

EXETER GREEN PARTY MANIFESTO 2026

Exeter is a great place to live, work and enjoy!

We need a Council that recognises the pressures people face, is honest about what it can and can't do, and chooses to work with, rather than do things to, our residents.

A Green-led council will open up decision-making and make it clearer how choices are made. We'll listen to ideas wherever they come from and work with communities to bring forward ideas and resources no council can provide on its own. This will bring new skills and new energy to solving problems.

Years of austerity have drained the Council of resources and the Labour government isn't offering any new funding to rescue local services. Old style, top down decision making isn't working. Our communities deserve better than 'managed decline'.

We have a positive AND practical vision for Exeter, and we set out a taster of what Greens in power will deliver if you vote Green on Thursday 7th May.



Green Party candidates 2026 with Green group leader Diana Moore (second row, centre)

SUMMARY

Our priorities for a Green Exeter City Council are summarised below, the details following in further sections.

Right Homes, Right Place, Right Price: A Green Council will focus on building more council, social and community led homes, bringing empty properties back into use, look at how to improve insulation to cut bills, and ensure safe, decent rentals through measures like HMO landlord licensing.

Council services that work for you: A Green Council will create a community and council action group to help tackle the cost of living crisis, use resident feedback to improve services like housing repairs and food waste collection, and develop better ways of working with and funding advice and information services.

Climate Action: A Green Council will help Exeter adapt to climate change, involve our communities in taking climate action and clearly communicate the impacts of climate change and the positive benefits of taking action.

Nurturing Nature: A Green Council will take action to protect and restore nature and boost nature in our neighbourhoods and invest in new green spaces; for example a Northernhay arboretum and Ridgetop Park - from Exwick to the Clyst Valley. We will create a plan to clean up Exeter's polluted air and fight for cleaning up the local waterways.

Keeping Safe: A Green Council will take a strong stand against in-person and online hate and violence and support initiatives which tackle antisocial behaviour and violence, especially against women. It will strengthen public health approaches to alcohol and other drug addiction.

A Welcoming City: A Green Council will create a new modern covered market in a city-centre park. It will support Exeter's cultural and heritage sectors and local businesses to deliver a strong year-round programme, and establish a city-centre taskforce to improve visitor experience, boost energy efficiency and cut waste.

Grass Roots Action: A Green Council will support community groups, local charities and social enterprises improve their skills and expertise, and support community action to protect green spaces and waterways. It will aim to increase allotment provision and hand community assets back to local people.

Thriving, Resilient Local Economy: A Green Council will champion local and independent businesses and social enterprises, encourage affordable and flexible workspaces, new and small businesses. It will use procurement to boost local and greener business practices and bring empty shops into community and creative use.

Putting the Local Back into Democracy: A Green Council will listen and consult better, work with residents through tools like a citizens' assembly, and undertake a community governance review to strengthen local decision making. It will encourage cross party working, make the council more transparent and accessible, and ensure a strong focus on climate action and environmental protection.

A Fairer Planning System: A Green Council will involve residents in shaping their neighbourhoods, ensure people have a say on how developer contributions are spent, require 35% affordable and social housing in all new developments, and demand decent standards from 'co living' schemes.

Getting Exeter Moving Well: A Green Council will prioritise support to travel options for people with disabilities and support safe and healthy walking, cycling and wheeling for everyone. It will push to increase secure covered bike storage. It will campaign for frequent, reliable bus services with affordable fares, including a £1 child add on for under 16s.



RIGHT HOMES, RIGHT PLACE, RIGHT PRICE

Our priorities are to focus action on tackling our city's housing crisis - the lack of affordable homes and social homes and homelessness. Exeter needs more social and affordable housing options, so that young people can afford to thrive, families can stay in the area as they grow, and older people can downsize and still be near loved ones. We need more council homes and work on creative solutions such as community owned housing.

Nobody should be left homeless, or be forced to sleep on the streets. In the short term finding more emergency and temporary housing is urgent. We need to find better ways to change the system. Involving those with lived experience of homelessness can inform how we can improve support and take preventative actions to help those at risk of homelessness.

We want empty homes brought back into use. The Council should use its powers to help property owners to fix up unused homes and take enforcement action when they won't. Empty buildings, including spaces above shops, should be assessed for opportunities to convert into decent homes or worthwhile cultural spaces.

The rising cost of running a home is a struggle or worry for many. We welcome the Council's work to improve the insulation and ventilation of its council housing. We need this 'retrofit' work to go further, helping more people to reduce their household bills. The Council can work with communities, other organisations and installers to coordinate quality retrofit action. We will help those least able to afford to do this work themselves and focus on improving the skills, jobs, and investment across the city to achieve it.

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Our priorities are:

- Build Council housing and work with organisations to build social or community led housing.
- Bring empty homes back into use, helping property owners to fix up unused homes and take enforcement action when they won't.
- Introduce a licensing scheme for landlords of houses in multiple occupation, to ensure safe and decent homes to rent.
- Explore the role the Council can play, with others, to insulate more homes and reduce bills.

A FAIRER PLANNING SYSTEM

From neighbourhood plans to planning applications, we believe communities must have a meaningful say in Exeter's future. The Government is making that harder, but we'll carry on speaking up for residents in the planning system. We will actively support communities who want to develop a Neighbourhood Plan. As the new Local Plan reaches its final stages we will continue to speak up for local concerns. We will involve the community in shaping regeneration plans for brownfield sites.

We'll fight to ensure large-scale developments are supported by new infrastructure and improved biodiversity, such as access to local GP and dentist surgeries, local services, green spaces, bus services, cycling and walking networks, extra places at nurseries, schools and community hubs. We will ensure that developer levies properly benefit new and existing communities and that funds get spent in a timely and transparent way.

Labour's backing for Co-living developments has seen the growth in tiny overpriced 'units', including on Council owned land. We'll introduce a 'Co-living policy' to ensure developers deliver decent design, space and management standards and fight for a review to ensure these developers contribute their fair share of the developer levy.

Over the last decade Labour's failure to deliver affordable homes through the planning system has taken its toll. The Council must work harder to hold developers to account for 35% affordable housing in all new developments, including on brownfield sites.

Our priorities are:

- Introduce a 'Co-living policy' to ensure developers deliver decent standards and fight for a review so Co-living developers pay their fair share to local infrastructure.
- Work harder to get developers to build 35% affordable and social housing in all new developments, including on brownfield sites.
- Take a zero-tolerance approach to failure by developers to meet agreed biodiversity net gain commitments.
- Support neighbourhood planning and involve residents in shaping regeneration.
- Ensure people can have a say and see how developer contributions and levies are allocated and spent, and hold the Council to account for those decisions.



GRASS ROOTS ACTION

Community action brings residents and local businesses together and builds stronger relationships between neighbours. From arts, heritage and gardening to sport and local democracy, community activity makes life richer.

The Community Builders team helps facilitate long lasting relationships, tackles local problems and brings great ideas to life. We need to go further in supporting community and charitable organisations, and social enterprises, and ensure the infrastructure support is in place to help these organisations thrive.

Community spaces create connections between people from different backgrounds. Local Government Reorganisation is likely to lead to selling off of Council assets. The Council should give residents a fair chance to take on the ownership of much loved land or buildings for community benefit. We'll work with communities to help them build a case for 'community asset transfer' so they have a stake in green spaces, community buildings, protecting heritage assets or creating venues, in particular for young people, culture and music.

We will support the growing number of communities keen to nurture unloved spots and work to protect our green space and waterways. To meet rising demand, we'll push for increasing the number of allotments, especially on Council owned land.

Our priorities are:

- Support community organisations, local charities and social enterprises to improve their skills and expertise to run their organisation.
- Map the Council's community assets, to identify opportunities and support a programme of community asset transfer.
- Support community groups keen to nurture and protect our green spaces and waterways.
- Push for increasing the number of allotments, especially on Council owned land.
- Talk with young people about how the city can meet their needs.

KEEPING SAFE

We recognise that our national politics risks deepening division by making people of different backgrounds, experiences and identities feel unwelcome, disrespected or scared. There is no place for hate or violence in our city. We will ensure that our Council is clear that hate and violence will not be tolerated - in person or online. We will support opportunities to meet, celebrate and engage in discussion and respect our diversity - enabling a shared sense of belonging in our city.

We want the Community Safety Partnership to work more openly and better work alongside our communities on the safety issues that affect them. The Community Safety Partnership must play a stronger role in coordinating a public health led response for those who are 'street attached', and increase access to support services for people with alcohol and other drug addictions.

Green Councillors already work with the Police, local businesses and residents on measures to improve city centre safety and reduce anti-social behaviour. We will continue to support victims of hate crime and violence and work with other agencies to focus on reducing these. Efforts to improve and support the night time economy, such as the Safety of Women at Night and the Purple Flag award, are welcome - but these need sustained effort by the Council to ensure they are effective. We have campaigned for a Police Office on South Street - and we will continue to work for a visible city centre police office. With the ending of the Police and Crime Commissioner, we'll fight for Councils to play a greater role in oversight of policing and we believe our communities should have a better say in how they are policed.

Our priorities are:

- A clear Council statement about tackling hate and violence, be it in person or online on Council social media. Initiatives that aim to challenge hate and violence will receive sustained Council support and proactive promotion, including those which aim to address the behaviour of perpetrators.
- The Community Safety Partnership taking a stronger public health role to help people with alcohol and other drug addictions to get the help they need.
- Play a sustained and active role in initiatives to support community safety, tackle anti-social behaviour and reduce violence towards women.
- Open up the work of the Community Safety Partnership, so it can better work alongside our communities.

COUNCIL SERVICES THAT WORK FOR YOU

We'll work to protect essential services from Labour's ongoing cuts - £2m more cuts are to be made over the next 2 years.

Council basic services can struggle to deliver, especially where powers and resources are limited, but there must be a focus on providing essential services well. For example, residents tell us Council housing repairs should ensure jobs are finished on time and in one go. At long last the food waste service is available for every household, we'll work to ensure the collection service works well and is well used.

The Council mustn't stop there - we need to continue to boost Exeter's dismal recycling rates. We want more glass recycling points across the city and to assess the feasibility of a doorstep collection service. We'll make better use of data to monitor and act on contamination hotspots, dog fouling and flytipping and consider the use of fines.

We know imaginative solutions to the cost of living crisis and improving services will come from residents, council staff, community organisations, working together to improve access to and the quality of services communities rely on.

Labour's cuts to Citizens' Advice funding has reduced the help available to people facing debt and financial difficulties. We will support new ways of working with, and funding of, information and advice services and the organisations that help tackle poverty and financial difficulties.

We want to ensure all the Council's leisure facilities and pitches are places where everyone feels welcome, are properly maintained, and fully accessible especially by people with disabilities and those on low incomes. Leisure services must be financially self-sufficient, with closer maintenance, and subsidies used to help those on the lowest incomes.

The Council invested some £50m in the Sidwell Point pool and leisure facility, running massively over budget at the expense of other priorities, and last year the Northbrook Pool was disposed of. Labour's poor decisions on the Council's public assets has left a long list of failed projects: requiring co-living on Mary Arches Car Park, running down Clifton Hill Sports Centre and the failure to replace Mallison Bridge. We will remove the Council from the failed Exeter Development Fund - which plans to hand more Council assets to developers - and ensure the proper oversight of regeneration and redevelopment projects.

Our priorities are:

- Set up a cross department and community working group to develop ways to help tackle the cost of living crisis.
- Use feedback to improve the Council services, especially the Council housing repairs service.
- New ways of working with, and funding of, information advice and guidance services.

CLIMATE ACTION & NURTURING NATURE

This Government has reported that the climate and ecological crises are so serious that they represent threats to our national security. Exeter's nature is under pressure from pollution, overbearing development and climate breakdown. We want people and nature to thrive in our parks, gardens, woodland, local green spaces as well as the River and Canal that run through the heart of the city.

Residents have been rightly outraged by the sewage in our rivers. South West Water's failures alongside large scale development adds to the problem. We will continue our campaign to clean up the Exe to be healthy for nature, swimming, and boating. The Council must use its Harbour Board stewardship to prioritise the health of the River Exe and the Ship canal.

The Council must take an active role to tackle air pollution that affects our health. Green Councillors have secured a commitment to a clean air plan with a range of positive solutions, and enforcement where required, to improve air quality and tackle congestion. Extending smokeless zones and challenging idling can make a difference across the city. The Council backed our proposals for 'School Streets' and we will work to reduce exposure to air pollution and traffic dangers to children.

We are proud of our city's parks and gardens. Many have a long history; others are built on former landfills. Investment in tree planting, and better maintenance of pathways, benches, bandstands, play spaces and playgrounds are needed. We need to think ahead - for example, by planning a new arboretum on the slopes of Northernhay Gardens. We want our parks and gardens to be well used - increased footfall in these social spaces will drive out anti-social behaviour.

Exeter has seen a significant decline in its wildlife. Species that once flourished locally have disappeared, and many that were once common are now increasingly rare. Urgent action is needed to reverse this trend and place nature firmly on the path to recovery, for example such as actively supporting 'Towards a Wilder Devon'. We must restore degraded green spaces and waterways, create and reconnect habitats across the city, reintroduce species where appropriate, and ensure strong protection for the natural areas that remain. To protect our landscape from over development, we want to see designation of a new Ridgetop Park - connecting Exwick, across the Mincinglake and Beacon Hills, to join up to the Clyst Valley, and down to the Valley Parks.



Our priorities are:

- To support more city-wide action to tackle climate change and help people to get involved.
- Work on a plan to help Exeter adapt to our changing climate and improve nature in our neighbourhoods and in council operations.
- Support communities in promoting biodiversity in their local area and provide infrastructure support through our community builders to support local gardening and nature recovery groups.
- To promote environmentally friendly and compassionate environmental management methods.
- Bring forward a plan to clean up Exeter's air - reducing pollution from all sources.
- Invest in infrastructure parks and gardens, planning for a new Northernhay arboretum and designating a new Ridgetop Park from Exwick to the Clyst Valley.
- Ensure the Council properly communicates the impact of climate change and the benefits of climate action.



A WELCOMING CITY

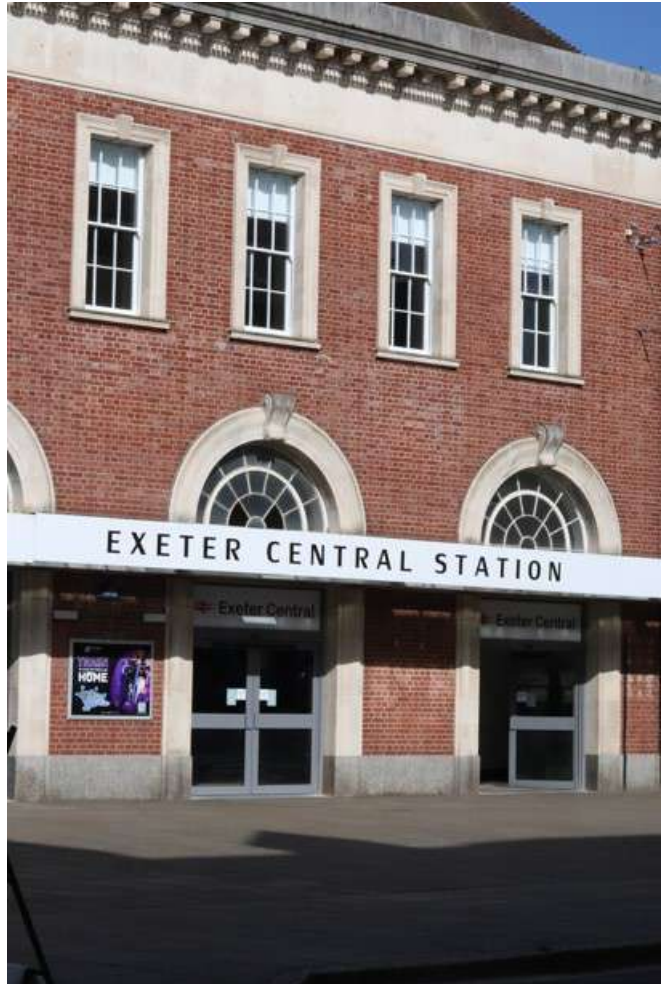
Our wonderful city can be a welcoming, distinctive place. It's already full of friendly people with a range of activities available for visitors and residents. There is more to be done to improve the street scene, help people find their way around and support our local small businesses.

Exeter is a place of cultural talent and heritage, and a long tradition of small and local businesses. We want the Council to activate and enable our local talent to flourish and revitalise community creativity and celebrate our city.

We'll work on a new city centre park and covered modern market on the site of the old bus station, providing a new space to support new and small local businesses and promote local affordable food and products. A modern and flexible structure would provide a great space for entertainment, especially for young people, the arts and culture.

Our priorities are:

- The creation of a new city centre park and home for a covered modern market on the site of the old bus station.
- Value and support the skills and experience of the cultural and heritage sector and local business so Exeter has a great year-round programme for residents and visitors, in the city centre and in our neighbourhoods.
- A city centre task force to focus on finding solutions to the problems visitors and residents report, help local businesses to improve their energy efficiency and reduce packaging, and make it easier to find your way round.



A THRIVING, RESILIENT LOCAL ECONOMY

Exeter's economy is built on its people, local businesses, social enterprises, creatives and entrepreneurs who bring life to our city.

A Green led Council will champion a local economy that is fair, sustainable and rooted in economic wellbeing. We recognise that businesses are facing rising costs, workforce pressures and uncertainty. While the Council cannot solve everything, it can create the conditions for local businesses to thrive by working with them, removing barriers and investing in the foundations of a strong local economy.

We are also entering a period of rapid change; including artificial intelligence, changes in the workforce, challenges in accessing capital and growing pressures on health and wellbeing; all of which are reshaping how businesses operate and what communities need. Our role is to ensure Exeter is well placed to adapt and benefit from these changes.

Our priorities are:

- Support and champion local and independent businesses and social enterprises. Work with partners to support entrepreneurs, freelancers and startups.
- Enable Council procurement to support local and sustainable business practices.
- Support meaningful use of empty shops and spaces for local startups, creatives and community use.
- Ensure opportunities are accessible across all communities.
- Encourage flexible and affordable workspace across the city.



PUTTING THE LOCAL BACK INTO DEMOCRACY

We have realistic expectations and understand that the Council can't do what everyone wants all the time. So it is important that the Council's consultations and engagement activities are fair, transparent and truly inform decisions in a meaningful way. For example a Citizens' Assembly, can play a role in helping communities consider complex issues and their views can help inform better decision making.



Residents will need to discuss what services should be delivered in our neighbourhoods - their voices must not be lost in a bigger Council. As part of plans for Local Government Reorganisation Green Councillors secured a 'community governance review' - to consider a town or parish Council as part of the new Council set-up, as is the case in places outside the city. We'll make sure that promise is followed through.

We can improve how the current Council operates and makes ethical decisions and investments. We'll scrutinise plans, publish all Council Committees and 'Board' meetings minutes and broadcast meetings.

We are committed to working cross party, so opposition parties chair the committees that provide scrutiny of the Council's work.

Our priorities are:

- Improving how the Council listens, consults, and works with residents to tackle local problems including the use of a Citizen's Assembly.
- Undertake a community governance review, so residents can decide on our local services and representation.
- Encouraging cross-party working, improving accountability, and making council decisions easier to follow and live stream meetings.
- Ensure services in the new local authority focus on prevention and are local, support climate action and protect our environment.

GETTING EXETER MOVING WELL

Exeter City Council, Devon County Council and the Transport Authority all have different transport responsibilities. Exeter City Council has a limited role through planning and promoting leisure and active travel. It also works with other bodies to keep people moving in an affordable and sustainable way. Sustainable and healthy travel means putting the travel needs and options for people with disabilities first and following a well-established and widely agreed 'transport hierarchy' which prioritises walking and cycling followed by public transport. We will continue to press for this hierarchy to inform planning and transport decisions in the new Exeter Council following Local Government Reorganisation.



Even though the Council doesn't run public transport, Green Councillors will continue to fight for affordable bus fares and the £1 child 'add-on' for children under 16. In the new transport authority set up as part of Local Government Reorganisation, we'll make the case for free bus travel for everyone under 22, as is the case in Scotland and London.

We need buses and trains to connect better - both within the city and beyond as viable options for people to get to college and work. We'll continue to argue for improved reliability of buses and increases in frequencies especially in the evening and on Sundays. We need the idea of a 'Devon Metro' - using the existing rail network around Exeter and its 10 stations to create a "turn-up-and-go" rapid-transit style system - to finally become reality after Local Government Reorganisation. We want guaranteed bus replacement services all the way to and from Exeter when rail lines are disrupted.

Our priorities are:

- Support safe and healthy walking, cycling and wheeling.
- Support secure, covered, and lockable bicycle storage spaces and relax planning rules to allow temporary covered bike storage in gardens.
- Campaign for better buses and public transport that's frequent and reliable and for affordable bus fares including a £1 child 'add-on' for children under 16.