into any discussions and decisions around culture of the city.

- Use the upcoming skills strategy to listen and facilitate new opportunities for young people starting out in the creative industries.

- Support our National Portfolio Organisations following the new round of funding.

- Work with UNESCO City of Literature to deliver a strong memorandum of understanding, leveraging every possibility of this world class status.

- Facilitate and deliver key events in our open spaces.

- Continue to support the Exeter Heritage Partnership Network to be the voice of Exeter's Heritage institutions, working in partnership to lead inclusive, inspirational and thought-provoking heritage activities which encourage both residents and visitors to engage with the story of Exeter's history.

How we will address this priority - headline actions

3

Leading a well-run council

We have identified six pillars of a well-run council. We have set out below what we mean by each of these and what we will do to deliver them. All of our services will be setting out their contribution to these six pillars in their own service plans.

- A A balanced budget
- B Good governance
- C Value-for-money services
- D Customer-focused services
- E Supported & developed staff & members
- F Well-managed assets

One Exeter is the council's transformation programme.

It aims to deliver a fit-for-purpose organisation and deliver the budget reductions identified in the Medium Term Financial Plan.

The programme will transform how we work and how we support our staff, customers and stakeholders and it is central to delivery of the six pillars - A well-run council.

 **ONE EXETER**
ONE COUNCIL • ONE TEAM

A A balanced budget	B Good governance	C Value-for-money services	D Customer-focused services	E Supported and developed staff and members	F Well-managed assets
<p>We will meet the challenges of ongoing reductions in funding from central government and a budget reduction of £6.6m by 2026/27 through reducing costs, generating additional income and prioritising spend whilst maintaining statutory services.</p> <p>Budget reductions and income We will identify budget reductions and income that enable us to deliver a balanced budget to Council in 2023.</p> <p>Generating income We will expand our commercial activity and generate more income.</p> <p>Discretionary services We will review the prioritisation and operation of our discretionary services.</p>	<p>We conduct our business in accordance with our Code of Corporate Governance, which follows the seven core principles of the framework Delivering Good Governance in Local Government (CIPFA).</p> <p>Risks We will regularly assess and mitigate our risks.</p> <p>Emergencies and disruptive incidents We will be resilient and capable of responding to emergencies and disruptive incidents.</p> <p>Equality and diversity We will address this and tackle social exclusion in all of our work.</p> <p>Performance management We will monitor and review delivery of our priorities and work programmes and use data to inform our decisions and priorities.</p> <p>Consultation and engagement We will actively communicate and engage with our residents and communities and seek their views on projects and initiatives in line with our Consultation Charter.</p> <p>Effective partnerships We will work with our partners and stakeholders for mutual benefit to achieve shared ambitions, use innovative delivery models and unlock investment. We will maintain a partnership register to ensure our partnerships meet our partnership protocol.</p>	<p>Our organisational structure and roles optimise delivery of our strategic priorities and services. We deliver and procure value-for-money, customer-facing support services, where value for money means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ spending less (minimising the cost of services) ■ spending wisely (prioritising what we spend money on) ■ spending well (making the best use of available resources through continuously-improved processes) <p>Organisational structure We will review our organisation and set out proposals for a fit-for-purpose organisational structure.</p> <p>Procurement We will procure goods and services as efficiently and effectively as possible.</p> <p>Value-for-money services As part of our organisational change programme, One Exeter, we will review our services to ensure they are meeting our value-for-money objectives.</p>	<p>We make it as easy as possible for people to help themselves by providing high-quality information and advice, first time, through digital and self-help services and a single point of contact.</p> <p>Service reviews We will carry out service reviews to analyse and redesign the operation of our services and their processes to ensure that they meet the customer-focused principles of our One Exeter programme.</p> <p>Digital services We will work with Strata, our ICT provider, to implement our Digital Strategy and maximise the opportunities for customer-focused service.</p>	<p>We provide training, development and support programmes for our employees and councillors.</p> <p>Staff development We will develop the capability of our staff to ensure they are highly motivated, well trained, supported with agile working and adopt our values and behaviours.</p> <p>Staff wellbeing We will put in place an Employee Wellbeing Framework.</p> <p>Elected members We will enable our elected members to be effective in their roles as politicians and community representatives.</p> <p>Health and safety We will ensure that health and safety at work is a priority and that all staff are aware of its significance for their roles and responsibilities.</p>	<p>We have investment and maintenance programmes for the assets that underpin our business.</p> <p>Built assets We will manage our built assets to improve value for money, income potential and to maximise their longevity.</p> <p>Information We will manage and secure our information and ensure that we are open and transparent.</p> <p>ICT We will work with Strata, our ICT provider, to ensure effective and efficient management of our ICT assets.</p>



ONE EXETER

ONE COUNCIL • ONE TEAM

3

Leading
a well-run
council

Reviewing and updating this plan

We will review this plan and report on progress on an annual basis. We will also publish regular reports setting out progress delivering the priorities and action, including the supporting actions in our strategies and service plans.

