



Exeter City Council

To the Chair and Members
of the Scrutiny Committee - Community

Please ask for: Howard Bassett

Direct Dial: 01392 265107

Email: howard.bassett@exeter.gov.uk

Our ref:

Your ref:

AGENDA FOR
EXETER CITY COUNCIL
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - COMMUNITY

The Scrutiny Committee - Community will meet on **TUESDAY 5 MARCH 2013**, commencing at **5.30 pm**, in the Rennes Room, Civic Centre, Paris Street, Exeter to consider the following business. If you have an enquiry regarding any items on this agenda, please contact Howard Bassett, Member Services Officer on **Exeter 265107**.

Entry to the Civic Centre can be gained through the Customer Service Centre, Paris Street.

Pages

Part I: Items suggested for discussion with the press and public present

1 **APOLOGIES**

To receive apologies for absence from Committee members.

2 **MINUTES**

To sign the minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2013.

3 **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

Councillors are reminded of the need to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests that relate to business on the agenda and which have not already been included in the register of interests, before any discussion takes place on the item. Unless the interest is sensitive, you must also disclose the nature of the interest. In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, you must then leave the room and must not participate in any further discussion of the item.

Councillors requiring clarification should seek the advice of the Monitoring Officer prior to the day of the meeting.

Office of Corporate Manager Democratic & Civic Support

Civic Centre, Paris Street, Exeter, EX1 1JN

Tel: 01392 277888

Fax: 01392 265593

www.exeter.gov.uk

4 **QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC UNDER STANDING ORDER 19**

A period of up to 15 minutes will be set aside to deal with questions to the Committee from members of the public.

Details of questions should be notified to the Corporate Manager Democratic and Civic Support at least three working days prior to the meeting. Further information and a copy of the procedure are available from Member Services (01392 265107) also on the Council web site.

<http://www.exeter.gov.uk/scrutinyquestions>

5 **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL UNDER STANDING ORDER 20**

To receive questions from Members of the Council to appropriate Portfolio Holders.

6 **PRESENTATION BY INSPECTOR ANDREW WEBBER**

Inspector Webber will speak on current Policing issues and plans for the future.

7 **PRESENTATION ON SYSTEMS REVIEW - KEEP MY CITY LOOKING GOOD**

Presentation by the Keep My City Looking Good Design Team.

<u>MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE EXECUTIVE</u>
--

8 **CHARGING PROTOCOL FOR WASTE RECEPTACLES**

To consider the report of the Assistant Director Environment – *report circulated* 1 - 8

9 **ENERGY WORKS 2013/14**

To consider the report of the Assistant Director Housing and Contracts – *report circulated* 9 - 10

10 **EMPTY HOMES ENFORCEMENT**

To consider the report of the Assistant Director Housing and Contracts – *report circulated* 11 - 22

<u>MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION BY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - COMMUNITY</u>

11 **HOUSING SERVICES BENCHMARKING 2011-12**

To consider the report of the Assistant Director Housing and Contracts – *report circulated* 23 - 26

12

PARK HOMES FORUM

To consider the report of the Assistant Director Environment – *report circulated* 27 - 30

13

COMMUNITY GRANTS 2012/13

To consider the report of the Corporate Manager Policy/Communications/
Community Inclusion and Consultation - *report circulated* 31 - 34

PERFORMANCE MONITORING

14

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT STEWARDSHIP TO DECEMBER 2012

To consider the joint report of the Assistant Director Housing and Contracts and
Assistant Director Finance - *report circulated* 35 - 44

15

COMMUNITY SERVICES STEWARDSHIP TO 31 DECEMBER 2012

To consider the joint report of the Strategic Director and Assistant Director
Finance - *report circulated* 45 - 58

16

PARKWOOD LEISURE MANAGEMENT CONTRACT

Minutes of the meeting of the Parkwood Leisure Services Working Group of 7
January 2013 attached. 59 - 62

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next **Scrutiny Committee - Community** will be held on Tuesday 28 May
2013 at 5.30 pm

FUTURE BUSINESS

The schedule of future business proposed for this Scrutiny Committee and
other Committees of the Council can be viewed on the following link to the
Council's website: <http://www.exeter.gov.uk/forwardplan>
Councillors can view a hard copy of the schedule in the Members Room.

Membership -

Councillors Shiel (Chair), Mitchell (Deputy Chair), Branston, Bowkett, Choules, Clark, Dawson,
Donovan, Laws, Morris, Mottram, Payne and Tippins

Find out more about Exeter City Council services by looking at our web site <http://www.exeter.gov.uk>. This will give you the dates of all future Committee meetings and tell you how you can ask a question at a Scrutiny Committee meeting. Alternatively, contact the Member Services Officer on (01392) 265107 for further information.

Individual reports on this agenda can be produced in large print on request to Member Services on 01392 265111.



Please remember to recycle. If you would prefer not to receive paper copies please let us know. Contact Member Services 01392 265197 or email member.services@exeter.gov.uk

EXETER CITY COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - COMMUNITY 5 MARCH 2013

EXECUTIVE
19 MARCH 2013

CHARGING PROTOCOL FOR WASTE RECEPTACLES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 Following a review of chargeable services a set of fees and charges were agreed by Council on 26 February 2013 to cover the provision of refuse containers to domestic premises from April 1st 2013 (see Appendix 1). This report gives options in which to apply a charge and dependent upon the option taken seeks agreement to the adoption of a charging protocol in response to circumstances where it may be in the public interest to waive or reduce some of these charges.

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council currently spends around £100,000 per annum in providing new and replacement bins for both recyclables and rubbish for landfill.
- 2.2 The new charges for bins or a charge for the delivery of bins, could apply to one or more of the following situations where bins are requested:
- containers being provided in the case of newly built or converted dwellings;
 - to new occupiers in an existing dwelling where the provision is missing; and
 - to existing occupiers who request a replacement bin.
- 2.3 In relation to newly built dwellings or those provided from conversion of an existing building, it will be relatively straight-forward to plot these as they become available for occupation, and administer a charge for provision and delivery of waste bins.
- 2.4 In relation to an existing dwelling when a new occupier finds that provision is missing, or when an existing occupier wishes to replace a bin for a variety of reasons, it becomes more complicated to administer a charge. From experience in other local authorities that have introduced a charge it is evident that practical difficulties may arise in taking a rigid approach, particularly in circumstances where it is difficult to justify charges being levied. This situation would require customer contact staff to take ad-hoc decisions on these matters and so in order to attain a consistent approach, there is benefit in adopting a clear protocol for charging for bin provision.
- 2.5 An alternative option for existing householders, and one which is relatively easy to administer, is to apply a nominal delivery charge across the board to occupiers wishing to change their black bin provision. This nominal charge should be affordable, (a charge of £6 is recommended), but the option of collecting a bin free of charge will be offered (as we currently do for compost bins). By applying a nominal value to the bin, it is likely that householders will be encouraged to take more care of their bins, that private landlords will take more care of the waste management arrangements at their lettings, and consequently there may be a gradual reduction in bins being left out on pavements, lost bins, and bin replacement frequency.

- 2.4 The options considered in this report are therefore:
- A. to apply the charges for bin provision set out in Appendix 1 to newly built or newly converted dwellings only;
 - B. to apply a delivery charge in all cases when there is a request for a change in existing bin provision and a wish for the bin to be delivered;
 - C. to apply the charges for bin provision set out in Appendix 1 to both newly built or newly converted dwellings and existing dwellings.

3. IDENTIFICATION & EVALUATION OF OPTIONS

3.1 Charging for bin provision in new dwellings – Option A

The advantage of limiting a charge to newly built or converted dwellings is that the Council can differentiate these dwellings from others as they come on stream and can facilitate the administration of a charge via its web-based tool for requesting bins. The potential to use the planning system in order to require developers to fund bin provision in new build dwellings was examined but deemed limited as consent has already been granted for approximately 50% of projected build over the next 7 years, and requirement could not be retrospectively applied. Therefore, in the absence of any informal arrangements made with developers, it will fall upon the house purchaser to make arrangements and pay the charge.

- 3.2 The projected number of new dwellings for 2013/14 is 600, which when based on the previous year's profile of bin provision would yield an estimated income of £26,500.

3.3 Charging for delivery for bin changes – Option B

Requests from existing occupiers make up approximately 65% of all bin provision (2600 bins p.a.). Currently these are provided and delivered free of charge. By introducing a delivery charge of £6 with the option of collection from Oakwood House free of charge, an estimated income of £16,900 (delivery charge for green and black bins) or £8,450 (delivery charge for black bins only), will be derived. The only exemption to the charge would be where the bin has been damaged beyond use by the collection and emptying process and no fault of the householder. Due to the need to encourage recycling over waste production, the option to only charge for delivery of black bins is advisable (Appendix 2); this also reflects the charging structure in Appendix 1.

- 3.4 A further option to consider is to apply only a delivery charge, but for all bin provision, with the option of collection at no charge. Based upon the profile for bin provision in 2012/13 this would yield an annual income of £26,000. This would be relatively easy to apply, but it would have the disadvantage of applying to green bins, thereby potentially discouraging any move by households to increased recycling. This option is not the preferred option for this reason.

3.4 Charging for all bin provision – Option C

Extending charges to all requests for bins has the potential to yield more income; based upon the profile of residual bins provided in 2012/13 an estimated income of £89,300 is derived. Difficulties could arise with such charging when householders are unwilling or unable to pay the requisite charge at the time of request, leading to waste being improperly presented and the need for the Council to respond by taking remedial action. A further disadvantage with this is that it will be very difficult to administer via any web-based tool unless a rigid approach is taken in all circumstances. However, a rigid application of the charges may lead to an unfair approach where householders have genuine and persuasive reasons to justify a waiver or reduction of the charge, and this inevitably will mean many more customer

calls to deal with, which in turn will increase the cost of administration. Therefore this option is likely to be the least acceptable of all the options.

- 3.5 Should Members wish to introduce charges across the board for black bin provision, the adoption of a charging protocol as set out in Appendix 3 will allow for both a consistent application of the charges and any waiving of such. It will also reduce any pressure on staff receiving calls to make ad-hoc decisions, which in turn may have led to an inconsistent application of the charges.

3.6 **Preferred option**

The option of charging only in respect of new development or conversion, will be far easier to administer, and will yield the target income of £25,000. In addition, the introduction of a modest delivery charge for black bins will place a nominal value on bins, which is considered beneficial, and assist in meeting the cost of this service. Introducing both of these sets of charges in combination is therefore the preferred option (i.e. Options A and B combined).

- 3.7 If, however, Members wish to move towards a cost neutral position in respect of bin provision, then charges would need to be applied across the board as in Option C. In this case it is recommended that the charging protocol in Appendix 3 is adopted to ensure a consistent approach.

4. LEGAL, FINANCIAL AND OTHER POLICY MATTERS

- 4.1 Section 45 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 imposes a statutory duty upon the council to collect household waste. The council can make a charge for providing the containers used for the collection and waste and recycling, and can specify the dimensions and construction of a bin in which waste is to be presented. By adopting a framework for applying charges, and for the waiving or reducing charges in certain circumstances, a more consistent approach will be made by the Council.

4.2 **Financial considerations**

As part of the council's budget strategy which was agreed by Council at its meeting of 26 February 2013, a reduction of £25,000 was made to the Waste Collection Services budget for 2013/14, which will need to be made up from additional income. The number of newly built or converted dwellings in 2013/14 is projected to be 600, yielding an estimated income of £26,500, although the profile of new development in 2014/15 will differ with a greater amount of block accommodation. Introducing a charge for delivery of black bins requested by existing customers will derive an additional income of £8,450, to give a combined total of £34,950, thereby satisfying budget requirements, and allowing for any potential increase in administration costs.

The projected number of bins issued in 2012/13 totals 4032; of these approximately half (2016) will be black bins. Based upon the profile of bins provided in 2013/14 the potential income from charging for all requests of black bins is £89,300 but this takes no account of reduced income from waivers or reductions, nor any increase in administration costs.

4.3 **Diversity and Equality Implications**

The introduction of the proposed charges are relatively modest and are deemed not have any adverse impact on any particular target equality group. The additional income derived will allow the service to maintain the current level of service including the collect and return service for householders with mobility issues.

5 RECOMMENDED that:-

Scrutiny Community support the report and request Executive to:-

- (1) to introduce charges as set out in Appendix 1, in respect of newly developed or converted dwellings only (Option A) in combination with applying a delivery charge set out in Appendix 2 for all other requests for black bins (Option B);
or
- (2) to apply charges as set out in Appendix 1 to all householders making a request for bins under the framework of the proposed Charging Protocol for recycling and waste containers in Appendix 3 (Option C).

**ROBERT NORLEY
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR ENVIRONMENT**

S:PA/LP/ Committee/113EXEC1
3.1.13

**Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)
Background papers used in compiling this report:**

None

APPENDIX 1: CHARGES FOR WASTE RECEPTACLES (OPTION A & C)

The following charges will be applied for the supply and delivery of domestic refuse bins.

Domestic Refuse Containers	Fee	VAT	Total
140 litre wheeled grey (residual) bin	25.00	-	25.00
180 litre wheeled grey (residual) bin	35.00	-	35.00
240 litre wheeled grey (residual) bin	45.00	-	45.00
360 litre wheeled grey (residual) bin	70.00	-	70.00
660 litre grey (residual) wheeled bin	235.00	-	235.00
1100 litre grey (residual) wheeled bin	250.00	-	250.00
80 litre static grey (residual) bin	15.00	-	15.00
Seagull-proof sack	3.00	-	3.00
Where applicable, an authorisation fee will be charged:			
2 wheeled bin	5.00	-	5.00
4 wheeled bin	10.00	-	10.00
Supply and delivery of a roll of 200 sacks for residual waste	15.00	-	15.00

**APPENDIX 2 CHARGING FOR DELIVERY OF BIN WHEN DELIVERY REQUESTED
(OPTION B)**

Domestic Refuse Container	Delivery Charge for Residual Containers
1100 litre grey (residual) wheeled bin	£25.00
140 litre wheeled grey (residual) bin	£6.00
180 litre wheeled grey (residual) bin	£6.00
240 litre wheeled grey (residual) bin	£6.00
360 litre wheeled grey (residual) bin	£6.00

APPENDIX 3: CHARGING PROTOCOL FOR WASTE CONTAINER PROVISION WITH RESPECT TO OPTION C

No charge will be levied when:

- 1) The container has been damaged beyond repair by the collection and emptying process, so that it is no longer usable.
- 2) The container has been stolen, and this has been verified by the occupier.
- 3) Down-sizing from a larger to a smaller bin.
- 4) Where the container has apparently prematurely failed owing to age or poor manufacture.
- 5) Where a different size container is required to suit large families or for medical reasons.
- 6) Where the property had been provided with alternative container arrangements and the new householder wishes to be supplied with the standard arrangements suited to that property type.
- 7) In other circumstances where the Cleansing & Fleet Manager deems it appropriate to waive the charge.

A reduction of 50% will be applied to charges where:

- 1) A reconditioned bin is provided.
- 2) In other circumstances where the Cleansing & Fleet Manager deems it appropriate to reduce the charge.

This page is intentionally left blank

EXETER CITY COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – COMMUNITY 5 MARCH 2013

EXECUTIVE
19 MARCH 2013

ENERGY WORKS 2013/14

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval for undertaking energy saving works on the housing stock.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 As part of the Council's ongoing commitment to maintaining our housing assets, we are continually looking for ways to improve the condition of our properties, reduce carbon omissions and potentially reduce energy costs for our tenants.

3 PROPOSALS

Re-roofing and Photo-Voltaic (PV) panels

- 3.1 The housing capital programme for 2013/14 allows for 55 properties in Hawthorn Road to be fitted with new roofs at a cost of £300,000. The aspect of these roofs makes most of them suitable for PV panels to be fitted and preliminary estimates for a 3-panel in roof system are £1961 per property, around £108,000 in total. The estimates for a 5 panel in roof system are £2809 per property which is a total cost of around £155,000.
- 3.2 The annual budget for energy conservation is £30,000. For a number of years, small sums of grant income from schemes such as cavity and loft insulation works has been saved with the objective of re-investing the funds in more energy saving works in our housing stock. Including the under-spend from the 2012/13 budget and the grant income from previous schemes, the 2013/14 budget is £168,000.
- 3.3 We propose to fit as many PV panels as the space and aspects of the individual properties at Hawthorn Road allows because the more panels we install, the greater the Feed In Tariff we would receive and the greater the potential savings are for our tenants. It is estimated that the average annual saving on our tenants' electricity bills would be in the region of £80 and that each set of five panels would save 0.58 tonnes of carbon each year.

Ready for Retrofit trial

- 3.4 We are keen to consider how to improve the thermal efficiency of our stock in order to reduce carbon emissions and reduce our tenants' energy bills. Two units have been identified in Shakespeare Road for a trial. These are standard two-bedroom houses that were constructed in the 1950s and that are typical of many in our portfolio. These properties have already had a thermal survey undertaken on them and appear to be performing poorly in terms of thermal efficiency. The idea is to try a range of measures on these properties as a pilot to determine what could be achieved at a reasonable cost across the stock. We estimate that a budget of £40,000 is required for this pilot, although it is likely some grant funding would be

available for the scheme to off-set this sum. This can be funded from existing budgets.

Window upgrades

- 3.5 Thermal surveys have been carried out on the flats where the external rendering programme works are to be done in 2013/14. They indicate that the fabric of the building is performing quite well in terms of thermal efficiency but that the plastic double glazed windows that were fitted some 15-25 years ago are, in some cases, performing 20% below the surrounding walls. An estimate to upgrade the window glass while the other works are going on is £650 per flat, based on the programme of 48 flats, the total is £31,200. This can be funded from existing budgets.
- 3.6 It is difficult to estimate how much our tenants will save on their fuel bills until the work has been completed and monitoring undertaken. However, changing the windows from Grade C to Grade A will alter the structural heat loss per unit of surface area (U-values) from 1.6 to 1.1, an improvement of 31.25%.

4 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 **RECOMMENDED** that Scrutiny – Community supports and Executive agrees to commit:

1) the allocated Energy works budget for 2013/14, any under-spend from the 2012/13 budget, Feed In Tariff (FIT) payments and any grant income received from energy efficiency works to install photovoltaic arrays to as many properties at Hawthorn Road as possible, in conjunction with the re-roofing programme;

2) £40,000 from a combination of existing budgets to undertake a trial retro-fit to improve thermal efficiency at two properties identified at Shakespeare Road;

3) £31,200 from the Communal Areas budget for upgrading the window glass on 48 flats, in conjunction with the external rendering programme works.

SARAH WARD
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR HOUSING & CONTRACTS

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

None

EXETER CITY COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 5 MARCH 2013

EXECUTIVE 19 MARCH 2013

EMPTY HOMES ENFORCEMENT

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To approve a systematic approach to tackling long term empty homes in the city and the use of enforcement powers where required to ensure empty homes are returned back into use.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Long term empty properties are a valuable housing resource, particularly in areas of high housing demand like Exeter. Homes that are left unoccupied can quickly fall into disrepair and neglect, becoming a blight on the neighbourhood by attracting anti-social behaviour, accumulating refuse, encouraging vandalism and reducing property values in the local area. Bringing empty properties back into use can benefit the individual owners, potential future occupiers and the wider community.
- 2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published in March 2012 makes a specific reference to empty properties. It states that:
“Local Planning Authorities should identify and bring back into residential use empty housing and buildings in line with local housing and empty homes strategies and, where appropriate, acquire properties under compulsory purchase powers”.
- 2.3 The number of empty properties returned to use is a key element in the calculation of New Homes Bonus. For example, one Band D long term empty home returned to use will produce £8,634 over the six year period. Exeter City Council gets 80% of this – just under £7,000 over six years for each Band D property removed from the Council Tax Base figures.
- 2.4 An effective empty homes enforcement policy also helps maximise available housing stock in the city and normally improves the general condition and energy efficiency of properties.

3.0 TACKLING EMPTY PROPERTIES IN EXETER

- 3.1 Compared to other similar areas, the Council already has a good track record in tackling empty properties. New Homes Bonus is calculated on the net reduction in the Council Tax Class C (long term empty properties) on 1 October each year. In October 2012, there was a net reduction of 62 homes to 230 properties which will deliver nearly £420,000 in New Homes Bonus over the next six years. This shows that 0.4% of all properties in Exeter are long term empty properties compared to an average of 2.5% nationally. However, it will be important to keep the number of empty homes at or below 205 every October in order to maintain New Homes Bonus funding at this level.

- 3.2 A long term empty property is defined as a property that has been empty for six months or longer. The majority of empty properties are identified through the Council Tax database because properties that are empty and unfurnished currently receive an exemption from Council Tax for up to six months and then receive an ongoing discount of 10%. These are classified as Class C long term empty properties.
- 3.3 However, this does not represent a full picture of empty properties as only those properties where the owner has advised the Council Tax department that the property is empty in order to receive an exemption are included. Where owners of empty properties continue to pay full Council Tax there is no way to know whether the property is empty unless it is reported as empty to the Council. In addition, properties that are empty but are furnished are currently recorded as second homes through the Council Tax database.
- 3.4 At Executive Committee in November, it was agreed that as part of the technical reforms to Council Tax that from April 2013 the exemption given to empty property owners will be reduced from six months to two months and properties that have been empty for longer than two years will be charged 150% Council Tax. In addition, the 10% discount given to second home owners will be removed. Therefore, from April 2013 there will be less incentive for owners to advise the Council that their property is empty and may make it more difficult for the Council to identify empty properties.
- 3.5 Many properties become empty at some point as part of the normal operation of the housing market and are usually empty for less than six months. These properties are considered “transactional” empties, usually properties that are in the process of being renovated, are being marketed for sale or for letting.
- 3.6 Properties may become empty for a number of reasons such as:
- lack of funds for refurbishment
 - reluctance to let out
 - bankruptcy/repossession/abandonment
 - buy for investment purposes
 - lack of knowledge / inaction of owners
 - probate, estate or legal ownership issues
 - illness
 - family dispute
- 3.7 In February, there were 310 long term empty properties on the Council Tax Class C list, with 77 having been empty for longer than 12 months. The table below shows the number of properties that are currently empty and the length of time they have been empty:

Date empty	Number of empty properties
7-12 months	233
1-2 years	38
2-3 years	8
3-4 years	12
4-5 years	3
6-10 years	13
11-15 years	3
16-20 years	0
20+ years	0
Total	310

- 3.8 The table shows an increase in the number of long term empty properties since October 2012. This has been the result of data cleansing of void properties on the Council Tax database which are now been listed as long term empty properties.
- 3.9 Despite the Empty Homes Enforcement Policy stating that enforcement action will not usually be taken on properties empty for less than a year, work is carried out on a regular basis throughout the year to ensure that the information on the Council Tax database is as accurate as possible through the use of verification visits to properties. This has shown to be a useful exercise and usually results in a significant reduction in number of properties empty between 7-12 months. It is expected that this number will be reduced significantly ahead of October 2013 and the next New Homes Bonus calculation.
- 3.10 The Council's existing approach to empty properties has not been ineffective. It is based on a step by step process which builds from offering advice and information, through the use of grants and loans as incentives, to more formal enforcement action using existing authorised powers. We could continue to use these powers to tackle the issues posed by long term empty properties. However, this normally offers only a short term fix and does not address the underlying issue of ultimately bringing the empty property back into use. We believe that what is required to tackle those properties that have been empty a long time is an ultimate sanction of removing the empty property from its existing owner, by means of either enforced sale, an Empty Dwelling Management Order (EDMO) and Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO). Obviously this is a very serious sanction and cannot be undertaken lightly. The draft Enforcement Policy attached at Appendix 1 sets out how and when such enforcement will be used.
- 3.11 Many owners need support, information or encouragement to help them bring their empty home back into use, whilst others have little or no intention of doing anything with their property. Empty property owners are offered advice, assistance and support by the Council to reach a solution in order to bring their empty property back into use. However, there are circumstances where owners cannot be traced or are reluctant to bring back into use their property within a reasonable timescale. In these circumstances, enforcement action may be deemed the most appropriate course of action.
- 3.12 Action will be taken on empty properties using the following criteria:
- Length of time empty
 - Condition of property
 - Causing a detrimental environmental impact
 - Subject to enforcement action by other departments
 - Affecting stability or causing harm to neighbouring properties
- 3.13 Some empty properties will require more immediate enforcement action due to the condition of the property where there are health and safety concerns or the condition has a negative impact on the local neighbourhood. This will ensure that the condition of the property is improved in the short term, whilst further action is taken to return the property into use longer term.
- 3.14 Enforcement action will not be limited only to empty homes listed as long term empty properties on the Council Tax database. The Enforcement Policy will permit the Council to take action against any privately owned long term empty property to return it back into use.

- 3.15 The Council would not seek to take action on properties that are empty for less than six months or properties that have been empty where there is clearly an intention to bring the property back into use. The Council will instead focus empty homes enforcement action on properties that have been empty for longer than six months where there is no prospect of the owner returning the property back into use in the foreseeable future.
- 3.16 The Council will not use enforcement action until all other avenues to encourage the owner to bring the property back into use have been exhausted. We will only use enforcement action where the owner is not engaging in finding a solution to bring the property back into use or where all avenues to find an absent owner have been explored. We will also use the most appropriate enforcement action to bring the property back into use. Often the threat of enforcement action will encourage the empty property owner to engage with the Council and is therefore a particularly useful tool.

4.0 **ACTION PROPOSED**

- 4.1 Approval is sought to use the legal powers available to local authorities to return properties back into use, which include the enforced sale of the property, an Empty Dwelling Management Order (EDMO) and Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO).
- 4.2 Approval is also sought for delegated authority to be granted to the Assistant Director of Housing & Contracts, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing, to take action on long term empty homes identified. Delegation will ensure that the appropriate action can be expedited without the need for committee approval on a case by case basis.

5.0 **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Using enforcement powers to bring empty properties back already requires staff resources across the Council, particularly in housing, environmental health and city development. It is not expected that enforced sale, Empty Dwelling Management Orders or Compulsory Purchase Orders will be used on large numbers of properties. Similar approaches in other areas of the country have demonstrated that the threat of enforcement action and a robust track record of enforcement is often enough to encourage property owners to take action.
- 5.2 However, in some cases robust action will be required and it is important to have the resources in place to both fund the complex administrative processes and to actually purchase the property, if necessary. It is proposed that the ringfenced New Homes Bonus funds be used to fund empty property enforcement on the exceptional occasions that additional funding is required. Revenue funding will be drawn from the capacity funding already set aside and any temporary capital funding required will be drawn from the Major Infrastructure Fund and replaced *without delay* with the proceeds of the onward sale.
- 5.3 Any empty properties that are purchased will be sold quickly to a new owner who is prepared to make the investment so that the capital outlay will be short-term. In certain circumstances, for example if the empty property was originally owned by the council, it might be purchased by the Housing Revenue Account and added to the council's housing stock. Alternatively, rather than funding the purchase ourselves, we may be able to agree a back-to-back sale with a housing association or private developer and reduce the Council's liability for Stamp Duty Land Tax. A risk-based disposal policy will be drawn up which sets out how the Council will dispose of any properties purchased as a result of enforcement action.

- 5.4 Delegating enforcement powers to the Assistant Director of Housing & Contracts will ensure that such action is only taken where there are no other options available to bring the property back into use.
- 6.0 **RECOMMENDED** that:-
- 6.1 Scrutiny Committee - Community approves the Empty Homes Enforcement Policy and requests Executive to
- (a) approve the Empty Homes Enforcement Policy
 - (b) authorise the use of New Homes Bonus to fund enforcement action on empty properties in exceptional circumstances where external services are required, to a maximum of £20,000 over the next three years
 - (c) authorise the use of New Homes Bonus in exceptional circumstances to fund the purchase of an empty property to a maximum of £300,000 per property
 - (d) authorise the Assistant Director of Housing and Contracts, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Involvement to undertake an Enforced Sale, an Empty Dwelling Management Order or a Compulsory Purchase Order to bring an empty property back to use

SARAH WARD
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR HOUSING & CONTRACTS
Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

None

This page is intentionally left blank

EXETER CITY COUNCIL**EMPTY HOMES ENFORCEMENT POLICY****MARCH 2013****1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 This policy sets out how the Council will work to bring empty properties back into use. This policy contributes to the [Exeter Empty Homes Strategy 2009-2014](#).

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Long term empty properties are a wasted resource, particular in areas of high housing demand such as Exeter. Homes that are left unoccupied can quickly fall into disrepair and neglect, becoming a blight on the neighbourhood by attracting ASB, accumulating refuse, encouraging vandalism and reducing property values in the local area. Bringing empty properties back into use can benefit the individual owners, potential occupiers and the wider community.
- 2.2 Land for new residential development in Exeter is scarce and land that is available commands a premium price. By making the best use of existing resources such as empty properties and returning them into use will help to negate the need to build as many new build properties.

3.0 Impact of empty properties

- 3.1 An empty home is not just the concern of the owner because a property left unoccupied and not maintained will over time impact on its surroundings. This can include neighbouring properties whose condition and value may also be severely affected. Empty properties also run the risk of attracting unwanted attention from vandals and squatters and in extreme cases become a target for arson.
- 3.2 Some of the above problems will require the local authority, the Police or the Fire Service to take action utilising valuable resources and causing costs that may not be recoverable from the owner of a property. Bringing an empty property back into use may assist in improving the general streetscape of an area and reduce anti-social behaviour as well as providing a valuable source of urgently needed accommodation.
- 3.3 Exeter City Council will take every step to assist owners of empty properties in bringing the property back into use. The details of this are set out within the Empty Homes Strategy. However, there are instances that, despite the best efforts on the part of the Council, properties remain empty for long periods of time.
- 3.4 These are the properties that are more likely to cause problems in the immediate neighbourhood. It is in these cases that, as a last resort, the Council will pursue enforcement action to return the property back into use. This policy outlines the processes that will be taken before, during and after enforcement action is approved.

4.0 Identifying empty properties

4.1 The Council will:-

- Take steps to identify empty properties throughout the City with the aid of [Section 237 of the Housing Act 2004](#), which allows for the identification of properties through the Council Tax system that are registered as empty, in order to take steps to bring them back into use.
- Ensure that when seeking to identify empty properties, all processing of personal data will be in accordance with the Council's data protection policy and the rights of the data subjects contained in Part 2 of the Data Protection Act 1988.
- Encourage a range of stakeholders to report an empty home, including:-
 - Housing Officers
 - Building Control surveyors
 - Planning Officers
 - Environmental Health Officers
 - Pest Control Officers
 - Conservation Officers
 - Councillors
 - The Fire Service
 - The Police service
 - Neighbours
- Investigate further and take action where properties are reported as empty but are not classified as empty through the Council Tax system. It is increasingly common to find empty properties where the owner pays full Council Tax and has never applied for an exemption. In addition, there are a number of properties registered as second homes under Council Tax but are not genuinely used as a second home but are "furnished empty" properties.

5.0 Advice and assistance to owners of empty properties

5.1 The Council will offer advice, assistance and support to empty property owners to bring their properties back into use. The Council will work with owners to provide a tailored package of advice, assistance and incentives specific to the owners needs. Officers will encourage owners to work together with the Council to reach a solution in order to bring the property back into use.

5.2 Initiatives have been developed to support this including:

- Information on renting the property
- Information on selling the property
- Free schedule of works completed with a building surveyor
- Repayable grant to provide assistance to owners to bring their properties to a lettable standard for the Private Sector Leasing Scheme (PSL) and EXtraLet scheme
- Low cost loans to cover the cost of renovation for the sale of the property or to let privately through Wessex Home Improvement Loans
- Advice and assistance to obtain energy efficiency measures in line with the Council's Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy.

- 5.3 However, if the owner cannot be traced or is reluctant to take action to bring the property back into use, within a reasonable period, the Council will consider the use of enforcement action to both improve the condition of the property and to ultimately bring the property back into use.

6.0 Prioritising properties for enforcement action

- 6.1 Potentially, any privately owned vacant dwelling could be subject to enforcement action including those not classified as Class C long term empty through the Council Tax system. This will include properties such as second homes which are empty, that are not used as a holiday homes and are unlikely to become occupied in the immediate future. However, in the context of the Council's priorities, a means of prioritising empty properties is needed. This gives accountability to the choice of property which could proceed with enforcement action and ensures that such choices reflect the Council's policies and procedures.

- 6.2 Properties will be prioritised and ranked using the following criteria:

- Length of time empty
- Condition of property
- Causing a detrimental environmental impact
- Subject to enforcement action by other departments
- Affect stability or cause harm to neighbouring properties

- 6.3 In addition, the following criteria may also prioritise those that are pursued with most urgency:

- Squatted properties
- Properties causing a nuisance to neighbours
- Properties identified by the police, fire service as causing particular problems in terms of crime

7.0 Action on empty properties

Properties empty less than 1 year

- 7.1 Most properties are usually occupied within one year and are considered "transactional" properties. For this reason, it is proposed that the Council do not take action on properties empty less than one year unless the condition of the property dictates that enforcement action is a necessity (e.g causing statutory nuisance to a neighbouring property)

Properties empty for more than 1 year

- 7.2 The Council will concentrate enforcement action on properties that have been prioritised, which are ones that would continue to remain empty without enforcement action.

8.0 Achieving the improvement of empty properties

- 8.1 There are a number of enforcement powers such as statutory notices available to the Council to take action on properties to address the poor condition of the property especially where there may be health and safety concerns or where it negatively impacts on neighbours and their properties. These powers are listed below:

Problem	Legislation	Power Granted
Dangerous or dilapidated buildings or structures.	<p><i>Building Act 1984, ss77 & 78.</i></p> <p><i>Housing Act 2004, Part 1.</i></p>	<p>To require the owner to make the property safe (Section 77) or enable the Local Authority to take emergency action to make the building safe (Section 78).</p> <p>Under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System local authorities can evaluate the potential risks to health and safety arising from deficiencies within properties and take appropriate enforcement action.</p>
Unsecured properties (where it poses the risk that it may be entered or suffer vandalism, arson or similar).	<p><i>Building Act 1984, s78.</i></p> <p><i>Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982, s29.</i></p>	<p>To allow the Local Authority to fence off the property.</p> <p>To require the owner to take steps to secure a property or allow the Local Authority to board it up in an emergency.</p>
Blocked or defective drainage or private sewers.	<p><i>Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, s35.</i></p> <p><i>Building Act 1984, s59.</i></p> <p><i>Public Health Act 1961, s17.</i></p>	<p>To require the owner to address obstructed private sewers.</p> <p>To require the owner to address blocked or defective drainage.</p> <p>To require the owner to address defective drainage or private sewers.</p>
Vermin (where it is either present or there is a risk of attracting vermin that may detrimentally affect people's health).	<p><i>Public Health Act 1961, s34.</i></p> <p><i>Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949, s4.</i></p> <p><i>Public Health Act 1936, s83.</i></p> <p><i>Environmental Protection Act 1990, s80.</i></p> <p><i>Building Act 1984, s76.</i></p>	<p>To require the owner to remove waste so that vermin is not attracted to the site, to destroy an infestation and to remove any accumulation prejudicial to health.</p>
Unightly land and property affecting the amenity of an area.	<p><i>Public Health Act 1961, s34 (see above).</i></p> <p><i>Town and Country Planning Act 1990, s215.</i></p> <p><i>Building Act 1984, s79.</i></p>	<p>To require the owner to remove waste from the property (see above).</p> <p>To require the owner to take steps to address a property adversely affecting the amenity of an area through its disrepair.</p> <p>To require the owner to address unsightly land or the external appearance of a property.</p>

8.2 Although the enforcement action listed above will not ultimately return a property back into use, it will improve the condition of the property and impact upon the immediate neighbourhood in the short term. The Council will then seek to encourage the owner to bring the property back into use.

9.0 Principles for enforcement to bring empty properties back into use

9.1 This policy is aimed at returning long term empty properties back into use. Enforcement action to ensure properties are brought back into use will be based on the Government's Enforcement Concordat which 'aims to protect the public, the environment and groups such as consumers and workers'. The following principles will be adhered to:-

- **Proportionality** This means relating enforcement action to the risks.
- **Consistency** of approach. Taking a similar approach in similar circumstances to achieve similar ends.
- **Transparency** about how the Service operates in order to maintain public confidence and what those regulated may expect from the service.
- **Targeting** of enforcement action towards those properties that give rise to the most serious risk.

9.2 Officers will consider the use of enforcement action in the following circumstances:

- The Council has made numerous attempts to engage with the owner, all reasonable offers of assistance have been made to the owner and these offers have not been acted upon; and
- There is no prospect of the house being brought back into use by the owner within a reasonable timescale
- The property is causing a significant problem in the local neighbourhood

9.3 The Council will not use enforcement action until all other avenues to encourage the owner to bring the property back into use have been exhausted. The Council will use enforcement action where the owner is not engaging with the Council in finding a solution to bring the property back into use or where all avenues to find an absent owner have been explored.

9.4 The Council will use the most appropriate enforcement action to bring the property back into use. The Council will communicate its intentions in plain English or in the appropriate language or method in accordance with the needs of the owner. The owner of the property will be made aware of the advice and support that the council can provide to assist the owner to bring the property back into use and the enforcement powers it may use, including the relevant timescales and processes.

9.5 The decision to take enforcement action such as the enforced sale of the property, an Empty Dwelling Management Order or Compulsory Purchase Order will be made under delegated authority to the Assistant Director of Housing & Contracts in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing. This will ensure that approval is only granted in circumstances where it is considered appropriate to undertake enforcement action.

9.6 Once made aware of the intention to use enforcement action, the owner will be given a period to consider their options and appeal against the proposed action. Details of the Council's complaints and appeals processes will be

provided at the outset. The enforcement process will be open to review at any time during the process if circumstances change.

- 9.7 The Council will undertake enforcement action as promptly and efficiently as possible in order to minimise delays. The Council will seek to ensure that cases are dealt with in a consistent manner. All officers undertaking enforcement action to return empty properties back into use will be suitably trained, qualified and authorised to ensure that they are fully competent to undertake enforcement duties.

10.0 Enforcement Powers

- 10.2 **Enforced Sale** – The Enforced Sale procedure permits the Council to serve a notice on the property owner to request payment of all outstanding charges such as Council Tax and any works carried out in default following action taken under the legislation detailed in 8.1. If payment remains outstanding after 3 months after the notice expires, it allows the Council to proceed with enforcing the sale of the property to recover the charge(s).

The criteria for using an Enforced Sale would be:

- The total debt on the property should exceed £500
- The property is vacant

The Enforced Sale procedure may be halted prior to its sale by the owner of the property by paying any outstanding debt owed to the Council. It is not guaranteed that any long term empty property will be returned to use as a result of Enforced Sale procedure. However, it is likely that anyone purchasing such a property intends to return it to use.

- 10.3 **Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMO)** – Under the Housing Act 2004, the Council can apply to the Residential Property Tribunal for an EDMO to be made if a dwelling has been empty for two years or more. An EDMO allows the Council to take over the management of badly let or vacant properties for initially a 12 month period, followed by a 7 year period. Any costs incurred in improving the property to the Decent Homes Standard are recovered from the rent. Ownership is not removed and there can be no charge against the property for repairs. Once let repair costs and management fees could be recouped from the rental payments. This option should be used where the costs incurred to bring the property to a habitable standard could be recovered from the rental income from the property.
- 10.4 **Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO)** – Under either S17 Housing Act 1985 (if in good appearance) or S226(1)(a) Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (if the property is in a poor condition), the Council can take this action to purchase the property from the owner and then sell the property. A condition on the sale contract can be added to ensure that the property is brought back into use within an agreed timescale. This would action would only be used as a last resort when all other options have been exhausted and have failed to convince the owner of a long term empty property to return it to use voluntarily, or where a charge against the property has been paid halting Enforced Sale proceedings.

EXETER CITY COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 5 MARCH 2013

HOUSING SERVICES BENCHMARKING 2011-12

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To report the findings from the 2011-2012 benchmarking exercise undertaken by Housemark Core Landlord Services.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Housemark is a national body set up to provide comparative performance information for the housing sector. It concentrates principally on landlord services. Around 400 housing associations and stock-retaining local authorities submit data on a quarterly basis. Benchmarking takes place annually and compares performance, satisfaction and cost across a range of housing management services.
- 2.2 The performance information measured by Housemark is drawn from an era where there was a high degree of external regulation and prescribed performance monitoring and performance standards. Since 2010, most national performance regimes have been removed and national regulation and compliance requirements are now very light touch. Organisations that provide housing services have the freedoms and flexibilities to run, organise and prioritise their services as they feel best serves their residents.
- 2.3 In addition, this council is committed to transforming its services using systems thinking methodology and the services we provide to our housing tenants, and which are benchmarked in this report, are currently being reviewed. It is a key principle of systems thinking that arbitrary performance measures can lead to inefficient and sometimes toxic practices in order to demonstrate good performance, rather than focussing on delivering services in an efficient, effective and customer-centric way. As a result, we are developing new measures around capability at point of transaction, end-to-end times, customer satisfaction and getting things right first time which can be measured in real time and acted upon swiftly when performance dips.
- 2.4 In view of this, the helpfulness of services like Housemark data and benchmarking is increasingly being drawn into question but, given that we are in a period of transition, it is proposed to subscribe to the service for a couple more years just to make sure we are happy with the new ways of measuring service performance. It will be particularly interesting to see whether the service improvements that will be made as a result of the reviews are reflected in these "old world" measures.

3 2012-13 BENCHMARKING FINDINGS

- 3.1 The results of the report are mixed, with many areas of strength, some areas to review and one area of relatively weak performance that was the subject of a specific report to this committee in September. The key findings of the report are:

Areas of strong performance

- The cost of our overheads (office premises, IT, finance, HR etc) is the lowest of the group

- Days lost to sickness and other absence is low
- Our total housing staff costs, including rent collection and arrears management, resident involvement, anti-social behaviour, tenancy management and lettings, are low
- The cost of providing the rent collection/rent arrears control service is relatively low while the level of rent arrears we have is also very low
- The cost of providing a tenancy management service is low and the satisfaction level is high

Areas for further analysis

- The cost of our major works programme is high although our staff costs are low
- The cost of our responsive repairs service is low while our staff costs are high
- The cost of our void works service is high while our management costs are low
- The amount of staff we employ to carry out housing management functions is relatively high while the amount we pay staff is the lowest of the group
- The cost of providing a resident involvement service is high and the satisfaction rate with it is also high
- The cost of providing a lettings management service is low while performance (in terms of average void times and rent loss on empty properties) is average

Areas of weak performance

- The cost of providing an anti-social behaviour service is very high but the success rate in resolving cases is low

3.2 The data also shows that we have improved in the following areas since the previous year:

- Staff turnover and staff sickness
- Rent arrears
- Number of anti-social behaviour cases reported
- Tenant satisfaction with the quality of their home
- Percentage of dwellings that meet the decent homes standard
- SAP rating (ie energy efficiency rating) of dwellings
- Percentage of repairs completed on time
- Cost of responsive repairs and void works

3.3 However, our performance has deteriorated in the following areas:

- Average void time for re-letting properties
- Percentage of anti-social behaviour cases successfully resolved
- Total cost of major and cyclical works
- Number of days to complete repairs

3.4 The full report is available in the Members' room and online at <http://intranet/index.aspx?articleid=2615>.

4 ACTIONS

4.1 The Council has been carrying out benchmarking for some years, as well as engaging our tenants in performance reviews, and we are aware of the areas where service improvements are required. I am confident that the system reviews that are

taking place in housing services will fundamentally address these service areas, particularly in antisocial behaviour and lettings management, which are about to be rolled in to the *Help me with my Housing Problem* review and voids and planned works, which are part of the *Maintain our Assets* review. However, experience from previous systems reviews is that initially services worsen and we must be alive to this, particularly with respect to the “old world” measures. For example, some areas of consistently good performance, such as rent arrears, may worsen permanently as our priorities change from, in that example, collecting rent efficiently to helping understand why our residents have not paid and helping them to improve their long term financial and housing outcomes.

- 4.2 However, we will undertake further analysis of the areas highlighted by the benchmarking to understand the underlying reasons and establish whether any changes should be made in advance of the conclusion of the systems reviews.

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 Benchmarking has been an important management tool and still has a place in service improvement. However, the systems reviews currently being undertaken in housing will deliver service improvements without reference to this report and its continued future value will be reviewed over the next couple of years. For the last decade, housing organisations and local government in general have been governed by performance data sets such as this and we recognise that it will be a difficult transition for residents, Members and staff to measure good performance differently.
- 5.2 We will continue to resource and use Housemark until we are confident that the systems data is providing all the measures we need to improve our services and assert strong performance.

6 RECOMMENDED

- 1) That the Committee notes the key findings of the Housemark Core Landlord Services Benchmarking report and the future direction of performance management for housing services.

SARAH WARD
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR HOUSING AND CONTRACTS

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

Summary of benchmarking results 2011/12. December 2012. Housemark

This page is intentionally left blank

EXETER CITY COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - COMMUNITY 5 MARCH 2013

PARK HOMES FORUM

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report informs Members about the establishment of a Forum for residents of mobile home sites in the city giving those residents a voice. The Forum will also assist residents to identify key issues of local concern.
- 1.2 In addition the Forum will provide information and advice to residents which will empower them to develop new initiatives and help them to foster better relationships with site owners.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The City Council has a duty to license permanent residential mobile home sites (park home sites) under the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960.
- 2.2 Currently there are four sites licensed by the City Council; Newport Park, Exeter Road, Exonia Park, Dunsford Hill, Rydon Park, Rydon Lane and Ringswell Park, Sidmouth Road. These four parks are licensed for a total of 550 mobile homes.
- 2.3 The licenses are granted subject to conditions imposed by the Council which specify the lay-out of the sites, in respect of minimum spacing between homes, and the provision of facilities, services and equipment. These conditions are broadly based on 'Model Standards' published by central government. The most recent Model Standards were published in 2008.
- 2.4 Enforcement of these conditions is the role of the City Council and is normally achieved through negotiation with site owners. If this fails to achieve compliance with conditions the only sanction available to the Council is criminal prosecution. This course of action has been taken in respect of one site owner in recent years but has not resulted in significant improvements being made to the site.
- 2.5 The sites themselves are privately owned by limited companies, trusts or partnerships. The site owners lease 'pitches' to the residents, the vast majority of whom own their own mobile homes. The residents each have a legal agreement with the site owners which contain terms and conditions
- 2.6 The agreements contain implied terms, which are set out in the law, covering such matters as the duration of the agreement, rights of termination, recovery of overpayment in the event of termination and the rights to sell or gift homes.
- 2.7 The entitlement of site owners to receive commission from the sale of mobile homes on their sites is also covered by the implied terms of the agreement.
- 2.8 The agreements also contain express terms which vary from park to park and will cover such matters as pitch fees, service charges, and details about maintenance responsibilities for the site and the homes.

- 2.9 In addition to these agreements residents are bound by Park Rules set by the site owners which cover matters such as the minimum age of residents, occupation of homes by children, pet ownership etc.
- 2.10 Disputes between the site owners and residents in respect of the terms of the agreements and park rules are outside the scope of the Council's enforcement powers and can only be resolved by means of civil proceedings pursued either by the owners or residents themselves. Council officers would only become involved in these matters if called as witnesses in a civil action.
- 2.11 As a generality the residents of mobile homes are over retirement age and on low incomes. In that respect they can be considered to be vulnerable. In addition many do not fully understand their legal rights and responsibilities. As a result residents could be exposed to sharp business practices by site owners.
- 2.12 This has been acknowledged by the Government which recently gave residents the legal right to form residents associations in order for mobile home residents to negotiate collectively with their site owners in respect of their agreements, increases to pitch fees etc. Site owners are not obliged to recognise associations unless at least 50% of the residents are members. At present only two of the sites have recognised associations, Ringswell Park and Exonia Park.
- 2.13 In response to national publicity about the unscrupulous business practices of a small minority of mobile home site owners, who are able to exploit loop holes in the current legislation in order to seriously disadvantage home owners, the Government launched a Select Committee Enquiry during 2012. The Enquiry resulted in the publication of the Mobile Homes Bill 2012-2013 which is currently at its second reading stage in the House of Lords. If enacted the new Act will radically improve the protection for mobile home residents and will change the enforcement powers available to local councils by introducing the power to serve legal notices to undertake the necessary works to ensure compliance with licence conditions, rather than having to go straight to prosecution, and the power to undertake the works necessary to comply with these notices in default of site owners in the event of them failing to comply.
- 2.14 In order to assist and support the residents of mobile homes, particularly in the changing legislative landscape, the Council has established a Forum for mobile home residents. The terms of reference (Appendix 1) have been agreed and initial meetings have been attended by representatives from three of the mobile home sites, Members, Officers and most recently a representative from the Devon and Cornwall Police.

3. RECOMMENDED

That Members note the establishment of the Exeter City Council Park Home Forum.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR ENVIRONMENT

S:PA/LP/ Committee/313SCC1
13.2.13

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)

Background papers used in compiling this report:

None

Terms of Reference for Exeter City Council Park Home Forum

The Forum will consist of:

1. A designated Officer from Exeter City Council.
2. Lead Councillor for Housing and Community Involvement.
3. City Council Councillors from wards containing park home sites - Cowick, Topsham and St Loyes wards
4. Up to three representatives of residents from each of the following Mobile Home Sites:
 - **The Rydons**
 - **Exonia Park**
 - **Ringswell Park**
 - **Newport Park**

Names / addresses of members from the four sites will be held by Exeter City Council (those named can send a substitute to the meeting if unable to attend)

Officers from ECC, other statutory agencies and the voluntary and community sector may be asked to attend a particular meeting to provide support, advice or information on a specific issue.

Overall Aim of the Forum

1. To ensure that Park Home residents have a voice.
2. To ensure that, where practicable, solutions are found in response to local concerns.
3. To help identify the key issues within Park Home sites.
4. To be a link between Exeter City Council / Councillors and residents living within Park Home sites and to promote effective liaison, including liaison with other agencies.
5. To educate, source & provide information on a variety of matters as necessary.
6. To promote effective resident empowerment through consultation, involvement and participation, and to help develop new initiatives.
7. To foster better relations between site residents and the respective site owners.

General Terms of reference

1. The position of Chair will be held by a Councillor of Exeter City Council.
2. The Chair will be voted into the position by the Forum and the position shall be held for no more than two years, without re-election.
3. The Chair will nominate a Deputy to act in his/her stead in case of absence.
4. It is the responsibility of residents of each Park Home site to decide who shall be a member of the Park Home Forum representing their views on the Forum.
5. Meetings will be held three times a year.

6. Extraordinary meetings may be called where necessary, but this must be agreed with, and called by the Chair.
7. Meetings will be arranged and venues booked by Exeter City Council.
8. Notice of the meeting will be advertised one week prior to the meeting.
9. Any items that members would like placed on the agenda must be received by Exeter City Council and agreed by the Chair two weeks in advance of the meeting; there will not be 'any other business' on the agenda.
10. An agenda will be sent to all members of the Forum one week prior to the meeting.
11. Members agree to provide apologies if unable to attend
12. Any member unable to attend can send someone in their place providing they have notified Exeter City Council in advance.
13. In the event of an agenda item being of particular relevance to a home owner who is not a member of the forum that home owner may attend, with the approval of the Chair, who must be given at least one week's notice of the name and address of the person wishing to attend the forum
14. All discussions and decisions made will be recorded in summary format as minutes and will be signed by the Chair after the agreement of the Forum has been obtained that they reflect a true record of the decisions taken.
15. All members will adhere to the Park Home Forum Code of Conduct.

Code of Conduct

- All members must adhere to the Terms of Reference
- All members shall be open and honest in their dealings and show respect for other members
- All members will observe confidentiality
- All speakers will address themselves through the Chair
- Only one person shall speak at a time
- Each member wishing to speak on an issue will indicate and the Chair will pick each in turn at his/her discretion.
- All speakers shall be polite and courteous to others.
- All speakers will keep to the subject under discussion.
- No member shall raise individual issues unless as a means of illustrating a point.
- No personal political references shall be made
- If a member does not abide by the code of conduct, the Chair will warn that if they break the code of conduct they may be asked to leave the meeting.
- The Forum will not tolerate any racist, sexist, or other discriminatory remarks.
- Any member who consistently breaks the terms of reference or by virtue of their misconduct brings the Forum in to disrepute, may be expelled by the Chair.

EXETER CITY COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - COMMUNITY 5 MARCH 2013

COMMUNITY GRANTS 2012 /13

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update on the allocation of Ward Grants and City Grants in 2012/13 and to propose a reduction in the maximum amount of a City Grant in 2013/14.

2. BACKGROUND

This is the second year where funds have been made available to support residents and community groups in building stronger and more resilient communities across Exeter. The grants support community-led initiatives that encourage volunteering. The funding also enables Members to support community initiatives in their wards.

3. ALLOCATION OF GRANTS IN 2012/13

3.1 Ward Grants

Ward Grants are awarded to community groups to deliver local projects, or as a contribution towards small capital expenditure projects. For 2012/13 a sum of £36,000 (£3,000 per ward), was made available for Community Grants from the New Homes Bonus Local Infrastructure fund. Community Groups are able to apply for a grant of up to £300. Decisions on the award of these grants are made jointly by the relevant ward councillors. The grants have been actively promoted throughout the year with information targeted directly at school, church, health, community and resident groups, they have also been promoted through social media and press releases to local media. A summary of Community Grants awarded up to February 7th 2013 is attached at Annex A.

3.2 City Grants

City Grants are awarded to community groups that are delivering a service/project to residents from a number of wards or to residents from across the city. For 2012/13 a sum of £20,000 was made available for City Grants and a maximum of £3,000 per group can be awarded. City Grants are decided by a city-wide panel which is made up of the Lead Councillor for Community Involvement and a representative from each of the other political groups on the Council. A summary of City Grants awarded up to February 7th 2013 is attached at Annex A.

4. ISSUES AND PROPOSALS

4.1 Overall the Council's grants continue to prove popular but, as in the first year of the scheme, there is inconsistency across wards in the take up of Community Grants. In 2012/13 some wards have received more applications than can be funded (Priory, Exwick, St.Thomas, Heavitree, Mincinglake, Pinhoe and Whipton) and other wards have received very few applications. Three wards carried forward more than £500 from 2011/12. It should be possible to carry forward unspent funds into 2013/14 but there is a risk of some wards developing a significant surplus. Ward Members will continue to be supported in allocating their ward grants within the financial year.

4.2 The City Grants funding was immediately popular with groups wanting to deliver services across the city. The fund was launched in June 2012 on a first come-first served basis. A significant portion of the funds were allocated in the first round with only limited funds then

being available for the remainder of the year. To deal with this situation, subsequent applicants were asked to supply information about which wards their project covered. This information was used to support multiple Ward Grants. By doing this, 20 City Grant applications were dealt with as 57 Ward Grant applications. This enabled us to continue providing support to community groups who would otherwise have been unsuccessful, but has the disadvantage of being time consuming to administer. In order to overcome this issue it is proposed that the maximum City Grant be reduced from £3,000 to £2,000. This will mean that the Council will be able to support more groups across the city.

5. RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 It is recommended that Scrutiny Committee notes this report and supports the proposal to reduce the maximum City Grant from £3,000 to £2,000.

BRUCE LUXTON
CORPORATE MANAGER, POLICY, COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)
Background papers used in compiling this report:
None

Allocation of Ward Grants and City Grants in 2012/13

Ward grants

Applications received	Carried over from 2011/12	Total applied for	Total Awarded	Amount to be awarded	
Alphington	7	0	2,000	2,000	0
Cowick	7	255	1,736	1,736	519
Duryard	9	540	1,835	1,735	805
Exwick	9	17	2,336	2,036	-19
Heavitree	10	0	2,600	2,000	0
Mincinglake	8	0	1,700	1,700	300
Newtown	8	0	1,900	1,900	100
Pennsylvania	9	105	1,968	1,668	437
Pinhoe	12	0	2,438	1,338	662
Polsloe	8	200	1,682	1,382	818
Priory	9	0	2,600	1,700	300
St David's	12	0	2,840	2,000	0
St James	8	90	1,950	1,950	140
St Leonard's	3	137	550	550	1,587
St Loyes	6	510	1,186	1,186	1,324
St Thomas	10	0	2,300	2,036	-36
Topsham	11	538	2,728	2,418	120
Whipton Barton	9	0	2,000	2,000	0
Total	155	£2,392	£36,349	£31,335	£7,057

City Grants

Organisation	Amount applied for (£)	Amount awarded (£)
SoberLink	3,000	1,500
Home-Start Exeter	3,000	1,500
Trefoil Lodge	2,750	1,750
SOS Global	2,500	500
Carousel Project	3,000	3,000
SPACE	700	700
Hospital Radio Exeter	2,000	1,000
ISCA Wheelchair Dancers	2,400	1,000
Refugee Support Week	880	880
Devon Development Education	2,000	1,000
Exeter District Woodcraft Folk	2,600	2,600
Over 50s Social club	300	300
D&C Police Lifeskills	1,000	500
ECTA	700	700
Phonic FM	2,400	500
Chestnut Childrens Centre	1,000	250
Exeter Pride	1,500	1,000
Exeter Eagles BMX Club	3,000	500
	34,730	19,180

This page is intentionally left blank

EXETER CITY COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - COMMUNITY 5 MARCH 2013

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET MONITORING TO DECEMBER 2012

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING

To advise Members of any major differences, by management unit, between the original budget and the outturn forecast for the nine months of the financial year up to 31 December 2012 in respect of the Housing Revenue Account and the Council's new build schemes.

1.2 CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING

Budget monitoring updates in respect of the HRA Capital Programme are now incorporated into this report, which is prepared on a quarterly basis, in order to improve financial reporting to this Committee and help to provide a more comprehensive financial update in respect of the Housing Revenue Account.

2. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING TO DECEMBER 2012

2.1 HOUSING SELF-FINANCING

The Government made significant reforms to council housing finance within the Localism Act 2011, which resulted in the commencement of self-financing and the abolition of the Housing Revenue Account subsidy system from 1 April 2012.

Under the HRA subsidy system rents were pooled and redistributed by central government. Exeter City Council was a net contributor to the central pot, whereby it paid more into the central pot than it received back in subsidy. Over the last few years we have paid around £4m per year to the Government and had an annual budgeted deficit on the HRA.

Self-financing enables each stock owning local authority to retain their own income collected from rents, service charges and other sources at a local level to deliver housing services to tenants and to maintain their housing stock. Under self-financing it is anticipated that local authorities will achieve a surplus each financial year, which will help facilitate service improvements, repay debt and to provide investment in the stock.

2.2 PROJECTED SURPLUS

During this period the total budget variances indicate that there will be a net surplus of £234,000 in 2012-13 which will be transferred to the HRA working balance, this compares to a net surplus of £414,200 which was previously reported to this committee in September. One of the main reasons for the forecast reduction in surplus is due to an additional revenue contribution to capital to finance the acquisition of 6 flats at the former Royal Navy Store site for social housing.

This latest forecasts represent a decrease of £2,086,270 compared to the budgeted transfer to the working balance of £2,320,270. This reduction is predominantly due to an approved increase to the kitchen and bathroom replacement programmes, which is explained in more detail below.

It is estimated that the working balance will stand at £5,998,423 at 31 March 2013.

2.3 VARIANCES FROM BUDGET AS AT DECEMBER 2012

The main variations by management unit are detailed below. Please also refer to Appendix 1.

	£
2012-2013 ESTIMATED TRANSFER TO THE WORKING BALANCE	(2,320,270)
85A1 MANAGEMENT	(153,040)
<p>Savings are projected in respect of employee costs due to a lower than budgeted pay award for 2012-13 and from the outcomes of the Senior Management Review. Further savings will be achieved in respect of a vacant Neighbourhood Manager post, as recruitment to this post is pending the outcome of the Housing systems review. Savings in superannuation costs are also expected due to a lower than budgeted number of staff in the scheme.</p> <p>These savings will be partially offset by additional staff resources required to backfill a Technical Officer post, so that the post holder could devote time to undertaking housing stock condition surveys for 6 months. Unbudgeted redundancy costs have also been incurred in respect of six posts.</p> <p>Savings have been made in the cost of procuring new mobile working devices, as implementation of new mobile working systems in Housing Services are pending the outcome of the systems review.</p> <p>A refund has also been received from South West Water in respect of water and sewerage charges at Magdalen Gardens. Water consumption levels by the 16 bungalows have been higher than usual due to a water leak, which has now been resolved.</p> <p>Additional income is also forecast in respect of solar panels installed on council dwellings. This income will be set aside to help finance future investment in energy efficient measures for other council dwellings.</p>	
85A3 SUNDRY LANDS MAINTENANCE	0
<p>There are no overall variances from budget to report in respect of this management unit.</p> <p>A minor overspend is expected in the cost of the Garden Assistance Scheme, as the scheme has taken on the regular maintenance of more gardens. Garden assistance is provided to help the vulnerable, elderly and disabled maintain their gardens.</p> <p>A compensating saving is expected to be made in the cost of initial cultivations, as fewer gardens will need an initial tidy up prior to joining the Garden Assistance Scheme following a reduction to the waiting list.</p>	

85A4 REPAIRS FUND CONTRIBUTION 2,291,370

The forecast overspend in this management unit reflects the additional revenue contribution to capital which will be required to finance the 2012-13 HRA Capital Programme.

On 18 September Executive approved an increase of £1,775,000 to the kitchen and bathroom replacement programmes and also approved the purchase of 16 new affordable homes at Dean Clarke House and the Royal Navy Stores Depot at a cost of £212,550 during 2012-13. However, it is not anticipated that the properties at Dean Clarke House will be completed until the Summer, so the required revenue contribution to finance their acquisition will be deferred until 2013-14.

On 4 December Executive approved an additional revenue contribution to capital of £309,000 in order to acquire a further 6 x 2 bed flats at the former Royal Navy Stores site. This will bring the total number of properties acquired by the Council at this site to 17.

In addition to making a revenue contribution to capital, this management unit also provides for the cost of annual repairs and maintenance to council dwellings. A £100,000 overspend is forecast in respect of works to empty properties, which is due to a change in the Void Standard following consultation with tenants. A further £100,000 overspend is forecast in respect of the cost of dealing with day-to-day faults or problems reported by tenants in their council home which are met from the General Repairs budget.

A minor overspend in respect of the Major Repairs Allowance will be incurred, so that sufficient revenue monies are set aside for future major repairs, in accordance with the Government guidelines for 2012-13.

85A6 CAPITAL CHARGES 0

There are no variances from budget to report in respect of this management unit, which comprises the depreciation of HRA dwellings, garages, IT software, vehicles, plant and equipment.

85A8 RENTS (108,800)

Additional rent of £100,000 is anticipated from council dwellings. This is due to a combination of factors, which include; a lower than budgeted number of council properties sold under the Right-to-Buy scheme, recent acquisitions of new council dwellings and achieving earlier rent convergence on properties that have a change of tenancy.

In accordance with the Government's 'rent convergence' policy, the Council is required to increase its rents to guideline rent levels by 2015-16, so that council tenants and housing association tenants will pay similar rents for similar properties in similar areas. Upon a change of tenancy, the opportunity is therefore taken to amend the rent charged to Government guideline rent levels.

Minor additional income is also forecast from lease agreements relating to other council assets, such as parking spaces and access rights.

85B2 INTEREST 56,740

Interest payable on the £56.884m loan with the Public Works Loan Board is higher than budgeted, due to a rise in interest rates between the time the budgets were set and the commencement of the loan on 28 March 2012.

However, the additional interest costs have been partly offset by a forecast increase in investment interest receivable on HRA balances.

2012-2013 3rd QUARTER FORECAST TRANSFER TO THE WORKING BALANCE (234,000)

3. COUNCIL OWN BUILD (COB) BUDGET MONITORING TO DECEMBER 2012

The Council's new properties at Rowan House and Knights Place form part of the overall Housing Revenue Account, but separate income and expenditure budgets are maintained in order to ensure that they are self-financing.

3.1 COB WORKING BALANCE

During this period the total budget variances indicate that there will be a net surplus of £48,260 achieved in 2012-2013, which will be transferred to the COB working balance. This represents an increase of £30,690 compared to the budgeted transfer to the working balance of £17,570. It is estimated that the working balance will stand at £76,466 at 31 March 2013.

3.2 The main variations are detailed below, please also refer to Appendix 1:

£

2012-2013 ESTIMATED TRANSFER TO THE WORKING BALANCE (17,570)

85B5 COB INCOME AND EXPENDITURE (30,690)

Savings in employee costs are projected due to a lower than budgeted pay rise and from fewer members of staff participating in the superannuation scheme.

Savings are expected to be made in respect of repair and maintenance costs at Knights Place, as recent works have been undertaken by the building contractor as part of resolving snagging issues.

Additional income is also forecast in respect of service charges, such as communal cleaning, lighting, door entry systems and ground maintenance.

Savings in interest costs are also projected, due to lower short-term borrowing costs.

2012-2013 3RD QUARTER FORECAST TRANSFER TO THE WORKING BALANCE (48,260)

4. CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING TO DECEMBER 2012

To report the current position in respect of the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme and to update Members with any anticipated cost variances, acceleration of projects or slippage of schemes into future years.

4.1 REVISIONS TO THE HRA CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The 2012-13 HRA Capital Programme was last reported to Scrutiny Committee – Community on 6 November 2012. Since that meeting the following changes have been made that have increased the programme:

Description	£	Approval / Funding
HRA Capital Programme, as at 6 November 2012	9,129,780	
Budgets deferred into 2013-14 HRA Capital Programme	(260,000)	Executive 4 December 2012
Acquisition of Social Housing – 6 x 2 bedroom flats at the former Royal Navy Stores Depot	309,000	Executive 4 December 2012 – funded by a revenue contribution to capital
Revised HRA Capital Programme	9,178,780	

4.2 PERFORMANCE

The current HRA Capital Programme is detailed in Appendix 2. The appendix shows a total forecast spend of £8,566,894 in 2012-13 with £628,460 of the programme expected to be deferred until 2013-14. Below are explanations for the main variations from the approved programme:

- **Programmed Re-roofing (Budget £300,000)**

In order to save reactive repair costs the roofs of four properties have been replaced in order to resolve problems with multiple leaks. These properties were not included in the programmed re-roofing works for 2012-13 and have therefore been accelerated. This has resulted in an overspend of £20,654, but will result in future savings in the cost of programmed works.

- **Energy Conservation (Budget £53,240)**

A separate report is being presented to this committee in respect of proposed energy works for 2013-14. Further spend of this budget has therefore been deferred until next financial year, so that the budget can be used towards improving the thermal efficiency of two properties at Shakespeare Road and towards the installation of solar panels at Hawthorn Road.

- **Smoke Detector Replacements (Budget £200,000)**

The £200,000 budget in 2012-13 is intended to provide for the replacement of smoke detectors in flats with a further £200,000 set aside next financial year for the replacement of smoke detectors in all other council dwellings. Work is currently being undertaken to identify the most efficient way to deliver this programme and it is likely that both budgets will be consolidated in 2013-14 so that the full programme can be completed next financial year.

- **Other Works (Budget £133,540)**

Works to replace soil down pipes in blocks of flats have been delayed due to the requirement to undertake consultation with leaseholders. It is currently projected that around £40,000 of the budget will need to be carried forward into 2013-14, so that works can be completed once leaseholder's agreement has been obtained.

Additional works associated with the demolition of properties at Chestnut Avenue have been carried out and treated as revenue expenditure; as such works do not qualify as capital expenditure. The saving shown against this budget reflects the transfer of these costs to revenue.

- **Fire Precaution Works to Flats (Budget £331,050)**

Planned works include emergency lighting and fire door improvements. A minor delay has been experienced due to the time involved with changing the door manufacturer, which is expected to result in £50,000 of the budget being deferred until 2013-14.

- **Communal Areas (Budget £148,110)**

This budget is intended to be spent on improvements to communal areas such as; replacement communal entrance doors, staircase decorations and the provision of new flooring. The main contractor started on site in the summer with all planned works expected to be completed by the end of March at a cost of £98,110. The remaining balance of £50,000 will be carried forward and amalgamated with next year's budget provision in order to allow for a larger scheme of works to be undertaken in 2013-14.

- **Structural Repairs (Budget £51,490)**

Major structural repairs at 13 West View Terrace are planned to be completed this financial year. The uncommitted balance of the budget will therefore be carried forward into future financial years to provide for major repairs to council dwellings as and when they are identified.

- **Fire Alarms at Sheltered Accommodation (Budget £60,000)**

The main contractor has recently been appointed following completion of a tender process and the programme of work is now being agreed to install fire alarms at ten sheltered accommodation sites. It is hoped that work on site will start this month and it is projected that £20,000 of this budget will need to be deferred into next financial year.

- **Acquisition of Social Housing (Budget £797,280)**

This budget includes £212,550 for the acquisition of 5 flats at Dean Clarke House which will be added to the Council's social housing stock. Delays in the housing development due to the developer seeking planning amendments have resulted in a revised completion date for the 5 flats and it is now expected that the properties will be available in the summer. The budget provision will therefore be deferred into 2013-14.

5. **COUNCIL OWN BUILD CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

Following the successful completion of the Council Own Build (COB) sites at Rowan House and Knights Place, the Council now has a COB Capital Programme for developing Phase 2 and Phase 3 sites.

5.1 **PERFORMANCE**

The COB Capital Programme is detailed in Appendix 2. The appendix shows a total forecast spend of £155,100 in 2012-13 with no deviations from budget.

Expenditure being incurred during 2012-13 relates to architects fees and ground investigation work in order to take identified housing development sites to the planning stage.

6. **RECOMMENDATION**

6.1 That the Scrutiny Committee – Community note the content of this report

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FINANCE

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)

Background papers used in compiling this report: None

APRIL 2012 TO DECEMBER 2012

Code	Approved Annual Budget	Current Outturn Forecast	Quarter 3 Current Forecast Variance To Budget	Quarter 2 Previous Forecast Variance To Budget
	£	£	£	£
85A1 Management	2,992,070	2,839,030	(153,040)	(84,420)
85A3 Sundry Lands Maintenance	262,170	262,170	0	0
85A4 Repairs Fund Contribution	9,924,020	12,215,390	2,291,370	2,087,550
85A6 Capital Charges	0	0	0	0
85A8 Rents	(17,387,550)	(17,496,350)	(108,800)	(153,800)
85B2 Interest	1,889,020	1,945,760	56,740	56,740
85B4 Variance in Working Balance	2,320,270	234,000	(2,086,270)	(1,906,070)
Net Expenditure	0	0	0	0
Working Balance	1 April 2012	31 March 2013	£ 5,998,423	
	£ 5,764,423			

COUNCIL OWN BUILD SITES

Code	Approved Annual Budget	Current Outturn Forecast	Quarter 3 Current Forecast Variance To Budget	Quarter 2 Previous Forecast Variance To Budget
	£	£	£	£
H006 Rowan House	(6,450)	(6,650)	(200)	(180)
H007 Knights Place	(36,400)	(51,610)	(15,210)	(16,110)
H008 Capital Financing	15,000	10,000	(5,000)	(5,000)
H009 Capital Charges	10,280	0	(10,280)	(10,280)
Variance in Working Balance	17,570	48,260	30,690	31,570
	0	0	0	0
Working Balance	1 April 2012	31 March 2013	£ 76,466	
	£ 28,206			

This page is intentionally left blank

2012-13
CAPITAL MONITORING TO 31 DECEMBER 2012

	2012-13 Capital Programme	2012-13 Spend	2012-13 Forecast Spend	2012-13 Budget to be Carried Forward to Future Years	2012-13 Programme Variances Under/(Over)
	£	£	£	£	£

COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT					
CULTURAL CITY					
Play Area Refurbishments	314,140	54,157	85,000	212,000	(17,140)
Sports Facilities Refurbishment	67,000	37,537	84,000	0	17,000
Parks Improvements	77,760	55,348	55,576		(22,184)
Contribution to RAMM Re HLF Parks Bid	65,200	49,838	65,200		0
Exwick Community Centre	0	0	0		0
RAMM Redevelopment	2,200,000	1,725,629	2,200,000		0
RAMM Off Site Store	40,740	33,692	40,740		0
Neighbourhood Parks & Local Open Spaces	34,630	22,206	34,630		0
Allotments - Toilet Replacement	23,440	5,611	23,440		0
Replacement of Flowerpot Skate Park	250,000	5,228	10,000	240,000	0
Refurbishment and Upgrade of Paddling Pools	200,000	62,832	200,000		0
Newtown Community Centre	0	8,416	20,000		20,000
					0
CARED FOR ENVIRONMENT					
Vehicle Replacement Programme	400,000	334,639	400,000		0
Public Toilet Refurbishment	990	0	990		0
Local Authority Carbon Management Programme	107,910	41,496	107,910		0
Improvements to Cemetery Roads & Pathways	11,950	0	11,950		0
Cemeteries & Churches Storage Improvements	0	0	0		0
Midi Recycling Banks	0	0	0		0
					0
EXCELLENCE IN PUBLIC SERVICES					
New Technology for Cleansing	14,190	7,270	14,190		0
Belle Isle Depot - Secure Equipment Storage	11,820	11,931	11,931		111
No 6 Greenhouse Belle Isle	17,500	0	17,500		0
					0
HEALTHY & ACTIVE PEOPLE					
Disabled Facility Grants	386,020	292,913	386,020		0
					0
EVERYONE HAS A HOME					
Warm Up Exeter/PLEA Scheme	100,000	2,971	100,000		0
5 Year House Condition Survey	0	0	0		0
Renovation Grants	50,000	0	50,000		0
Wessex Loan Scheme	784,380	648,883	784,380		0
Glencoe Capital Works	5,670	0	0		(5,670)
Private Sector Renewal Scheme	150,000	171,134	276,660		126,660
Newport Road	0	800			0
Whipton Methodist Church	0	400			0
Bennett Square	0	750			0
St Loyes Design Fees	20,000	0	0	20,000	0
WHIL Empty Properties	200,000	200,000	200,000		0
Steps Acquisitions	50,000	0	0		(50,000)
11-13 Stepcote Hill	60,000	0	0		(60,000)
22 St Davids Hill Conversion	50,000	0	0	50,000	0
Other temporary accommodation improvement	0	708	0		0
Temporary Accom Purchase	170,000	0	0	170,000	0
Infill Sites	350,000	0	0	350,000	0
Sovereign Infill - Shakespeare Road	375,000	375,000	375,000		0
Sovereign Infill - Leypark Road	135,000	135,000	135,000		0
The Haven	250,000	0	250,000	0	0
					0
SAFE CITY					
Replace Digital Recording Equipment at Control Centre	0	0	0		0

**2012-13
CAPITAL MONITORING TO 31 DECEMBER 2012**

	2012-13 Capital Programme £	2012-13 Spend £	2012-13 Forecast Spend £	2012-13 Budget to be Carried Forward to Future Years £	2012-13 Programme Variances Under/(Over) £
COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT TOTAL	6,973,340	4,284,389	5,940,117	1,042,000	8,777

EXETER CITY COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - COMMUNITY 5 MARCH 2013

BUDGET MONITORING REPORT TO 31 DECEMBER 2012

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING

This report advises Members of any material differences by management unit to the revised budget.

1.2 CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING

Previous capital budget monitoring updates in respect of Community & Environment have been reported to Scrutiny Committee – Resources as part of reporting the progress of the Council's overall Capital Programme.

Budget monitoring updates in respect of the Community & Environment Capital Programme are now incorporated into this report, which is prepared on a quarterly basis, in order to improve financial reporting to this Committee and help to provide a more comprehensive financial update in respect of the Scrutiny Committee – Community budgets.

2. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING TO 31 DECEMBER 2012

2.1 The current forecast suggests that net expenditure for this committee will decrease from the revised budget by a total of £189,840 after transfers to and from reserves, which represents a variation of 1.6% from the revised budget. This includes supplementary budgets of £55,200. Capital charges have been deducted from this to provide the total budget for management accounting purposes.

2.2 The current forecast variance represents a £269,990 decrease in expenditure compared with the variance forecast for quarter 2. The significant movements are:

81A2 Cleansing – Reduction in the forecast overspend on pay and increased income from Garden Waste service

81A4 Public Safety – Increase in the forecast underspend on pay and various savings on supplies and services

81A6 Grounds Maintenance – Increase in the forecast overspend on arboricultural work and dealing with illegal campers. Increase in the forecast overspend on pay due to long term sickness.

81A7 Museums Service – Museum of the Year grant received but provision made to transfer this into an earmarked reserve.

81C2 Advisory Services – Increase in forecast overspend on emergency temporary accommodation, serviced accommodation and private sector leased properties.

81B9 Directorate Administration, 81C7 Director Community and Environment and 81C9 Assistant Directors – Management and Administration restructures now reflected. There are corresponding overspends in Resources where some of the costs are now borne.

2.3 Provision for a pay increase of 2.5% was included in the 2012/13 budgets. The Council proposed a payment of £250 to staff earning a full time equivalent salary of under £21,000 per annum; the proposal was approved at the Executive on 19 June 2012. This has resulted in a saving on salary budgets; these savings have been included in the variance for each individual management unit.

2.3 The main variations by management unit are detailed below:

2012-13 REVISED ESTIMATE Less CAPITAL CHARGES £ 11,720,930

81A1 ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Staff costs in this unit are expected to be approximately £48,000 less than the estimates due to the reduced pay award, a vacancy and a secondment. This is partially offset by an estimated reduction in income of £13,000, particularly in respect of stray dogs, litter fines and the treatment of wasp nests . (33,310)

81A2 CLEANSING SERVICES

65,160

Pay is expected to exceed the estimates by approximately £32,000 due mainly to high levels of long term sickness in the Street Cleaning and Refuse Collection services and the delayed implementation of revised garden waste collection procedures, partially offset by the reduced pay award and some savings in the office staffing due to vacancies. The additional staffing costs in the garden waste service are further offset by approximately £38,000 more income from the service due to an increase in the number of customers.

A voluntary redundancy will result in an additional cost of approximately £22,000 in this service; however, this will be funded from an earmarked reserve.

The final invoice for waste disposal costs in respect of the trade waste service relating to the year ended 31 March 2012 was more than estimated due to tonnages having been higher than estimated throughout 2011/12. Tonnages remain high, and these factors will combine to lead to an overspend of approximately £60,000 in 2012/13.

Water saving measures are expected to result in a reduction in utility costs of around £45,000 in public conveniences.

Additional costs for printing and stationery are offset by a reduction in those costs in Recycling (81B6 below)

- **Action points**
 - The estimated cost of trade waste disposal in 2013/14 has been increased to reflect tonnages currently being collected by the service.
 - The staffing requirements for the garden waste service have been reviewed in view of the increased take up of the service as well as the changes in the way the service is delivered, and this has been reflected in the 2013/14 estimates.
 - The estimate for water in public conveniences has been reduced in 2013/14

81A3 LICENSING, FOOD, HEALTH & SAFETY

15,750

The Asbestos Safety Officer has been transferred into this unit from the Contracts Unit (81C6 below). His salary costs would have been recharged to the Asset Improvement and Maintenance (AIMS) service under the previous arrangements. The budget for AIMS will therefore be reduced by this cost, offsetting the overspend in this unit.

This will be partially offset by savings arising from the reduced pay award and increased income in respect of gambling licences and legal costs recovered.

The anticipated saving on the net cost of taxi licensing will be transferred to the earmarked reserve.

81A4 PUBLIC SAFETY

(24,830)

Maintenance costs for the new home call alarm system were not included in the estimate and this will result in an overspend of approximately £15,000. This is partially offset by increased income from the Home Call Alarm service.

The reduced pay award (see 2.2 above) has resulted in savings of £9,000 in this unit. Additional pay savings have arisen in respect of overtime and allowances.

A refund of service charges paid for the Control Room in 2011/12 has resulted in a saving. Savings are also expected to arise in respect of consultants' fees, telephone charges and travel expenses.

- **Action points**
 - The way in which the service is delivered is being reviewed which should lead to reduced costs in 2013/14; this has been reflected in the estimates for that year.
 - The maintenance costs for the home call alarm system have been included in the 2013/14 estimates.

81A6 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

55,040

Pay costs are expected to exceed the estimates by approximately £30,000 as a result of long term sickness.

Increased arboricultural work is expected to lead to an over-spend of approximately £35,000.

Increased costs of dealing with illegal campers are expected to result in an over-spend of £22,500.

These additional costs are partially offset by reduced energy costs as a result of the installation of solar panels, income from the sale of scrap metal, and income from rents and sale of equipment in excess of the estimate.

- **Action points**
 - No further agency operatives will be taken on until the grass cutting season starts in an attempts to reduce the overspend on pay.

81A7 MUSEUMS SERVICE

(650)

The rateable value for the Royal Albert Memorial Museum (RAMM) set by the Valuation Office is 50% more than was originally estimated, resulting in the National Non Domestic Rates (NNDR) for the facility being £81,000 more than was estimated.

- **Action point**
 - The council is appealing against the valuation, which may result in a refund, but it will take some time for this to be agreed. The 2013/14 estimates will be based on the best information available at the time.

The cost of utilities is expected to exceed the estimates by £64,000.

- **Action point**
 - The 2013/14 estimates will reflect the utility costs being experienced in the RAMM.

An estimated £24,000 legal costs in respect of the RAMM redevelopment have been included, further increasing the overspend.

Total pay costs across the unit are expected to be £32,000 less than the estimates due to the reduced pay award, reduced superannuation costs and a voluntary redundancy. These savings will be partially offset by the redundancy payment of £6,500; however this will be funded from the earmarked reserve.

A developing market for corporate hire and strong attendances at events and activities has resulted in income being above the profiled budget; it is therefore anticipated that income will exceed the estimate by £16,000.

The costs in respect of Rougemont House are included in this management unit. The council is considering the options available for this property and, depending on the decision taken, savings may be made on the budgets in respect of the property. The outturn forecast reflects a reduction in anticipated maintenance costs of £27,000

The income received for the RAMM being crowned 'Museum of the Year' has been included in the figures. This income will be transferred to an earmarked reserve at year end to support future museum activity.

81A8 LEISURE FACILITIES

(38,500)

Accounting regulations require that the cost of the discretionary element of the NNDR charge for the facilities in this unit should be allocated to the budget for Discretionary Non Domestic Rates. The budget for this is held in the Scrutiny Resources Committee which will mean that the overspend will be reported in that committee, while resulting in a reduction of £58,000 in the cost to this Committee.

- **Action point**
 - The 2013/14 estimates will be amended to take account of this change.

£20,000 anticipated expenditure in respect of the new pool project has been included in this management unit. A transfer from the New Homes Bonus earmarked reserve will be made at year end to cover

this expenditure.

81B2 BEREAVEMENT SERVICES 8,500

The estimated income receivable as at 31 March 2012 proved to be too high, resulting in reduced income being recognised in the current year. In addition, income from bereavement services is expected to be less than the estimates.

This is partially offset by reduced pay costs as a result of the reduced pay award (see 2.2 above) and vacancies. In addition, savings are anticipated on various supplies and services and plant and fleet costs. Finally, income from rent is expected to exceed the estimates.

81B3 PROPERTIES (1,840)

Additional income will arise from rents. This will be partially offset by expenditure on the maintenance of the properties within this management unit which will result in an overspend on the premises related budgets.

81B6 RECYCLING 0

Prices for paper and card have reduced from approximately £130 and £90 per tonne to £100 and £70 respectively, thus reducing the income forecast for the year. However some prices have increased, partially offsetting the impact of the lower prices for paper and card, but income is nevertheless expected to be approximately £60,000 less than the budget. Some reductions in expenditure are expected to offset this reduced income.

Pay costs are expected to be less than estimated due to a short term vacancy and the lower pay award (see 2.2 above)

The cost of processing co-mingled materials is expected to be less than estimated. Further savings are expected to arise on protective clothing and fuel costs

Expenditure on printing and stationery will be less than estimated to offset additional costs in Cleansing (81A2)

81B7 DIRECTORATE ADMINISTRATION (153,980)

The majority of staff from the administration teams of Economy and Community and Environment directorates were transferred to the new Corporate Support Unit with effect from 1 April 2012, to combine with what was the General Office administration team. The budget for 2012/13 for the now disbanded Community and Environment Administration Service team is held in this committee, while the costs are being recorded in 86B5 Corporate Customer Services within Resources Scrutiny. There is consequently an underspend in this Committee and an overspend in Resources.

- **Action point**

- The 2013/14 estimates reflect the new structure.

81C2 ADVISORY SERVICES

39,400

A reduction in salary costs will arise from the voluntary redundancy of a member of staff who works in this unit and Strategic Housing & Enabling (81C3 below). Additional savings are anticipated on the superannuation and national insurance budgets. The reduced pay award has also resulted in savings in this unit. These savings have been partially offset by costs incurred in respect of agency staff and the redundancy payment (which will be funded from the earmarked reserve). The net saving in pay costs, before the transfer from reserves, is expected to be £24,000.

Higher than expected spend on emergency temporary accommodation will mean the budget for this will be overspent at the end of the financial year. This is due to an increase in complex cases approaching the service. This overspend is being addressed by entering into additional contractual arrangements with temporary accommodation providers.

The above has also resulted in an overspend on Serviced Accommodation which covers contracted temporary accommodation. Given that the council receives additional subsidy from DWP for contracted temporary accommodation it is preferable to enter into arrangements rather than 'spot purchase' accommodation. Therefore any overspend within Serviced Accommodation is less than what would be incurred if 'spot purchasing' was undertaken.

Figures to date show an overspend within the EXtraLet, Private Sector Leased properties and Shaul Court budgets. This is partially due to a number of former student Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) having being procured; these HMOs are shared houses and were not fully filled immediately. The impact on the individual budgets is a shortfall on the associated rental and housing benefit income budgets for the period the properties were void.

The above mentioned additional expenditure will be partially covered by the additional Housing Benefit received which also means the respective income budgets will be exceeded. External grant income has been received in the year. This income has been used to support the delivery of this service. The additional grant income has reduced the in year overspend.

81C3 HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

20,810

A reduction in salary costs will arise from the voluntary redundancy of a member of staff who works in this unit and Advisory Services (81C2 above). Additional savings are anticipated on the superannuation and national insurance budgets. The reduced pay award has also resulted in savings in this unit (see 2.2 above). These savings have been partially offset by the cost of the redundancy payment (which will be funded from the earmarked reserve). The net saving in pay costs, before the transfer from reserves, is expected to be £14,000.

Savings are also anticipated on advertising, publications and leaflets, conference and seminar costs and transport related budgets. This management unit is part funded by Section 106 money. The saving on the staffing costs and other budgets will result in a £45,000 reduction in the amount of section 106 funding required for this service.

81C4 PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING (66,000)

The reduced pay award and the secondment of an employee are expected to result in a reduction in the pay costs of this unit of £41,000.

£16,000 additional income is anticipated from the recovery of legal costs and the licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO).

An additional £35,000 for a condition survey was approved at the June 2012 meeting of the Executive. However, it is now anticipated that this money will be spent over the next five years, so there will be a saving on the original budget of £5,000. A supplementary budget of £10,000 will be requested for 2013/14 in due course.

A saving of £3,000 is anticipated on travel costs.

81C6 CONTRACTS AND DIRECT SERVICES 0

The reduced pay award has resulted in savings in this unit. In addition two employees have been transferred to other units.

The costs of this unit are fully recharged to its clients, and there is therefore no direct impact on this committee.

81C7 DIRECTOR COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT (198,150)

The post of Director Community and Environment was deleted from the establishment from April 2012, resulting in pay savings. The cost of the Strategic Directors is reported to Resources within 86B7 Strategic Directors.

- **Action point**

- The 2013/14 estimates reflect the new structure.

81C9 ASSISTANT DIRECTORS 111,640

Following the review of senior management within the Council, the salaries for the Assistant Directors for Environment and Public Realm are now recorded in this unit; the corresponding savings are being reported within this and Economy Committees

- **Action point**

- The 2013/14 estimates reflect the new structure.

2012-13 EXPECTED FINAL OUTTURN 11,519,970

EXPECTED TRANSFERS TO / (FROM) RESERVES 11,120

EXPECTED TOTAL NET EXPENDITURE 11,531,090

3. CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING TO 31 DECEMBER 2012

To report the current position in respect of The Scrutiny Capital Programme and to update Members with any anticipated cost variances, acceleration of projects or slippage of schemes into future years.

3.1 REVISIONS TO THE COMMUNITY CAPITAL PROGRAMME

3.2 The 2012/13 Community Capital Programme was last reported to Scrutiny Committee – Resources on 19 September 2012.

3.3 A review of the 2012/13 Capital Programme has been undertaken by the Strategic Management Team in consultation with portfolio holders. Resulting from this review various capital schemes have either been reduced or removed completely. These proposed variations to the capital programme are detailed in appendix 2 to this report and will go forward to Executive on 20 November for approval.

3.4 PERFORMANCE

The current Community Capital Programme is detailed in Appendix 2. The appendix shows a total forecast spend of £6,372,257 in 2012/13 with £590,000 of the programme expected to be deferred until 2013/14. Below are explanations for the main variations from the approved programme and a general update on the schemes is also included:

Cultural City

- **RAMM Redevelopment (Budget £2,200,000)**

This budget was approved at Council in October 2012 to cover any outstanding liabilities in respect of the redevelopment.

Everyone has a home

- **22 St David's Hill Conversion (Budget £50,000)**

Negotiations are ongoing with NHS Devon and other statutory bodies to co-locate relevant rough sleeper services. This will be subject to planning consent and statutory agency commitment but it is intended that subject to planning; the agreement and therefore reconfiguration of the building will start before April 2013.

- **Private Sector Renewal Scheme (Budget £150,000)**

This budget is used to facilitate the reuse of privately owned empty homes and properties, ensuring they are fit for habitation. The expenditure is expected to exceed the budget as a number of properties are expected to be brought back into use before the end of this financial year. The overspend on this scheme will not require additional borrowing as any expenditure incurred will be financed from capital receipts. This capital project is intended to be self financing as landlords repay much of the outlay either upfront, through reduced rents or via sundry debt invoices.

- **Steps Acquisitions (Budget £50,000) and 11-13 Stepcote Hill (Budget £60,000)**

The budgets for the above schemes are no longer required and will be declared as a saving.

4. RECOMMENDED

That Scrutiny Committee – Community note this report.

STRATEGIC DIRECTOR

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FINANCE

**Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)
Background papers used in compiling this report**

None

This page is intentionally left blank

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - COMMUNITY
BUDGET MONITORING

Appendix 1

APRIL 2012 TO DECEMBER 2012

ORIGINAL ANNUAL BUDGET	SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGETS	CAPITAL CHARGES	PLANNED MOVEMENTS ON RESERVES	REVISED BUDGET EXC CAPITAL CHARGES	CODE	CURRENT OUTTURN FORECAST	QUARTER 3 FORECAST VARIANCE	QUARTER 2 FORECAST VARIANCE
£	£	£		£		£	£	£
541,870	0	0	0	541,870	81A1 ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION	508,560	(33,310)	(23,000)
3,922,760	0	(463,830)	0	3,458,930	81A2 CLEANSING SERVICES	3,524,090	65,160	109,500
345,770	0	0	15,900	361,670	81A3 LICENSING, FOOD, HEALTH & SAFETY	377,420	15,750	23,500
840,530	0	0	0	840,530	81A4 PUBLIC SAFETY	815,700	(24,830)	4,500
2,028,910	2,000	(187,340)	0	1,843,570	81A6 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	1,898,610	55,040	(19,750)
2,268,920	38,200	(233,860)	0	2,073,260	81A7 MUSEUMS SERVICE	2,072,610	(650)	115,500
909,840	0	(694,400)	0	215,440	81A8 LEISURE FACILITIES	176,940	(38,500)	(28,500)
283,050	0	(11,540)	0	271,510	81B2 BEREAVEMENT SERVICES	280,010	8,500	5,000
24,740	0	(6,850)	0	17,890	81B3 PROPERTIES	16,050	(1,840)	(9,000)
263,560	15,000	(152,650)	0	125,910	81B6 RECYCLING	125,910	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	81B9 DIRECTORATE ADMINISTRATION	(153,980)	(153,980)	0
1,453,490	0	(9,340)	0	1,444,150	81C2 ADVISORY SERVICES	1,483,550	39,400	(3,750)
270,740	0	0	0	270,740	81C3 STRATEGIC HOUSING & ENABLING	291,550	20,810	16,250
317,610	0	(134,930)	0	182,680	81C4 PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING	116,680	(66,000)	(13,250)
80,300	0	0	0	80,300	81C5 SUNDRY LANDS MAINTENANCE	80,300	0	0
0	0	(7,520)	0	(7,520)	81C6 CONTRACT & BUILDING SERVICES	(7,520)	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	81C7 DIRECTOR COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT	(198,150)	(198,150)	0
0	0	0	0	0	81C9 ASSISTANT DIRECTORS	111,640	111,640	0
13,552,090	55,200	(1,902,260)	15,900	11,720,930	NET EXPENDITURE	11,519,970	(200,960)	177,000

Page 55

VARIANCES ON TRANSFERS TO / (FROM) EARMARKED RESERVES

81A2 - Cleansing Services	(22,020)	(22,020)
81A3 - Licensing, Food, Health & Safety	3,290	900
81A7 - Museums Service	93,410	(6,590)
81A8 - Leisure Facilities	(20,000)	(30,000)
81C2 - Advisory Services	(21,560)	(17,140)
81C3 - Strategic Housing and Enabling	(22,000)	(22,000)
OVERALL FORECAST EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR AFTER MOVEMENTS TO / FROM RESERVES	11,531,090	11,801,080
REVISED BUDGETS	11,720,930	11,720,930
ADJUSTED OUTTURN VARIANCE	(189,840)	80,150

This page is intentionally left blank

2012-13
CAPITAL MONITORING TO 31 DECEMBER 2012

	2012-13 Capital Programme	2012-13 Spend	2012-13 Forecast Spend	2012-13 Budget to be Carried Forward to Future Years	2012-13 Programme Variances Under/(Over)
	£	£	£	£	£

COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT					
CULTURAL CITY					
Play Area Refurbishments	314,140	54,157	85,000	212,000	(17,140)
Sports Facilities Refurbishment	67,000	37,537	84,000	0	17,000
Parks Improvements	77,760	55,348	55,576		(22,184)
Contribution to RAMM Re HLF Parks Bid	65,200	49,838	65,200		0
Exwick Community Centre	0	0	0		0
RAMM Redevelopment	2,200,000	1,725,629	2,200,000		0
RAMM Off Site Store	40,740	33,692	40,740		0
Neighbourhood Parks & Local Open Spaces	34,630	22,206	34,630		0
Allotments - Toilet Replacement	23,440	5,611	23,440		0
Replacement of Flowerpot Skate Park	250,000	5,228	10,000	240,000	0
Refurbishment and Upgrade of Paddling Pools	200,000	62,832	200,000		0
Newtown Community Centre	0	8,416	20,000		20,000
					0
CARED FOR ENVIRONMENT					
Vehicle Replacement Programme	400,000	334,639	400,000		0
Public Toilet Refurbishment	990	0	990		0
Local Authority Carbon Management Programme	107,910	41,496	107,910		0
Improvements to Cemetery Roads & Pathways	11,950	0	11,950		0
Cemeteries & Churches Storage Improvements	0	0	0		0
Midi Recycling Banks	0	0	0		0
					0
EXCELLENCE IN PUBLIC SERVICES					
New Technology for Cleansing	14,190	7,270	14,190		0
Belle Isle Depot - Secure Equipment Storage	11,820	11,931	11,931		111
No 6 Greenhouse Belle Isle	17,500	0	17,500		0
					0
HEALTHY & ACTIVE PEOPLE					
Disabled Facility Grants	386,020	292,913	386,020		0
					0
EVERYONE HAS A HOME					
Warm Up Exeter/PLEA Scheme	100,000	2,971	100,000		0
5 Year House Condition Survey	0	0	0		0
Renovation Grants	50,000	0	50,000		0
Wessex Loan Scheme	784,380	648,883	784,380		0
Glencoe Capital Works	5,670	0	0		(5,670)
Private Sector Renewal Scheme	150,000	171,134	276,660		126,660
Newport Road	0	800			0
Whipton Methodist Church	0	400			0
Bennett Square	0	750			0
St Loyes Design Fees	20,000	0	0	20,000	0
WHIL Empty Properties	200,000	200,000	200,000		0
Steps Acquisitions	50,000	0	0		(50,000)
11-13 Stepcote Hill	60,000	0	0		(60,000)
22 St Davids Hill Conversion	50,000	0	0	50,000	0
Other temporary accommodation improvement	0	708	0		0
Temporary Accommodation Purchase	170,000	0	0	170,000	0
Infill Sites	350,000	0	0	350,000	0
Sovereign Infill - Shakespeare Road	375,000	375,000	375,000		0
Sovereign Infill - Leypark Road	135,000	135,000	135,000		0
The Haven	250,000	0	250,000	0	0
					0
SAFE CITY					
Replace Digital Recording Equipment at Control Centre	0	0	0		0

**2012-13
CAPITAL MONITORING TO 31 DECEMBER 2012**

	2012-13 Capital Programme £	2012-13 Spend £	2012-13 Forecast Spend £	2012-13 Budget to be Carried Forward to Future Years £	2012-13 Programme Variances Under/(Over) £
COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT TOTAL	6,973,340	4,284,389	5,940,117	1,042,000	8,777

PARKWOOD LEISURE SERVICES WORKING GROUP

Monday 7 January 2013

Present:

Councillor Shiel, Morris, and Sheldon

Also Present:

Darren Parrott, Assistant Regional Director South West
Stephen Hughes, Exeter Contract Manager

Also Present:

Assistant Director Economy, Leisure Facilities Manager and Assistant Member Services Officer

33

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Mitchell and James Coulton.

34

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 20 NOVEMBER 2012

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2012 were agreed, subject to the amendment of 'James Coulter' to read 'James Coulton' under Minute. No. 25 - apologies for absence.

Matters Arising

Minute No. 27 – Customer Cards

With regard to the production of new customer comment cards, it was confirmed that the City Council logo would also be included to show its involvement. The design and cost was yet to be agreed.

Minute No. 29 – Findings of the Customer Questionnaire

As the issue of cleaning had been raised in a number of centres, an enquiry was made as to whether this was being addressed.

Stephen Hughes advised that the more modern sites had fewer issues. Where sites were busier and the condition of the facility reflects their age, such as the Pyramids, the perception is that aging surfaces such as floor tiles are dirty, when actually it is just inground wear over many years. However, these issues are being addressed, and some may be a case of moving resources.

Minute No. 30 – Update on Service Improvement Plans and Equipment Replacement

With regard to the refurbishment of the changing rooms at Wonford Sports Centre being largely funded by the City Council, Steve Lyon advised that improvements were necessary as the facility was subject to an increasing number of complaints relating to the changing and shower areas. The costs were being shared, with Parkwood Leisure contributing £12,000 as per their original contract submission for

capital improvements, and in addition the Council had received an advanced rental payment for a redundant Sports Development office from the Phoenix Youth Club to the value of £15,000. This rental income was therefore re-invested in the Wonford facility. The Council funded the difference from the sports facilities capital budget. It was felt that a refurbishment was the best solution, as opposed to cosmetic enhancements only providing a short term solution.

35

CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

Customer Forums for 2013

Stephen Hughes reported that the customer forums were not really working, and this was supported by the poor attendances last year. The forums would now become subject based focus groups relating to the site, e.g. swimming, bowls, fitness, aerobics, children's' activities. The current dates remain the same, but the way they are advertised will be enhanced.

36

SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS PLANS AND EQUIPMENT REPLACEMENT - REPORT TO SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - COMMUNITY

Richard Ball reported that the intention of the Improvement Plans were to identify and take forward qualitative improvements which relate to and enhance the customer experience beyond providing what is in the contract.

Certain actions within this document will happen in any case as they are required by the contract, but form the basis for further improvement, eg Quest. The industry recognised standard for quality in leisure centres, Quest sets out different levels of assessment for facilities and provides a useful basis for setting out further improvements to be received at each centre in order to gain accreditation for providing higher quality of service to customers. This document will be presented to the Council's Scrutiny Committee once finalised.

Stephen Hughes advised that the improvements identified are drawn from past Quest reports, customer satisfaction surveys and every day customer feedback. There are specific actions for each site, but are also some duplications regarding actions from site to site, but this was to be expected.

He made comments on the following as an example of the contents of the centre by centre draft improvement plan:

Clifton Hill Sports Centre

- CH3 (IM9) – Ensure that training needs are recognised and appropriate training arranged for staff.
Plans had been issued today for all sites.
- CH4 – Reduce membership attrition levels.
The corporate target for membership attrition rate was 6%.
- CH4 (IM13) – Replace as a minimum all cardio vascular equipment.
The cardio vascular equipment at Clifton Hill would be replaced in July 2013.
- CH4 (IM15) – Host at least one customer focus group dedicated to fitness.
The Focus Group should be held before the replacement of the equipment, so that customers' views could be sought.
- CH6 (IM19) – Strive to achieve an excellent status in Quest.
More detail needed to be included as to how this would be achieved.

- CH6 (IM20) – Deliver all customer focussed aspects of the Quest Improvement Plan.
The Module 1 Customer Experience aspect of Quest contains 10 points plus 30-40 bullet points each. To include those in this document would make it too large, and this could be added as an appendix, or to have a number of key areas to focus on. All centres will have a dedicated Quest improvement plan, which will include a maintenance visit and appraisal. Stephen would circulate the Quest Module 1 for feedback.
- CH7 (IM21) – Increase use of text blasts to communicate special offers. Email blasts should be used as well as text blasts. However, from feedback, people generally opt out of being contacted. It was suggested that this could be used for information, and not just marketing, eg when facilities close for special events such as swimming galas.
- CH7 (IM22) – Introduce Facebook. Facebook would be used to respond on a local basis, and a social media manager would be brought in.

Riverside Leisure Centre

Councillor Morris raised the issue of wristbands and access from the health suite to the swimming pool. The electronic lock had failed. Stephen Hughes advised that this would be investigated and resolved.

- R19 (IM26) – In partnership with a promoter, Riverside would host at least two large events per annum.
It was suggested that Stephen Hughes contact Dave Lewis (Facilities and Markets Manager) and Val Wilson (Festival & Events Manager). This could provide an opportunity for them to pass on details of Parkwood sites and facilities if events were turned away from other City Council sites for any reason. Stephen would set up a meeting with Dave Lewis.

General Comments

Following a general discussion about the detailed proposed actions, it was agreed that further comments on its content should be collected and fed back through the Service Contracts Manager for a final version to be produced and agreed as the basis for action this year. Comments to be provided to Steve Lyon by 21 January 2013. It was intended that the Working Group agreement to the final draft would then follow.

It was queried whether any utilisation measures were in place to see how much the various facilities and rooms are used, to assist in identifying whether there were any other opportunities. Darren Parrott advised that they would be using a new Legend system which would provide details on occupancy levels.

The agreed document would run from January – December 2013, and would be used as part of managers' monthly meetings and appraisals.

The Group felt it would be useful if managers from each site could attend future meetings of this working group to talk through their Improvement Plan. It was agreed that the managers from the sites where the meeting was being held would be invited to attend future meetings.

This had already been discussed under the previous item.

MEETING DIARY FOR 2013

The dates of future meetings were noted.

(The meeting commenced at 2.55 pm and closed at 4.17 pm)

Chair