

Community Panel Meeting

3rd June 6.00 to 8.00 pm

Innovation Hub, Dix's Field, Exeter

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Minutes and actions from the previous meeting

Action	Status
Regional Engagement Manager (REM) to reach out to Director, Arts and Culture and Head of Creative Industries and Economy about attending a future Meeting	Complete – will attend future meeting
REM to reach out to the Ted Wragg Strengthening Communities Lead about attending a future meeting	Attending today
REM to reach out to Green Futures Network and Centre for Energy and the Environment about tools to help residents make decisions about retrofit / energy saving	Information Shared with Panel
REM to work with Guild to convene working group for Student Community Challenge	In progress – Agenda item 7
Exeter Stories to reach out to the Devonshire Place Residents' Association	In progress
Panel to review the Community Fund categories	Agenda item 9
Panel members to let the REM know of any policy or strategy areas they are keen to get involved in	On-going

3. Update from Ted Wragg Trust Strengthening Communities Team

The Strengthening Communities Lead and Director of Education, and Special Educational Needs Lead for Ted Wragg, provided an overview of the Trust's Strengthening Communities approach and the support provided by the Trust for young people with additional educational needs.

- The Strengthening Communities Lead works across 18 schools in Exeter, Plymouth and East Devon, developing community engagement models for each school
- Four key stages to this work: understanding communities; creating asset maps; listening to the community; developing bespoke community engagement models
- EX5 Alive in Cranbrook Education Campus is an exemplar, working with health providers, Action for Children, a food bank etc, providing a focal point for the community
- The process is slow, as developing strong relationships takes time, but progress is being made and there are plans for a hub in the east of Exeter soon
- The Trust is currently aiming to fund ongoing work through diversification and applying for external funds
- The Trust is responding to the increase in children presenting with additional needs with increased investment in speech and language, and enhanced Social, Emotional, Mental Health (SEMH) support
- Recent successes at the Trust included a reduction in permanent exclusions of 50% this year and fewer days lost to suspension than previous years.

4. Financial Challenges in Higher Education Sector

- The Senior Vice-President and Registrar & Secretary described the current financial challenges in the sector which are due in part to changes to international student visas, and economic pressures in China
- While many Russell Group Universities are likely to be in deficit this year, Exeter is aiming to avoid this through focus on diversification into CPD and Degree Apprenticeships and transnational opportunities, scrutiny of University budgets, voluntary severance, and staff transfers
- The University remains hopeful for 2025-26 academic year and applications from domestic students remains high

5. Update on CUA Delivery Progress

The latest progress report was circulated to the Panel Members ahead of the meeting. The REM provided a brief overview of highlights:

Mission 1: Support the Sustainable and Inclusive Growth of the City

- While SPF Transitional funding for the Innovation Hub has not been granted, the Hub will remain open until the end of September and opportunities for external funding continue to be explored to see if this can be extended.

Mission 2: Innovate towards a sustainable low-carbon economy for the City of Exeter

- CUA partners are working collaboratively to increase the use of active and sustainable transport by staff and students - we now have a draft data sharing agreement which is being reviewed by partners and have a student intern working for us over the summer to start analysing the data and looking for opportunities for shifting transport habits
- The District Heat Network continues to be a priority for the partners

Mission 3: Build a City of Aspiration and Opportunity

- Community Exe has launched, providing extra curricula opportunities for disadvantaged local boys in years 9 to 11, aiming to show how learning connects to real life
- Exeter College Environmental Science students have been carrying out field studies in the Hooper Valley and there are plans for up to 300 A level Biology students to undertake practical classes in the Valley

Mission 4: Support an ambitious Culture and Tourism offer

- Creative Arc has been granted a second phase of SPF which means the programme will continue up until end of March 2026 with one more round of commissions
- The Exeter Heritage Partnership continues to develop with a new Volunteer Co-ordinator - The programme is also working with [Hikmat](#) and CoLab
- Plans are progressing for a Student Community Challenge which will aim to tackle a local societal challenge (see agenda item 7)

Mission 5: Enhance the Health and Wellbeing of our citizens

- The University will open a new Centre focusing on delivering research on climate change and its impacts on health that will address climate-environment-health inequalities.
- We recently organised an event with Devon Community Foundation and The Health Innovation Network which showcased community-based health research and explored different ways for communities to engage with research.

The Exeter CUA Board has approved the merger of Missions 1 & 2, on the basis that (i) a number of ambitions have been completed; (ii) there is currently a lot of overlap between these 2 missions, and (iii) we believe that any growth of the city should be sustainable. The new mission will be entitled:

Mission 1: Support the positive transformation of the city through sustainable and inclusive growth

6. The Exeter Climate Forum - Community Facing Events

- The [Exeter Climate Forum](#) is taking place from Monday 30th June – Friday 4th July
- There will be a number of events which are open to the public on and off campus, including some screenings at Exeter Phoenix.
- Exeter Science Centre will be hosting an event at Emmanuel Hall in St Thomas on 29th June. [Our Positive Future](#) will be a day of hands-on activities, engaging talks, and collaborative visioning, all about climate science and how we can create a more resilient Exeter.
- Civic Systems will be hosting “The Mirror” at Poltimore House from 3-5 July
- The list of Community Events will be updated on the Climate Forum website: <https://exeterclimateforum.com/community-events/>

7. Update on student / community challenge idea

- Initial meetings with the Guild/ students/ community panel members discussed the potential format and focus for a challenge
- Suggested themes include - mental health/ social inclusion, sustainability and environment, connections to Exeter's surroundings, community safety
- Three types of event were proposed: Citizens' assembly, Hackathon, and Community/ student gathering with defined purpose
- The Guild recommended the week following Welcome week would be the best time to run the challenge
- The REM followed up with a survey to students and community panel members and sustainability and the environment emerged as the preferred theme, while there was a slight majority in favour of a hackathon
- Panel members expressed a keenness to bring together new and existing students; to work with Community Builders and key people with links to sustainability; and to include the right people with the power to make a difference.
- The importance of defining a specific question and seeking a tangible output / outcome was emphasised.

8. Update from Panel on ideas and initiatives

- No updates

**9. Update from Community Liaison Manager
Applications / ideas for the Community Fund**

- The Community Liaison Manager (CLM) explained that the community fund had been distributed quite early this year, with 3 of the 4 themes receiving good engagement. The 4th theme (Supporting ideas and solutions that help address the climate crisis) had not attracted any applications.
- The CLM suggested that funding from this 4th theme could be allocated to championing any output from the Community Student Challenge.
 - Panel Members agreed to this suggestion

Use of “third spaces” by students

- The panel discussed the use of third spaces such as cafes and bars by students and others for working, whilst not spending much money
- Panel members suggested publishing a list which highlights cafes and spaces which welcome working from their establishment. This list could be curated by, for example InExeter.

10. Panel Membership

- The Panel currently comprises 8 members and original members have now served on the panel for 3 years.
- Panel Members were asked to consider whether they wish to remain on the panel.

Actions:

- REM to pass on Ted Wragg contact details to Panel Members if requested
- REM to arrange another meeting to progress plans for the Community Student Challenge
- REM to introduce CLM to InExeter for potential collaboration on working spaces list
- Panel members to let the REM know if they wish to remain on the panel