

PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date: Thursday 7 September 2017
Time: 5.30 pm
Venue: Rennes Room, Civic Centre, Paris Street, Exeter

Members are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business.

If you have an enquiry regarding any items on this agenda, please contact Howard Bassett, Democratic Services Officer (Committees) on 01392 265107.

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

Membership -

Councillors Wardle (Chair), Foale (Deputy Chair), Branston, Foggin, Hannan, Hannaford, Holland, Morris, Thompson and Vizard

Agenda

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 1 June 2017.

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.

4 **Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 - Exclusion of Press and Public**

It is considered that the Committee would be unlikely to exclude the press and public during consideration of the items on this agenda, but if it should wish to do so, the following resolution should be passed:-

RECOMMENDED that, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting of the particular item(s) on the grounds that it (they) involve(s) the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant paragraphs of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

5 **Questions from the Public under Standing Order 19**

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 Democratic Services (Committees) (Tel: 01392 265115) and also on the Council web site - www.exeter.gov.uk/decisions.

6 **Questions from Members of the Council under Standing Order 20**

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

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE EXECUTIVE

7 **Fire Safety Management Policy (Housing)**

To consider the report of the Director.

(Pages 5 -
16)

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

8 **Housing Revenue Account - Budget Monitoring to June 2017**

To consider the report of the Chief Finance Officer.

(Pages 17
- 32)

9 **Budget Monitoring to June 2017**

To consider the report of the Chief Finance Officer.

(Pages 33
- 42)

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

10 Exeter Sleep Safe

To consider the report of the Director.

(Pages 43
- 70)

11 Exeter Health and Wellbeing Board - Minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2017

(Pages 71
- 74)

Date of Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the People Scrutiny Committee will be held on **Thursday** 2 November 2017 at 5.30 pm in the Civic Centre.

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REPORT TO: Scrutiny Committee People, Executive and Council

Date of Meeting: 7th September 2017, 12th September 2017 and 17th October 2017

Report of: Bindu Arjoon, Director

Title: Fire Safety Management Policy (Housing)

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Council.

1. What is the report about?

This report recommends a new Fire Safety Management Policy in respect of the Council's housing stock and asks Members to decide whether escape routes should be managed under a 'managed' or sterile approach.

2. Recommendations:

- 2.1 That the Council adopts a new Fire Safety Management Policy meaning that designated escape routes and alternative routes which could be used for escape should be maintained free from all obstacles in order to secure tenant safety and the Council's compliance with statutory duties.
- 2.2 That members note that the approach to implementing the policy will be phased over time to include awareness raising, consultation on storage requirements and fire safety education.
- 2.3 Council approves the additional funding required to implement the adopted option for the management of the Council's Housing Stocks, those costs to be met from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), as shown in section four below.

3. Reasons for the recommendation:

The Housing Service's new Fire Safety Management Policy is written to ensure that the Council meets all of its statutory duties (appendix 1).

While acknowledging that the choice between a 'managed use' or 'sterile' strategy will be made by Members, officers and the fire service are clear in their view that the a sterile approach is by far the best option from a tenant safety perspective, from an efficient use of resources perspective and for best ensuring statutory compliance because it maintains escape routes in the safest condition and removes all possible uncertainty about what is and is not allowed.

Amongst the duties imposed by the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, is a requirement for landlords to ensure that escape routes and associated fire exits from premises are kept clear at all times.

4. What are the resource implications including non financial resources.

The existing Fire Policy has not been effective in managing escape routes, as evidenced by our Fire Risk Assessments. A list of acceptable items (to be stored in marked 'safe areas') provides for pot plants, bicycles, pushchairs and prams. There is an extensive list of items not permitted yet these are the items most often found, for example, doormats, carpets, tables and mobility scooters. Furniture, shelving and net curtains are not uncommon.

Officers have reviewed the resources currently available to the Housing department (both Assets and Customer Relations) and then considered what additional resources may be required for each of the two approaches.

Calculations (shown in Appendix 3) indicate:

- **Sterile Policy** will require at least one extra FTE employee for the enforcement stage. This is because officers have determined that monthly inspections¹ would be the minimum practicable precaution to ensure escape routes are kept sterile, have dialogues with tenants and take enforcement when necessary. Officers estimate this would most likely be job evaluated as a Grade 6 post the costs would be £26,280. However a further report will be brought to Executive and Council regarding the resources required for the pre- implementation phase.
- **Managed** is likely to require at least five extra FTE employees. This is because officers have determined that weekly inspections¹ would be the minimum to monitor unauthorised encroachments into escape routes, have dialogues with tenants and take enforcement when necessary. On the basis of this post being evaluated as a Grade 6 the cost would be £131,400.

It should be noted that for both options, existing Housing Officers would find the new policy difficult to enforce. Aside from the additional work which comes from inspecting and enforcing either option (see footnote), an inspection regime must be carried out methodically to be effective. All 437 locations will need to be inspected either monthly or weekly on a recorded, managed schedule.

Fire alarms

Continuing a situation where escape routes are not kept clear will necessitate the installation of new fire alarm systems. This is a consistent recommendation of our fire risk assessor.

This goes against official guidance for most blocks of flats because of the increased number of false activations generated. In effect, we would be increasing the alarm response burden on Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service (DSFRS) because we are not adequately managing the escape routes. DSFRS may start to charge for attendances.

¹ Inspections (all of which need to be recorded) will require follow up action where the policy is not being complied with. Such action may include: letters to all or individual tenants; potential work with tenant to locate alternative storage facilities; gathering evidence such as photos and statements; visiting the alleged perpetrators; writing to the alleged perpetrators; applying to court for injunctions; attending court if contested; if injunction obtained then enforcing the terms contained within it; subsequent increased inspection to ensure injunction not breached. The burden for these activities will fall on Housing Officers.

Alarm system costs would need to include installation, maintenance, monitoring centre, out-of-hours response and fault repair services. It is difficult to provide costs without individual site surveys and quotations but a reasonable figure would be £750 per site for installation and £500 per annum thereafter.

We estimate about 80 sites are likely to require alarms so a first year outlay would be in the region of £100,000 (£60,000 installation plus £40,000 annual service) and £40,000 service costs annually thereafter.

5. Section 151 Officer comments:

The financial implications in the report are noted. Members will note that there is a significant underspend within this financial year, although the funds remain committed. Regardless of the option picked by members, the funds will be included within the Housing Revenue Account's medium term financial plan.

6. What are the legal aspects?

Appendix one provides a list of relevant legislation and accompanying guidance material. Based on the findings of our fire risk assessments, we are clearly in breach of our statutory duty and therefore vulnerable to enforcement action and prosecution by the fire service.

If we were prosecuted because escape routes were not maintained in a clear condition, then under the new sentencing guidelines for health and safety offences, the courts will consider what harm could have occurred. For example, an item burning in an escape route could have prevented escape and trapped tenants and/or fire fighters. They could have died. We would be sentenced as if they had.

Fines in excess of £100,000 can be expected – as demonstrated by the recent prosecution of Southwark Council following the fire at Lakanal House; they were fined £270,000 plus £300,000 costs.

Further, under new sentencing guidelines for Corporate Manslaughter offences, prison sentences can now reach a maximum of 18 years. Courts would seek to identify a 'responsible person'; i.e. the person or persons who had ultimate control for the element that failed. This in normal circumstances would be the most senior operational manager of the organisation which for the council would be the Chief Executive and Growth Director.

7. Monitoring Officer's comments:

- 7.1 Paragraph 14 of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 states:
"Where necessary in order to safeguard the safety of relevant persons, the responsible Person must ensure that routes to emergency exits from premises and the exits themselves are kept clear at all times.
- 7.2 The Guidance produced by the LGA indicates that 'zero tolerance' should be adopted as the default position. More pertinently, the Guidance suggests that zero tolerance shall apply where there is doubt over the ability of residents to apply a 'managed use' policy.

- 7.3 In regard to the managed approach, it is clear that this is only appropriate if the risk assessment indicates that it should be applied, and if it is applied must give rise to clear requirements imposed upon residents that they must follow. This in turn will require a regular system of inspections and enforcement actions, to ensure that we are not in breach of our obligations.
- 7.4 The other point to consider is that our tenancy agreement, at Part C1, paragraph 4 states that tenants must *'co-operate with us and your neighbours to keep any communal areas clean, tidy and clear of obstruction. If you share balconies and stairways with other tenants, you must keep these areas clean and free of all items (floor coverings etc).'*
- This indicates that our position is that we require a sterile area in the common parts, as we have included an express term to that effect, but yet we allow tenants to breach this obligation, suggesting that we are currently turning a blind eye to the actions of tenants.
- 7.5 The Guidance is of course only that and so does not have the same status as legislation, but it is almost certainly going to be regarded as the benchmark for landlords.
- 7.6 Given the above, to have a “managed” approach increases the risk of harm to residents, staff and fire fighters, and so potentially could put the Council at risk of prosecution and or civil action. My advice is that we should adopt the sterile policy suggested by the guidance, i.e. that the default position is zero tolerance of obstructions i.e. sterile areas, unless the risk assessment suggests that a managed approach is appropriate.

8. Report details:

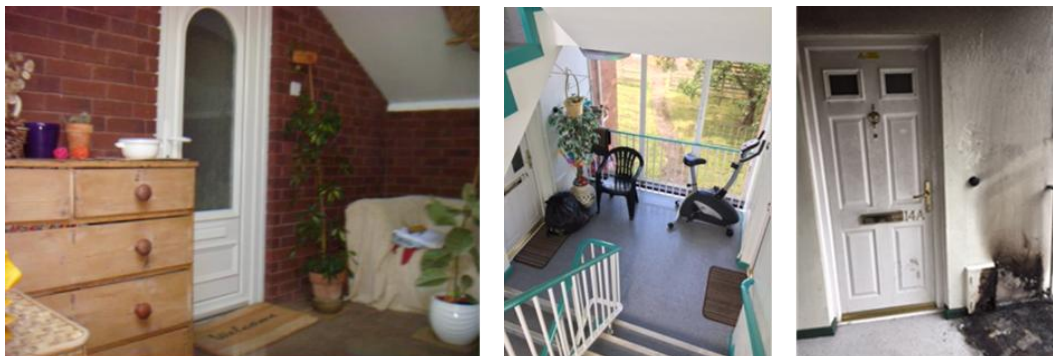
What are often and commonly referred to as ‘communal areas’ are actually escape routes, which start at the tenant’s front door and end at the fire exit, include the stairwells, landings and lobbies which serve them and are protected areas designed and constructed to facilitate escape, prevent the spread of heat and smoke and provide ‘refuge’ should escape prove impossible.

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order requires that escape routes are kept clear. This is because combustible and flammable items and sources of ignition not only create obstacles, slip and trip hazards but should they ignite, produce thick, hot, toxic smoke. Some survivors of the recent Grenfell Tower fire disaster reported the almost instantly debilitating and disorientating effects of smoke in the escape route.

The existing regime, based on the Fire Policy agreed by the Council in 2009 had the unintended effect of prioritised tenant storage issues and natural desire to ‘soften’ the look of escape routes over their safety and our compliance with regulations.

This is evidenced by the continual finding of our fire risk assessment reports (which have to be undertaken for all escape routes); i.e. fire escape routes, including stairwell landings and floor lobby protected areas, are being compromised by the items and materials that our residents leave in them.

The three recent images below illustrate some of the items which can be found in escape routes. The first image was taken by our fire risk assessor, the second was taken during a fire safety tour with a representative from DSFRS and the last was taken subsequent to a fire on an escape stairwell landing.



In determining which strategy (sterile or managed) is the best option to ensure compliance and tenant safety, officers carefully considered the comprehensive guidance provided by the publications *Fire safety in purpose-built blocks of flats* provided by the Local Government Association (Appendix 2), *Fire Safety Advice for Landlords* provided by the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service and **Fire Safety Risk Assessment – Sleeping Accommodation** provided by central government.

Officers also considered the strategies adopted by other councils and housing associations and the findings of our own fire risk assessments which are conducted by a fire risk assessor independent to the Council.

There was an informal consultation from officers and our Insurance provider Zurich and contacts within the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service (DSFRS) who were all clearly in favour of a zero tolerance strategy because it is easier to enforce and improves the probability of compliance.

Managed strategy

A managed policy will simply see the re-introduction of an 'exemptions' list. As discussed in section 4, the enforcing of this approach would require weekly checks to be made.

However, any item left in an escape route increases the risk to residents and fire fighters. Ultimately, only the Courts would decide if our measures were suitable and sufficient. Members may wish to consider the likely success of our mitigation

Zero tolerance

A sterile policy has the benefit of being unambiguous, provides the best safety and defence in court. Guidance dictates that sterile policy should always be adopted when there is doubt over the likelihood of residents to comply with a managed use policy.

In making their recommendation, officers recognise that one particular area of the policy could prove contentious with some tenants, namely:

“Ensure tenants understand the need to keep all communal corridors, stairwells and lobbies clear of any articles which may impede escape, hinder and endanger fire

fighters or allow fire to spread. In practical terms, this requires all clear areas and storage facilities not designated for personal use to be kept 'sterile'."

Initial concern can be reduced through a carefully phased introduction and implementation of the new policy. If approved by Members, officers will implement the introduction along the following lines:

Phase one – facilitation

These two activities have already commenced.

- Article in the next publication of our Insight magazine regarding the benefits of clear escape routes and dangers of obstructed ones.
- Talks to residents by Officers regarding fire safety in general at sheltered schemes – DSFRS are happy to participate.
- Overcrowding is considered to be an issue contributing to the escape routes being used to store items. Officers are working proactively with the ECC tenants identified as registered on Devon Home Choice lacking bed-space(s) to, where appropriate, assist them to move to more suitable properties either via mutual exchanges or management transfers.

Because storage is such an issue for tenants, the Council could consider installing external additional storage for items such as mobility scooters (with charging facilities) and secure storage facilities for larger items. Costs are difficult to anticipate but officers estimate that the estates improvement budgets may need to be increased from £50k to £200k per annum for the next 5 financial years to allow for additional storage space which include mobility storage areas and bin storage areas.

Phase two – implementation

- Following phase one, a three month lead-up time to enforcement
- Letter drops, Insight magazine update and notices in communal areas
- Assistance for the vulnerable where possible
- Removing the larger and more hazardous items

Phase three – enforcement

- Reminders and warning letters
- Visits by Housing Officers
- Removal of articles left in escape routes
- Eventual zero tolerance

East Devon have successfully implemented a zero tolerance policy which, after 18 months, is now accepted as the norm and increasingly appreciated by their residents, especially post-Grenfell. East Devon's Members and DSFRS fully supported the Council at every stage and this seems to have reduced the negative response from residents.

9. How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan?

A decision in favour of zero tolerance will promote a strategy far more likely to succeed, more of the time, in meeting statutory obligations so reducing corporate risk.

The published corporate plan points to working closely with other organisations, and zero tolerance aligns with the strong preference voiced by DSFRS. It also supports both the HRA objective to deliver a robust health and safety compliance regime and Health and Place endeavour to keep the city green, clean, safe and healthy.

10. What risks are there and how can they be reduced?

The risks are that there is a major fire in one of its council blocks and that there is injury/fatality, major damage to the property, major costs for decanting/ relocating of tenants and leaseholders and repairs. Additionally, a further risk is that the council faces prosecution for Corporate Manslaughter potentially leading to a significant fine and or incarceration of the person(s) considered responsible. There is also the reputational damage an incident like this would cause.

The council will never be able to completely remove all risks of a fire in its stock but as a responsible landlord should take all reasonable actions to mitigate the likelihood and the impact.

Both a managed and sterile area policy both present some risk and ultimately as already stated in the report in the event of a fire the courts would decide if the actions and measures taken by the council were appropriate and reasonable.

With a managed policy the risk would be our ability to resource and enforce this policy ensuring consistency across all our stock. This risk would be mitigated by providing the appropriate levels of resources as already set out in the report.

With either a managed or sterile policy the council may be able to mitigate the risk by providing additional storage areas to accommodate some of items currently placed in the escape routes and give further assistance in moving to tenants who are overcrowded in our properties. A sterile policy would be introduced in a phased way and it is anticipated that the estate improvements budget would need to be increased from £50k per annum to £200k for approximately the next 5 years.

11. What is the impact of the decision on equality and diversity; health and wellbeing; safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults, community safety and the environment?

If Members support the sterile policy recommendation, the new strategy will improve the safety of our more vulnerable residents. Sterile escape routes will improve access and egress for the less mobile.

However, those with mobility scooters, the disabled, elderly, infirm and those with young children may prefer to live on the ground floor if at all possible.

12. Are there any other options?

No other options have been identified by officers to satisfy our statutory duties.

Bindu Arjoon
Director

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)
Background papers used in compiling this report:-
None

Appendix one

The Fire Safety Management has been written to satisfy the following statutory and regulatory requirements:

- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Housing Act 2004
- Building Act 1985 and Building Regulations 2010/2013
- Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998
- Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994
- Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015

In order to do so, the author referenced the following guidance documents issued by central and local government and other authoritative bodies, many of which are supported by or have received contributions from the Chief Fire Officer's Association:

- Guide to Choosing a Competent Fire Risk Assessor (Version 2, published 09/10/2014 published by the Fire Risk Assessment Competency Council
- PAS 79:2012: Fire risk assessment, guidance and recommended methodology (BSI)
- Housing fire safety - Guidance on fire safety provisions for certain types of existing housing (LACORS)
- Fire safety in purpose-built blocks of flats (LGA)
- Fire safety advice for landlords, managing agents, private dwellings, blocks of flats and owners of houses in multiple occupation and social housing (Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service)
- Fire safety in construction (HSE)
- Fire safety risk assessment: sleeping accommodation (HMGov)
- Fire safety risk assessment: means of escape for disabled people (HMGov)
- Fire safety risk assessment: residential care premises (HMGov)
- Fire safety risk assessment: (HMGov)

Appendix two

The Local Government Association (LGA) led work commissioned by Government to develop a sector-led guidance on fire safety in purpose-built blocks of flats, which was written by experts in the field of fire safety and was published in July 2011. This was after landlords voiced a number of concerns about how best they can deliver an appropriate level of fire safety in purpose-built blocks of flats.

LGA worked alongside local authorities, private sector landlords and management agents, housing and environmental health professionals and fire and rescue services to produce the guidance from which the following extracts are produced.

Zero tolerance or managed

44.10 Unrestricted use of common parts is clearly not acceptable. It will, therefore, be necessary to adopt one of the following alternatives:

- i. 'zero tolerance'
- ii. 'managed use'

44.11 A 'zero tolerance' approach is one in which residents are not permitted to use the common parts to store or dispose of their belongings or rubbish. No exceptions would apply. It would ensure that the common parts are effectively 'sterile' i.e. free of combustible material, ignition sources and obstructions.

44.12 The benefits of this approach are:

- it is the simplest policy to adopt
- it removes not only the risk from accidental fires, involving items in the common parts, but also denies fuel for the arsonist
- there is no ambiguity regarding what is allowed and therefore residents know exactly where they stand
- it is easier for landlords to 'police' when carrying out inspections
- enforcing authorities usually favour this approach
- it is simpler to audit by those carrying out fire risk assessments
- it arguably reduces the liability on landlords.

44.13 There are, however, disadvantages including:

- by not taking into account the specific circumstances, this policy might not be risk proportionate
- it unduly penalises those who could manage their common parts effectively
- it denies residents an opportunity to personalise and improve their living environment

A 'zero tolerance' policy should:

- be adopted by way of 'default'
- always apply when there is doubt over the ability of residents to apply a 'managed use' policy
- be adopted where flats open directly onto stairways unless 'managed use' is considered acceptable by the fire risk assessment
- always apply where the escape stairway is of combustible construction

- always apply where the building needs to be evacuated immediately ie where the standard of fire protection does not support a 'stay put' policy.

44.14 The alternative is 'managed use'. This approach allows strictly defined use of common parts and limits the items allowed, to control fire load and ease of ignition. It includes strict conditions on where such items can be kept. For example, a 'managed use' policy might permit residents to:

- place pot plants and door mats outside their front doors
- have framed pictures and notice boards on walls
- store bicycles, prams and mobility scooters in places that are out of the way and not likely to cause obstruction.

44.15 This approach also has advantages and disadvantages. The benefits include:

- by making the common areas 'homely', it fosters a sense of pride and value in the block, which can impact positively on anti-social behaviour
- it benefits older and disabled people in particular, by allowing them to store mobility aids at the point of access
- it allows the specific risk factors in the building to be taken into account.

44.16 The disadvantages include:

- it is more difficult to adopt as it requires a clearly defined policy with a list of 'dos and don'ts'
- there is more scope for misunderstanding, requiring more education of, and communication with, residents
- while it might be possible to minimise accidental fires with an appropriate 'managed use' policy, deliberate ignition may still be a significant concern
- by allowing valuables to be left on view, it can encourage crime and subsequently increase the risk of deliberate ignition
- it is more difficult for landlords to 'police', and for enforcing authorities and fire risk assessors to audit
- it is likely to require more frequent inspections by landlords
- failure to adopt the policy effectively could result in liability for landlords should a situation occur that places residents at risk of serious injury or death in the event of fire.

When adopting a 'managed use' policy:

- carry out a specific risk assessment taking into account the particular circumstances in the building
- consider whether residents are disposed towards keeping 'rules', and avoid 'managed use' where this is not the case
- ensure that there are clearly defined 'do's and don'ts' that residents can easily follow
- only apply it where there is a suitable standard of fire protection – particular care should be taken when applying it to situations such as single stairway buildings and 'dead end' corridors
- limit it to buildings in which the main elements of structure are made of concrete, brick and other non-combustible materials

Appendix three

FULLY MANAGED	Number	Stories	Inspection minutes per floor	Annual frequency	Annual minutes	Annual hours	Monthly hours	Weekly hours
Communal areas non-sheleterd	22	4	5	52	22880	381.3	31.8	7.3
Communal areas non-sheleterd	184	3	5	52	143520	2392.0	199.3	46.0
Communal areas non-sheleterd	201	2	5	52	104520	1742.0	145.2	33.5
Sheltered	17	3	10	52	26520	442.0	36.8	8.5
Sheltered	1	11	10	52	5720	95.3	7.9	1.8
HMO	10	3	5	52	7800	130.0	10.8	2.5
Travel	425		15	52	331500	5525.0	460.4	106.3
					642460	10707.7	892.3	205.9
FTE weekly								37.0
FTE required								5.6

ZERO TOLERANCE	Number	Stories	Inspection minutes per floor	Annual frequency	Annual minutes	Annual hours	Monthly hours	Weekly hours
Communal areas non-sheleterd	22	4	5	12	5280	88.0	7.3	1.7
Communal areas non-sheleterd	184	3	5	12	33120	552.0	46.0	10.6
Communal areas non-sheleterd	201	2	5	12	24120	402.0	33.5	7.7
Sheltered	17	3	10	12	6120	102.0	8.5	2.0
Sheltered	1	11	10	12	1320	22.0	1.8	0.4
HMO	10	3	5	12	1800	30.0	2.5	0.6
Travel	425		15	12	76500	1275.0	106.3	24.5
					148260	2471.0	205.9	47.5
FTE weekly								37.0
FTE required								1.3

REPORT TO: SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - PEOPLE
DATE OF MEETING: 7 September 2017
REPORT OF: Chief Finance Officer
TITLE: Housing Revenue Account Budget Monitoring - June 2017

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Is this an Executive or Council Function?

No

1. What is the report about?

To advise Members of any major differences, by management unit, between the approved budget and the outturn forecast for the first three months of the financial year up to 30 June 2017 in respect of the Housing Revenue Account and the Council's new build schemes.

A budget monitoring update in respect of the HRA Capital Programme is also incorporated into this report in order to help provide a comprehensive financial update in respect of the Housing Revenue Account.

In addition to the budgetary over/under-spends reported to this committee, Appendix 1 also highlights further areas of risk, so that Members are aware that certain budgets have been identified as being vulnerable to factors beyond the control of the Council, which may result in potential deviations from budget, and are therefore subject to close monitoring, by officers.

2. Recommendations:

That Members of Scrutiny Committee – Community assure themselves that satisfactory actions are being undertaken by Officers to address the key areas of budgetary pressure highlighted in this report.

3. Reasons for the recommendation:

The Housing Revenue Account is a statutory account and local housing authorities have a duty to keep an HRA in accordance with proper accounting practices and to review the account throughout the year. This is the first quarterly financial update in respect of the HRA for 2017-18.

4. What are the resource implications including non financial resources

The financial resources required to deliver both housing services to Council tenants and to invest in new and existing housing stock during 2017-18 are set out in the body of this report.

5. Section 151 Officer comments:

This report has been prepared on behalf of the Section 151 Officer to set out the financial position of the Housing Revenue Account, as at 30 June 2017.

6. What are the legal aspects?

The Housing Revenue Account is framed by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. This Act created the ring-fence and the structure within which the HRA operates and covers the detailed operation of the HRA, including the credits (income) and debits (expenditure) which make up the account.

7. Monitoring Officer Comments:

This report raises no issues for the Monitoring Officer.

8. Report Details:

HRA BUDGET MONITORING TO 30 JUNE 2017

8.1 Projected Surplus/Deficit

During this period the total budget variances indicate that there will be a net surplus of £725,335 in 2017-18. This represents a significant movement of £3,212,950 compared to the revised budgeted deficit of £2,487,615 for 2017-18 with, most notably, £2,700,000 attributable to delays with the St Loyes Extra Care scheme. The key budget deviations are explained below. Please also refer to Appendix 2.

Budget Heading	Forecast Budget Variance (Under)/Overspend	Explanation
Budgeted Deficit	£2,303,775	
Supplementary budgets	£183,840	£20,000 for mobile working, £20,000 for consultancy re operating models, £12,000 for stock condition survey, £60,000 for low maintenance and painting, £46,000 for tree inspections and remedial works and £25,840 for water system risk assessments. Executive approved 11 July 2017
Revised Budgeted Deficit	£2,487,615	
Management Costs	(£32,700)	• Savings in employee costs are expected due to vacant posts.
Housing Customers	£39,200	• Additional employee costs have been incurred in respect of covering maternity leave, which will be partially offset by savings in contract cleaning costs due to lower inflationary rises.
Sundry Land Maintenance	(£9,000)	• Savings are expected in respect of the Garden Assistance Scheme following lower inflationary rises in contract costs and a recent review of eligibility.
Repairs and Maintenance Programme	(£275,000)	• It is anticipated that slippage will occur in the external painting and low maintenance works in respect of flats due to the time required to undertake leaseholder consultation.
Revenue Contribution to Capital	(£2,700,000)	• The estimated amount of revenue monies required towards financing the HRA Capital Programme in 2017-18 has reduced by £2.7m, from £6.5m to £3.8m.

		In March 2014 Executive approved a £2.7m contribution towards the St Loyes Extra Care scheme, which was profiled to be required in 2017-18 but delays to the scheme will mean that significant spend will not take place until 2018/19 when it is hoped that works can start on site. A detailed report is due to be presented to committee later this year in respect of this scheme.
Housing Assets	(£155,450)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Savings in employee costs are expected due to vacant Surveyor posts within the Housing Assets team. The decant of tenants in ten LAINGS properties whilst a major refurbishment programme is undertaken are not all expected to take place this financial year. Higher than budgeted tender prices have necessitated an options appraisal and caused a delay in the project timetable. A saving is reported in 2017-18, as the cost of decanting tenants in 2018-19 will be factored into next year's budgets.
Interest	(£80,000)	Reflects additional interest receivable on HRA balances (Working Balance, Major Repairs Reserve and capital receipts). The significant forecast revenue and capital savings in 2017-18 will result in higher than anticipated HRA balances.
Total budget variances	(£3,212,950)	
Projected HRA surplus	(£725,335)	Transfer to HRA Working Balance

8.2 Impact on HRA Working Balance

The HRA Working Balance represents amounts set aside to help facilitate service improvements, repay debt or to provide investment in the stock in future financial years.

The forecast balance, as at 31 March 2018, is set out below:

Movement	2017/18
Opening HRA Working Balance, as at 1/4/17	£8,567,454
Forecast surplus for 2017/18	£725,335
Balance resolved to be retained (HRA contingency)	(£4,000,000)
Balance Available, as at 31/3/18	£5,292,789

8.3 HRA Available Resources over the Medium Term

The forecast HRA available resources for delivering both housing services and capital investment have been significantly affected by the requirement to reduce social rents by 1% each year over the four financial years; 2016/17 to 2019/20.

Appendix 3 sets out the total forecast HRA available resources up to 2020/21, which reflects this Government policy.

8.4 HRA Capital Programme

The 2017-18 HRA Capital Programme was approved by Council on 21 February 2017. Since that meeting the following changes have been made that have increased the programme.

Description	2017/18	Approval / Funding
HRA Capital Programme	£18,901,851	
Budgets carried forward from 2016/17 HRA Capital Programme	£1,833,940 £760,920	Executive 12 April 2016 Executive 12 July 2016
Budgets deferred to future financial years	(£2,791,811)	Executive 12 April and 12 July 2016
Estate Regeneration Grant	£1,295,000	
Revised HRA Capital Programme	£19,999,900	

8.5 Performance

The current HRA Capital Programme is detailed in Appendix 4. The appendix shows a total forecast spend of £11,607,625 compared to the £19,999,900 approved programme, a decrease of £8,392,275.

8.6 Capital Budget Variances

The details of key variances from budget are set out below.

Scheme	Forecast Overspend / (Underspend)	Explanation
Smoke/Fire Alarms – Older Persons	(£15,750)	Successfully negotiated a lower cost per dispersed alarm unit. The budget also allowed for ongoing connectivity charges, which have been moved to revenue in accordance with proper accounting practice.
Electrical re-wiring	(£922,430)	Significant savings are projected in respect of planned electrical re-wires. The budgets were prepared on early survey results, but subsequent surveys have identified significantly fewer properties as requiring full electrical rewires in accordance with health and safety regulations.

Scheme	Budget to be deferred to 2018/19	Explanation
Programmed Re-roofing	£790,000	A significant amount (£580k) relates to the planned re-roofing of flats, which has been delayed due to consultation with leaseholders before the tender process commences. The remaining £210k relates to re-roofing houses. Vacant Surveyor posts has placed a constraint on delivery of the programme and it is currently projected that works amounting to £193k will be deliverable.
Garage Upgrades	£89,000	A lower than anticipated level of works to garages are planned to be undertaken, whilst the future of certain garage sites are reviewed. In the interim a smaller scale programme of garage door upgrades will be completed.
LAINGS Refurbishments	£247,770	The extensive refurbishment of 17 LAINGS properties has been delayed whilst a thorough review of the tender returns was undertaken. It is hoped that works will start on site in January 2018.
Common Area Footpath/Wall Improvements	£350,000	All surveys of HRA footpaths and walls have been completed, which has informed the planned programme of works. The survey identified works in the area of Higher Barley Mount bus stop, but procurement of the works is pending confirmation of ownership.
Boiler Replacement Programme	£233,800	The commencement of planned boiler replacements has been delayed due to contract procurement. In the interim boiler failures are being dealt with under the gas servicing contract.
Communal Door and Screens	£231,870	Both leaseholder consultation and procurement delays are projected to result in slippage in this programme. It is hoped that a 2 year contract will be procured

		later this year. Urgent health and safety works will be undertaken in the interim.
Window Replacements	£500,000	Both leaseholder consultation and staff resources are placing a constraint on the delivery of this programme. Initial works will target houses with lower forecast spend of £246k.
St Loyes Extra Care Scheme	£3,694,651	Higher tender returns has necessitated a value engineering exercise to be completed coupled with negotiations with the preferred contractor. A detailed report is planned to be presented to committee later this year with the results of this work. In the meantime the budget has been profiled in accordance with the latest cash flow forecast.
Acquisition of Social Housing – Section 106	£240,000	This element of the budget is set aside for the purchase of six 2 bedroom flats at The Chasse development, which are not due to start until May 2018.
Acquisition of Social Housing – Open Market	£1,000,000	Plans to acquire properties on the open market have been put on hold until the detailed Higher Value Assets Levy regulations are known.

9. COUNCIL OWN BUILD BUDGET MONITORING TO 30 JUNE 2017

The Council's own build 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.

9.1 Projected Surplus/Deficit

There are no projected variances to report, as at June. The budgeted net surplus of £35,970 is still projected to be achieved during 2017-18.

MU Code	Management Unit	Budget Variance Overspend / (Underspend)	Explanation
85B5	COB	£0	There are no significant variances from budget to report at this stage. However, the recovery of lost rental income and additional costs in previous financial years whilst snagging issues were resolved at Knights Place form part of a claim to the

			main contractor and have been highlighted as an area of budgetary risk.
--	--	--	---

10. How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan?

The Housing Revenue Account contributes to two key purposes, as set out in the Corporate Plan; help me find somewhere suitable to live and maintain our property assets.

11. What risks are there and how can they be reduced?

Areas of budgetary risk are highlighted to committee as part of the quarterly budget monitoring updates. Appendix 1 sets out the risks identified, as at June.

In addition to individual areas of budgetary risk, the HRA is facing a broader financial risk in respect of the High Value Assets Levy, which may require the Council to make a payment to the Government in respect of its 'high value' housing. Due to the uncertainty regarding the definition of 'high value' and calculation of the levy payable, it is considered prudent to increase the HRA contingency from £3,000,000 to £4,000,000 over the medium term.

12. What is the impact of the decision on equality and diversity; health and wellbeing; safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults, community safety and the environment?

No impact

13. Are there any other options?

No

Chief Finance Officer

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

Background papers used in compiling this report:

None

Contact for enquiries:
Democratic Services (Committees)
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AREAS OF BUDGETARY RISK**APPENDIX 1**

A number of areas of budgetary risk have been identified within the HRA, as follows:

Budget Title	Approved Budget	Risk
General Maintenance	£1,770,000 (revenue)	The volatility of the level of reported faults due to factors beyond the control of the Council, for example adverse weather conditions represent a budgetary risk. The impact of property inspections undertaken by the Housing Customer Team may also lead to the identification of additional repairs.
Repairs to Void Properties	£1,172,910 (revenue)	Property turnover and the varying condition of properties when returned to the Council represent a budgetary risk.
Rental Income from Dwellings	£18,810,000 (revenue)	Right to Buy sales, number of new tenancies set at convergence rent levels, number of days lost through major works, rent lost in respect of void properties and welfare reform changes (for which an increased bad debt provision has been made) all impact on the annual rental income. However, rental income after the first 3 months is currently in line with budget expectations.
Adaptations	£450,000 (capital)	Demand for adaptations was ahead of profile for the first 3 months with works undertaken to help support the vulnerable to live independently. It is hoped that a procurement appraisal will enable demand to continue to be met but with cost efficiencies.
Rennes House Refurbishment	£550,000 (capital)	Planned works at Rennes House are pending the outcomes of an options appraisal for the block of flats. Spend of the 2017-18 budget, which is intended for lift replacements, is therefore a budgetary risk.
Knights Place	No budget (capital)	Significant works have been required to resolve water penetration issues at Knights Place and the costs and associated lost rental income form part of a claim to the main contractor.

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HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNTS BUDGET MONITORING 2017-18

APPENDIX 2

APRIL 2017 TO JUNE 2017

ACTUAL TO DATE			YEAR END FORECAST			
PROFILED BUDGET	ACTUAL TO DATE	VARIANCE TO DATE	Code	APPROVED BUDGET	Qrt 1 FORECAST VARIANCE	CURRENT OUTTURN FORECAST
£	£	£		£	£	£
176,872	133,007	(43,865)	85A1 MANAGEMENT	1,060,395	(32,700)	1,027,695
288,969	277,696	(11,273)	85A2 HOUSING CUSTOMERS	1,299,180	39,200	1,338,380
113,956	44,464	(69,492)	85A3 SUNDRY LAND MAINTENANCE	538,660	(9,000)	529,660
1,647,058	970,528	(676,530)	85A4 REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME	6,148,870	(275,000)	5,873,870
0	0	0	85A5 REVENUE CONTRIBUTION TO CAPITAL	6,496,640	(2,700,000)	3,796,640
0	0	0	85A6 CAPITAL CHARGES	2,935,930	0	2,935,930
337,698	263,602	(74,096)	85A7 HOUSING ASSETS	1,445,000	(155,450)	1,289,550
(5,627,948)	(5,714,386)	(86,439)	85A8 RENTS	(19,295,820)	0	(19,295,820)
0	0	0	85B2 INTEREST	1,858,760	(80,000)	1,778,760
			85B4 MOVEMENT TO/(FROM) WORKING BALANCE	(2,487,615)	3,212,950	725,335
			Net Expenditure	0	0	0
			Working Balance 1 April 2017	8,567,454	31 March 2018	9,292,789

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COUNCIL OWN BUILD SITES

PROFILED BUDGET	ACTUAL TO DATE	VARIANCE TO DATE	Code	APPROVED BUDGET	Qrt 1 FORECAST VARIANCE	CURRENT OUTTURN FORECAST
£	£	£		£	£	£
2,335	1,763	(572)	H005 MANAGEMENT	14,120	0	14,120
(3,126)	(2,967)	159	H006 ROWAN HOUSE	(10,480)	0	(10,480)
(16,620)	(18,535)	(1,915)	H007 KNIGHTS PLACE	(59,550)	0	(59,550)
0	0	0	H008 INTEREST	6,980	0	6,980
0	0	0	H009 CAPITAL CHARGES	12,960	0	12,960
			H010 MOVEMENT TO/(FROM) WORKING BALANCE	35,970	0	35,970
			Net Expenditure	0	0	0
			Working Balance 1 April 2017	208,097	31 March 2018	244,067

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APPENDIX 3

HRA AVAILABLE RESOURCES

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT	2017-18 £	2018-19 £	2019-20 £	2020-21 £	TOTAL £
CAPITAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE					
Usable Receipts Brought Forward					5,607,226
Major Repairs Reserve Brought Forward					8,719,199
Other HRA Sales	172,364	0	0	0	172,364
RTB sales	1,250,000	500,000	500,000	400,000	2,650,000
Surrender back to DCLG - pending St Loyes financing decision	(2,870,000)	0	0	0	(2,870,000)
Major Repairs Reserve	2,935,930	2,935,930	2,935,930	2,935,930	11,743,720
Revenue Contributions to Capital	3,796,642	7,196,555	2,500,000	2,500,000	15,993,197
External contributions	203,328	404,259	0	0	607,587
Grant funding - HCA grant (St Loyes)	0	1,490,000	0	0	1,490,000
Grant funding - Estate Regeneration Funding	1,295,000	0	0	0	1,295,000
Grant funding - Zero Energy Buildings Project	0	216,000	0	0	216,000
Commutated sums	556,840	4,883,211	487,169	155,976	6,083,196
Total Resources available	7,340,104	17,625,955	6,423,099	5,991,906	51,707,489
CAPITAL PROGRAMME					
HRA Capital Programme	19,999,900	17,711,000	7,289,164	5,897,814	50,897,878
June - Overspends / (Savings)	(938,184)				(938,184)
June - Slippage / Re-profiling	(7,454,091)	6,621,455	676,657	155,979	0
Total Housing Revenue Account	11,607,625	24,332,455	7,965,821	6,053,793	49,959,694
UNCOMMITTED CAPITAL RESOURCES:					
Usable Receipts Brought Forward	5,607,226	1,293,114	793,114	793,114	5,607,226
Major Repairs Reserve Brought Forward	8,719,199	8,765,790	2,559,290	1,016,568	8,719,199
Resources in Year	7,340,104	17,625,955	6,423,099	5,991,906	37,381,064
Less Estimated Spend	(11,607,625)	(24,332,455)	(7,965,821)	(6,053,793)	(49,959,694)
Uncommitted Capital Resources	10,058,904	3,352,404	1,809,682	1,747,795	1,747,795
WORKING BALANCE RESOURCES:					
Balance Brought Forward	8,567,454	9,292,789	5,730,461	6,552,180	8,567,454
HRA Balance Transfer - Surplus/(Deficit)	(2,487,615)	(593,112)	821,719	594,774	(1,664,234)
RCCO in respect of St Loyes Extra Care Scheme	2,700,000	(2,700,000)			0
June budget monitoring - forecast variances	512,950	(269,216)			243,734
Balance Carried Forward	9,292,789	5,730,461	6,552,180	7,146,954	7,146,954
Balance Resolved to be Retained	(4,000,000)	(4,000,000)	(4,000,000)	(4,000,000)	(4,000,000)
Uncommitted HRA Working Balance	5,292,789	1,730,461	2,552,180	3,146,954	3,146,954
TOTAL AVAILABLE CAPITAL RESOURCES	15,351,693	5,082,865	4,361,862	4,894,749	4,894,749

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APPENDIX 4

**2017-18
CAPITAL MONITORING TO 30 JUNE 2017**

	2017-18 Capital Programme	2017-18 Spend	2017-18 Forecast Spend	2017-18 Budget to be Carried Forward to Future Years	2017-18 Programme Variances Under ()
	£	£	£	£	£
HRA CAPITAL					
EVERYONE HAS A HOME					
Adaptations	450,000	101,875	450,000		0
Environmental Improvements - General	50,760	3,862	50,760		0
Programmed Re-roofing	1,190,300	0	400,300	790,000	0
Energy Conservation	190,000	0	190,000		0
Garage Upgrades	100,000	0	11,000	89,000	0
LAINGS Refurbishments	887,770	0	640,000	247,770	0
Kitchen Replacement Programme	587,500	44,093	587,500		0
Balcony Walkway Improvements	105,000	0	75,000	30,000	0
Bathroom Replacements Programme	462,500	9,377	462,500		0
Other Works	50,000	0	50,000		0
Fire Precautionary Works to Flats	231,090	46,002	231,090		0
Communal Areas	158,980	763	126,980	32,000	0
Structural Repairs	189,430	400	189,430		0
Rennes House Structural Works	550,000	0	550,000		0
Common Area Footpath/Wall Improvements	864,370	0	514,370	350,000	0
Soil Vent Pipe Replacement	25,500	0	25,500		0
Electrical Central Heating	19,120	0	19,120		0
Smoke/Fire Alarms - Older Persons	100,000	43,515	84,250		(15,750)
Electrical Re-wiring	2,011,300	49,207	1,073,870	15,000	(922,430)
Central Heating Programme	167,540	9,120	167,540		0
Boiler Replacement Programme	357,000	19,924	123,200	233,800	0
Communal Door & Screens	301,870	0	70,000	231,870	0
Fire Risk Assessment Works	434,550	0	434,550		0
Whipton Barton House Water Mains	50,000	0	50,000		0
Re-roofing Works Shillhay	839,840	35,922	839,840		0
Window Replacements	746,000	0	246,000	500,000	0
Replacement Housing Management System	175,100	175,096	175,096		(4)
HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT TOTAL	11,295,520	539,156	7,837,896	2,519,440	(938,184)
COUNCIL OWN BUILD CAPITAL					
COB Wave 2 - Rennes Car Park	2,264,470	346,710	2,264,470		0
St Loyes ExtraCare	3,846,370	25,229	151,719	3,694,651	0
Acquisition of Social Housing - Section 106	298,540	50,041	58,540	240,000	0
Acquisition of Social Housing - Open Market	1,000,000	0		1,000,000	0
Estate Regeneration - Heavitree (COB Wave III)	585,640	9,371	585,640		0
Estate Regeneration - Heavitree (Clifford Close)	166,950	0	166,950		0
Estate Regeneration - Heavitree (Vaughan Road)	286,060	0	286,060		0
Estate Regeneration - Heavitree (South Street)	256,350	0	256,350		0
COUNCIL OWN BUILD TOTAL	8,704,380	431,351	3,769,729	4,934,651	0
OVERALL HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT TOTAL	19,999,900	970,507	11,607,625	7,454,091	(938,184)

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REPORT TO: PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting: 7 SEPTEMBER 2017
Report of: Chief Finance Officer
Title: Budget Monitoring Report to 30 June 2017

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Executive

1. What is the report about?

This report advises Members of any material differences to the approved budget in respect of the People Scrutiny Committee revenue and capital budgets.

Potential areas of budgetary risk are also highlighted in this report, so that Members are aware that certain budgets have been identified as being vulnerable to factors beyond the control of the Council, which may result in potential deviations from budget, and are therefore subject to close monitoring by officers.

2. Recommendations:

That Members of People Scrutiny Committee note the content of this report in order to be satisfied that prudent steps are being taken to address the key areas of budgetary pressure highlighted in this report.

3. Reasons for the recommendation:

Local authorities have a statutory duty to set and monitor their budgets during the year and to take any actions necessary because of potential overspending or potential shortfalls in income. Members are therefore presented with a quarterly financial update in respect of People Services.

4. What are the resource implications including non financial resources

The financial resources required to deliver People Services during 2017/18 are set out in the body of this report.

5. Section 151 Officer comments:

This report has been prepared on behalf of the Section 151 Officer to set out the projected financial position of People Services as at 31 March 2018.

6. What are the legal aspects?

Part 2 of the Local Government Act 2003 provides the legislative framework for the process of setting and managing budgets. In particular, Section 28 of the 2003 Act requires local authorities to monitor their budgets during the financial year.

7. Monitoring Officer's comments:

This reports raises no issues for the Monitoring Officer.

8. Report Details:

Revenue Budget Monitoring to 30 June 2017

8.1 Key Variations from Budget

The current forecast suggests that net expenditure for this committee will increase from the approved budget by a total of £28,570 after transfers from reserves and revenue

contributions to capital, as detailed in Appendix 1. This represents a variation of 1.03% from the revised budget. This includes a supplementary budget of £178,300 already agreed by Council.

8.2 No significant variances or issues concerning expenditure or income have arisen for this committee this quarter.

9. Capital Budget Monitoring to 30 June 2017

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

9.1 Revisions to the People Capital Programme

The 2017/18 Capital Programme, including commitments brought forward from 2016/17, was last reported to Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee on 22 June 2017. Since that meeting the following changes have been made to the programme:

Description	£	Approval/Funding
Capital Programme, as reported to Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee, 22 June 2017	1,409,050	
Disabled Facilities Grants	288,160	Additional funding awarded from the Better Care Fund
Revised Capital Programme	1,697,210	

9.2 Performance

The current People Capital Programme is detailed in Appendix 2. The appendix shows a total spend of £120,135 in 2017/18.

9.3 Capital Variances from Budget

No significant variances or issues concerning expenditure have arisen for this committee.

9.4 Capital Budgets Deferred to 2018/19

No significant amounts have been identified as being wholly or partly deferred to 2018/19 and beyond.

10. How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan?

People Committee contributes to 5 key purposes, as set out in the Corporate Plan: Customer access to help me with my housing and financial problem, make it easy for me to pay, provide suitable housing and be a good landlord.

11. What risks are there and how can they be reduced?

Areas of budgetary risk are highlighted in this report. The key areas of budgetary risks within People Scrutiny Committee are attached as Appendix 3, for reference.

12. What is the impact of the decision on equality and diversity; health and wellbeing; safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults, community safety and the environment?

The revenue service costs reported to this Committee help support the provision of temporary accommodation, housing advice, licensing of houses of multiple occupation, new affordable housing within the City and the administration of housing benefits. All these

services have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of residents, in particular those in housing need.

In terms of capital expenditure, the 2017/18 capital programme helps facilitate disabled adaptations, energy efficiency measures and provide loans to return properties to a habitable standard. The capital schemes have a positive impact of the health and wellbeing of residents.

13. Are there any other options?

No

DAVE HODGSON
Chief Finance Officer

Authors:

Nicola Matthews-Morley and Michelle White

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

Background papers used in compiling this report:

None

Contact for enquiries:

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PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
BUDGET MONITORING

APRIL 2017 TO JUNE 2017

ACTUAL TO DATE			YEAR END FORECAST			
PROFILED BUDGET	ACTUAL TO DATE	VARIANCE TO DATE	CODE	APPROVED BUDGET	CURRENT OUTTURN FORECAST	FORECAST VARIANCE
£	£	£		£	£	£
245,838	230,653	(15,185)	81C2	1,044,810	1,044,810	0
143,957	138,847	(5,110)	81C3	265,400	293,970	28,570
16,385	17,033	648	81C4	100,960	100,960	0
87,790	87,790	0	81C5	87,790	87,790	0
228,461	267,385	38,924	81E1	91,180	91,180	0
382,915	479,794	96,879	86A1	1,194,870	1,194,870	0
1,105,346	1,221,502	116,156		2,785,010	2,813,580	28,570
			NET EXPENDITURE			

TRANSFERS TO / (FROM) EARMARKED RESERVES

0

OVERALL FORECAST EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR AFTER MOVEMENTS TO/FROM RESERVES	2,813,580
REVISED BUDGETS	2,785,010
ADJUSTED OUTTURN VARIANCE	28,570

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CAPITAL MONITORING TO 30 JUNE 2017

	2017/18 Capital Programme	2017/18 Spend to 30 June	2017/18 Forecast Spend	2017/18 Budget to be Carried Forward to 2018/19 and Beyond	2017/18 Programme Variances (Under)/Over
	£	£	£	£	£
PEOPLE					
<i>HELP ME FIND SOMEWHERE TO LIVE</i>					
Disabled Facility Grants	685,820	54,381	685,820		
Warm Up Exeter/PLEA Scheme	124,620	43,846	124,620		
Wessex Loan Scheme	107,820	21,908	107,820		
WHIL Empty Properties	194,000	0	194,000		
Temporary Accommodation Purchase	584,950	0	584,950		
PEOPLE TOTAL	1,697,210	120,135	1,697,210	0	0

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AREAS OF BUDGETARY RISK

The table below identifies areas that have been identified as a budgetary risk within the People Scrutiny Committee revenue budgets.

The revenue budget areas of risk are:

Budget Title	Approved Budget	Risk
Revenue Collection/Benefits – Housing Benefit Subsidy	£38,248,080	The Council administers over £38 million of Housing Benefit Subsidy for rent allowances and rent rebates. The claiming of subsidy is based on cost and administering within timescales varied from time to time by the Government. If timescales are not met, administrative errors minimised and overpayments reduced, there is a risk of paying out for Housing Benefit and only receiving a partial reimbursement of subsidy.

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REPORT TO PEOPLES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 7th September 2017

Report of: DIRECTOR

Title: SafeSleep 2016/17 and future plans for 2017/18 – INFORMATION ONLY

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Information only

1. What is the report about?

To provide members with review of the 2016/17 SafeSleep Shelter in Market Street, Exeter.

2. Recommendations:

The Executive note the contents of the SafeSleep report and the recommendations that will be used to inform future service delivery.

3. Reasons for the recommendation:

The provision of the SafeSleep shelter attracted significant attention from the Public and media. This report highlights the successes and learning from the Shelter to inform future provision.

4. What are the resource implications including non financial resources.

The operational cost of SafeSleep was £60,000, although this does not take into account the cost of staff time in setting up rent accounts and processing Housing Benefit claims. The Council provides an annual budget contribution of £28,000 towards the scheme. The remaining £32,000 costs are met through rental income through housing benefit payments and grants from Devon County Council and the Exeter Community Safety Partnership. There is no recommendation to change the Exeter City Council budget contribution for 2017/18.

This year the service will be subject to a procurement exercise. The internal resources needed to monitor this and administer housing benefit to an external agency will be reviewed at the end of the scheme to compare to the 2016/17 experience

5. Section 151 Officer comments:

There are no additional financial implications for the Council contained within this report.

6. What are the legal aspects?

Whilst there is no statutory duty to provide a winter shelter, there is government guidance about severe weather. The guidance advises that local authorities should have a Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEPE) for when there are 3 consecutive nights of sub-zero temperatures occur, or during times of wider extreme weather events. The Council uses Red / Amber weather alerts issued by Met Office to determine these thresholds. The guidance also highlights the option of extended winter provision. This is where a service is provided for a longer period to increase engagement and reduce the impact of services needing to respond at short notice. SafeSleep is an example of 'extended winter provision' as partners struggle to respond in an ad hoc emergency basis for SWEPE. .

Moving forward we will be procuring this years' service in line with Council procedures, future years will be included within the future outreach contract which will be due to be procured in early 2018.

7. Monitoring Officer's comments:

No issues raised.

8. Report details:

Please see attached report from 2016-2017

Highlights:-

- SafeSleep opened on 21st December 2016 and closed after 90 nights on 20th March 2017.
- Safesleep provided 1909 bed nights of accommodation to 36 individual homeless women (25%) and 107 individual homeless men (75%).
- Occupancy averaged at 21 people per night with a recorded high of 31 and a low of 12.
- 78% of those accommodated had a Local Connection to Exeter (63%) or Devon (15%) 4 clients were non British EU Nationals
- Clients ranged in age between 17 and 73. With 76% of clients, where age was known, in the age range 18-44
- 65 clients (45%) achieved positive move on to more settled sustainable accommodation. 34 clients had negative outcome including returning to the streets, prison, hospital or death. 44 clients had unknown outcomes – predominantly moving out of area.

Lessons to be learned

The three most challenging aspects of delivering Exeter SafeSleep 2016-17 were:

- Failure to secure a venue for the service, with relevant planning consents until early December, after the project was due to have commenced. In future years a suitable building needs to be agreed no later than September allowing two month lead in to deliver a more effective service.
- Lack of onsite day facilities. This was not possible due to limits of the location and planning consents required. Ability to deliver some day services from a SafeSleep venue would increase client engagement, offer diversionary activity away from less positive behaviours, provide space for specialist agencies to come and engage with hard to reach clients and further contribute preservation of life and health during very cold weather. The additional benefit would also be that on site staff during the day could manage access for contractors and liaise better with services and delivery companies.
- Limited use of volunteers, again a feature of limited lead in time and changes in management of the Assertive Homeless Outreach Team, which occurred as the service was due to commence. Developing a good pool of trained and well supported volunteers would be an enormous asset to SafeSleep. With volunteers able to support staff with administration, housekeeping tasks and providing meals and also being able to work directly with clients through positive social activities, befriending and supporting. Volunteers are also valuable as a conduit for positive publicity across a wide cross section of society, creating further interest and buy in to valuable projects addressing key social challenges.

9. How does the decision contribute to the Council’s Corporate Plan?

Safesleep contributes towards the Corporate plan by meeting the following objectives:-

- Continuing to provide support to the community and voluntary sector to achieve a range of positive outcomes for our communities through co-design and co-delivery.
- Working with Partners to tackle rough sleeping
- Implementing homelessness Strategy
- Finding alternative models of temporary accommodation.

10. What risks are there and how can they be reduced?

There is a risk that future provision will not be viable due to lack of suitable venue or provider. The Housing Needs Team will continue to work with partners to secure viable options where appropriate.

11. What is the impact of the decision on equality and diversity; health and wellbeing; safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults, community safety and the environment?

SafeSleep is very much an inclusive service, it provides accommodation and support to people who do not usually receive services. The environmental and community safety impact was lower than the public had been concerned about due to the due diligence in the planning and management of the project.

12. Are there any other options?

No

Bindu Arjoon, Director

Report written by Chris Stocks, Housing Needs Strategy and Partnership Lead

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

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

Exeter SafeSleep Project Report

Contact for enquires:

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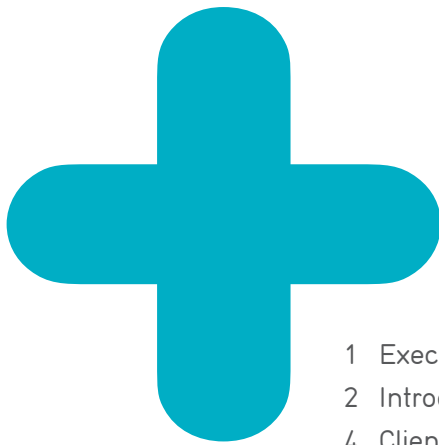
Julian House is a charity with limited liability – registered as a society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 Registered No. 19305R



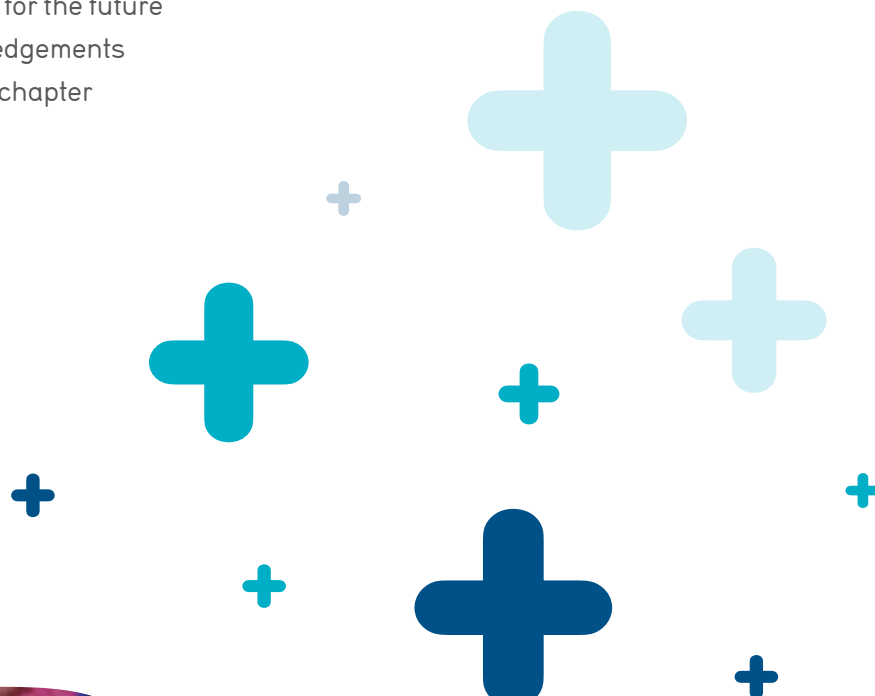
Exeter SafeSleep

Project Report 2016/17





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Exeter SafeSleep was commissioned by Exeter City Council and delivered by Julian House in order to provide 90 nights of hostel accommodation during the coldest months of winter and prevent rough sleepers from the risk of death on the streets.

The purpose of the shelter was to provide safe, dry, warm accommodation for rough sleepers, based on principles of client direct access, not requiring referral or assessment in order to make use of the facility

To promote continued stay and engagement as a means to reduce rough sleeping in Exeter and surrounding Authorities and begin processes and enact plans to move individual clients to longer term sustainable accommodation.

The service was delivered in a former shop on Market Street, which required temporary Change Of Use Planning Consent, which was unanimously approved by the Exeter City Council Planning Committee.

The service delivered on its ambitions to provide inclusive safe accommodation for rough sleepers, reduce rough sleeping and provide move on pathways away from the streets.

Whilst the overall impact of SafeSleep has been positive there were challenges for local neighbours, the police and St Petrocks, caused by volume of clients and the enforced closing time of 08:00.

SafeSleep was well supported by the Council and by a wide range of statutory and voluntary services, as well as by the general public and community groups.

- SafeSleep opened on 21st December 2016 and closed after 90 nights on 20th March 2017.
- SafeSleep provided 1909 bed nights of accommodation to 36 individual homeless women (25%) and 107 individual homeless men (75%).
- Occupancy averaged at 21 people per night with a recorded high of 31 and a low of 12.
- 78% of those accommodated had a Local Connection to Exeter (63%) or Devon (15%) 4 clients were non British EU Nationals
- Clients ranged in age between 17 and 73. With 76% of clients, where age was known, in the age range 18-44
- 41% of clients were “New to the streets”, 27% were “Returners” and 32% “Entrenched”
- 65 clients achieved positive move on to more settled sustainable accommodation. 34 clients had negative outcome including returning to the streets, prison, hospital or death. 44 clients had unknown outcomes – predominantly moving out of area.

Client feedback on the service was largely positive, with most people favouring a single venue, but also requesting extended opening as a day service.

Stakeholder feedback presented a range of views which were generally positive although also reflected the impact of unintended consequence of SafeSleep on their own service delivery.

Recommendations include, earlier planning and a longer lead in time at an identified venue. Securing a venue where day activities are also possible. Greater use of volunteers to help deliver the service. Increased staffing to help more clients achieve positive outcomes



John Isserlis
Operations Director

During the last five years and in common with the National and South West of England trend, Exeter has seen a steep rise in numbers of people counted as Rough Sleeping during annual verified Single Night Counts or Estimates.

The South West region has seen a greater percentage increase in rough sleeping than any other area outside of London.

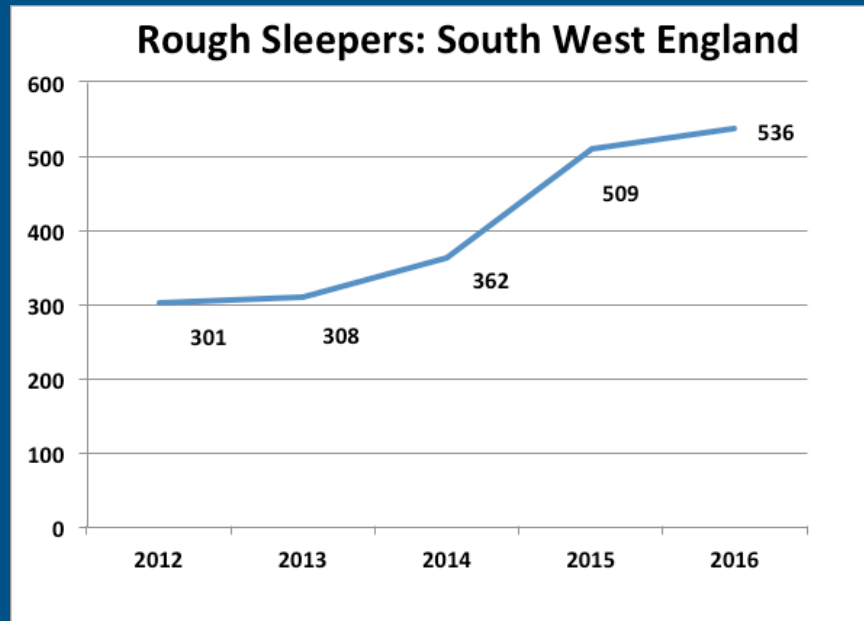
Exeter City Council, Community Safety Partnership, the business community, the public and providers of services to homeless people have all recognised the growing need and the requirement for creative solutions to address it.

In 2015-16 Exeter City Council took the bold step of commissioning its first Winter SafeSleep provision for rough sleepers.

The first SafeSleep was provided at two sites by Bournemouth Churches Housing Association at their Gabriel House Hostel and by St Petrocks at their Day Centre.

The service was successful in consistently providing accommodation for up to 25 rough sleepers during the winter months and in securing significant number of moves into more permanent accommodation for those who used the emergency accommodation.

Due to health and safety considerations neither site was



able to offer fully open access to all the clients who were sleeping on the streets of Exeter.

During SafesSleep 2015-16 there was a consistent list of 20 or more people who were excluded from accessing the service, by virtue of their perceived risk to other clients or staff.

Last year the Outreach Team focussed on feedback from people who had accessed SafeSleep and also from those who had continued to sleep on the streets, but could have accessed accommodation, they consistently cited early curfew as a primary reason for not using the accommodation available.

In developing a model for SafeSleep 2016-17 Julian House wanted to provide an open access service, which did not require referral or prior assessment.

A service which was accessible to clients who were currently sleeping on the streets, where risk was assessed and effectively managed within the hostel and

where permanent exclusion was reserved for only the most dangerous of individuals and where temporary exclusion was used as a tool to maintain safety when required but was also used to promote and allow re-engagement with the service.

Having listened to the feedback from clients in 2015-16 we were also keen to put in place a far later curfew and so allow those who would not access the service earlier in the evening an opportunity to use the hostel on their terms.

Local hostels have a very controlled approach to allowing client's dogs access to services. These controls are in place in order to reduce risk of spread of disease between dogs and to ensure that pet owners are taking proper responsibility for their dog.

Despite the good reasons for these controls being in place, they act as a barrier to access for some clients.

SafeSleep took a more relaxed attitude to dogs accompanying their owners and accessing the service. Our written Policy does not require prior checks on dogs, but is based around responsible ownership and active risk assessment within the building.

Due to the open nature of the hostel space, dog cages were available to be used, in order to create separation and safety for dogs and other residents.

Clients were able to have their dog sleep on their bed with them or next to their bed as they would do whilst living on the street.

Only one owner needed to use a cage for their dog for a few nights, in order to re-assure the animal and provide it with a safe space that it could retire to.

Clients with pets all demonstrated good ownership and care of their dogs and there were no issues with dogs during the operation of the service.

The eventually siting of the SafeSleep Hostel at 19 Market Street, was a late choice of venue and one which came with difficulties.

Although the building was in some senses ideally placed, in the heart of Exeter and in close proximity to Gabriel House and St Petrocks. And therefore in area which already is familiar to street homeless people in Exeter.

Exeter SafeSleep opened on 21st December. The service operated between 20:30 and 08:00 each night offering safe secure accommodation for people who would otherwise be sleeping on the streets of Exeter.

The service was staffed overnight by a newly employed Julian House team, with a minimum of two staff on duty at all times.

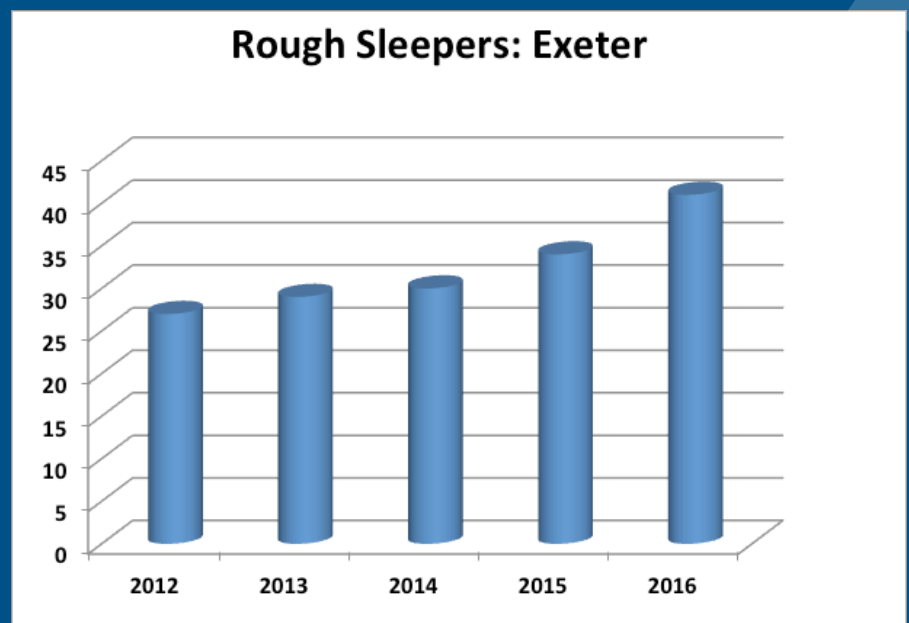
Between 20:30 and 24:00 a minimum of three staff were on duty often supplemented by Outreach team staff dropping in or planned sessions delivered through Exeter City Council Housing Options Team.

The curfew for SafeSleep was officially set at 23:30, although staff had discretion to use good judgement on a case by case basis to allow later entry.

SafeSleep had planned to open for 90 consecutive nights during the coldest winter months, offering respite from sleeping on the streets and preventing winter deaths amongst the rough sleeping population.

As well as providing a continuous nightly service, SafeSleep had the capacity to meet Authority needs to deliver required accommodation under the local Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP), triggered when three consecutive nights of sub zero temperatures occur.

The winter hostel opened for 89 of its planned 90 nights, providing the agreed level of service and finally closed its doors the on 20th March.



Client Demographics

SafeSleep offered equal access to men and women, with separate sleeping areas available to protect dignity and reduce risk.

The women's sleeping area was sited in the main room, closest to the staff station and in clear line of sight of staff on duty.

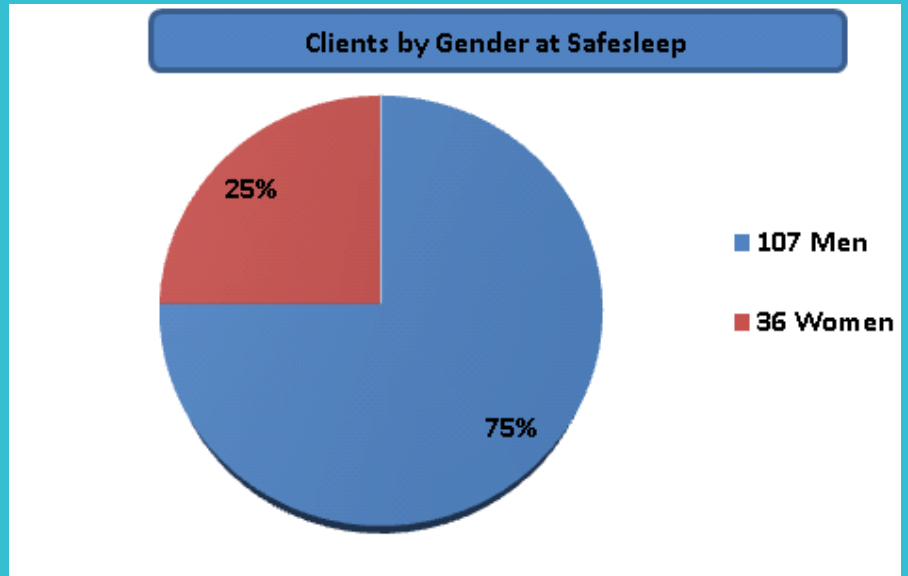
Male clients were prohibited from entering the female area and heterosexual couples were not able to share a space together.

Same sex couples who used SafeSleep presented a specific problem to staff, looking to safely manage the service, as naturally they would be sleeping in the same gender specific area and in beds which they chose to pull together.

The three self declared same sex couples were all made aware of expectations regarding appropriate behaviour in an open dormitory.

However their opportunity to share the same space and sleep close to each other brought about challenges from some of the heterosexual couples who wished to have the same opportunity.

During the summer and autumn of 2016, the Assertive Homeless



Outreach Team had recorded a significant increase in the number of women rough sleeping in Exeter.

This increase led to the creation of a specific Women Rough Sleeper Outreach Worker, funded by Exeter City Council.

The trend identified by the Assertive Outreach team has continued to be present and is evidenced by 25% of clients accessing SafeSleep being female.

A more typical representation of women within rough sleeping

populations in the UK would more typically be expected to be at closer to 15%.

Women's homelessness is a particularly challenging issue, often characterised by "hidden homelessness" and the not insignificant exposure to risk that single homeless women may take to secure a roof for the night.

Risks which although high are more acceptable to them than the potential dangers they face on the street.



Client age on access reflects a pattern regularly seen within age profiles of rough sleepers, in that the vast majority are aged between 18-45, with a marked decline in numbers of those aged over 45.

Within SafeSleep, where age was known (date of birth supplied and verified), 78% of all clients fell within the age range 18-44.

Two client aged 16 accessed SafeSleep, but were found

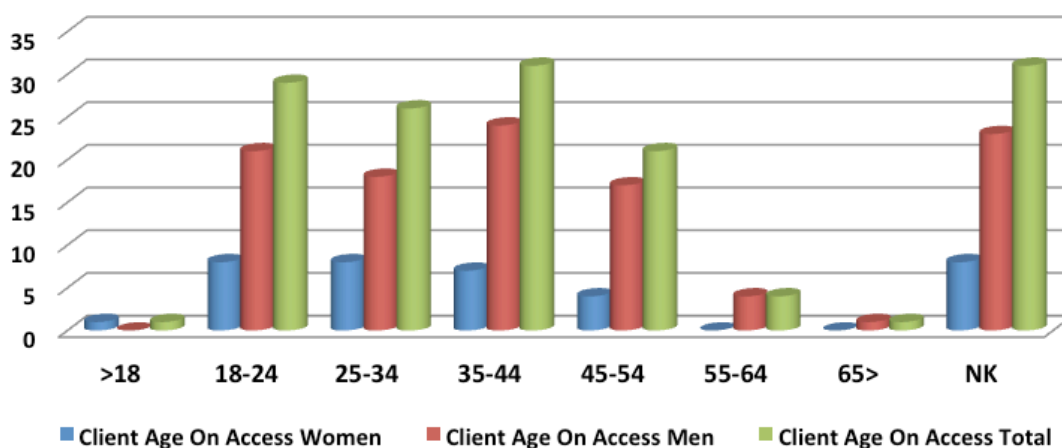
appropriate alternatives and did not stay the night, they are not included in the figures below.

The sharp decline in numbers of those aged above 45 is in part a reflection of early morbidity amongst rough sleepers.

Whilst life expectancy for rough sleeping men is still 47 and worse still for rough sleeping women at 43, the data masks the health inequalities which many homeless people face.

Part of the reason for overall reduction in rough sleeper numbers for those beyond their mid 40's is likely to be in large part a response to the presence of cumulative, co-morbid and chronic health issues, meaning that living on the streets is no longer possible without severe risk of hospitalisation or death occurring.

SafeSleep clients by age



Case Study

Male aged 23 from Lithuania RS for several months after losing employment and having no right to benefits. No dependency issues

Accessed local hostel but evicted shortly afterwards as housing benefits were not applicable due to failing Habitual Residency Test. Frequented local day centre for food and daily support. Accessed Safe Sleep and remained for 79 nights, this being his only option

Client acutely aware that had no options other than Safe Sleep to stay off the streets. He realised that to move forward he needed to find another job and private rented accommodation.

During SafeSleep support, client was actively able to look for work and accommodation. He found both and is currently working in a fast food outlet and has a room in a shared house

As pressure increases on Local Authorities to provide services and demands on the housing market can often not be met at a local level, Councils have adopted Local Connection Policy in respect of assessing right of access to accommodation through the Housing Register and relevant support that may be needed alongside this.

Whilst it was not the intention of SafeSleep to base right of access on the presence of a local connection, we recognise that importing rough sleepers to Exeter is not helpful, creates an additional burden of work on voluntary and statutory services and ultimately is not in the best interest of the individual in respect of moving away from a street based lifestyle.

SafeSleep provided open access to anyone presenting as homeless on the night and assessment helped to then determine whether or not the client had a local connection. Clients without local connection were informed of this and that the single service offer, they would receive, would be a planned re-connection to the area where they had a connection.

A planned re-connection is taken to mean referred into available accommodation and all reasonable effort made to ensure that appropriate support systems are in place in the receiving Authority.

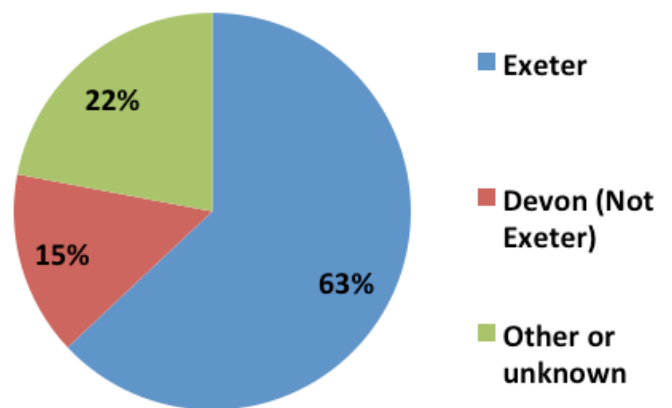
Where a client has no established local connection, due to long term transient lifestyle or similar factors, then the Assertive Outreach Team and Exeter Housing Options will seek to establish a local connection to the locality.

You will have a local connection if you:

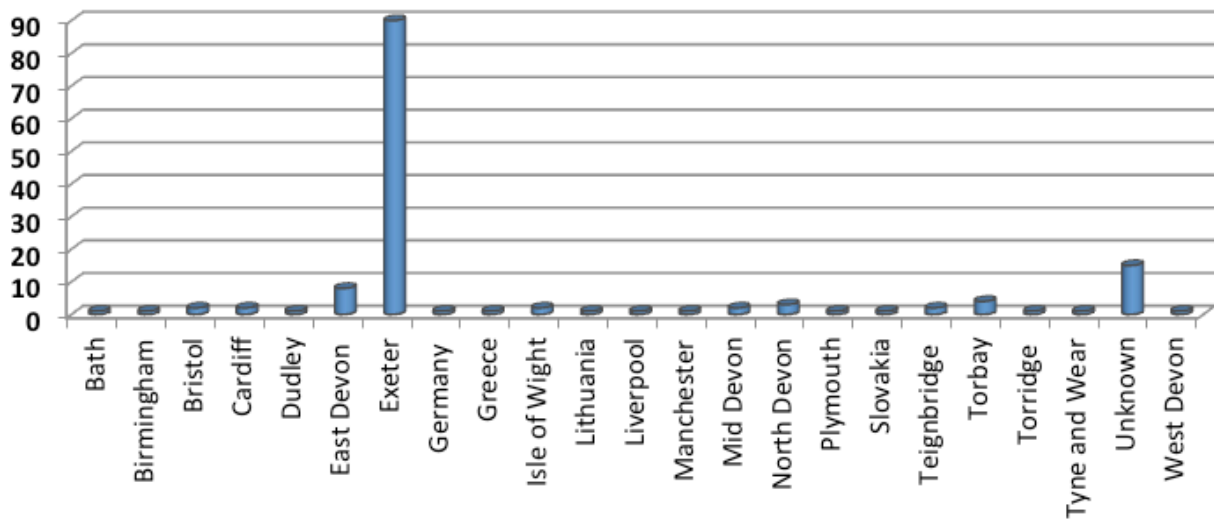
- Have lived in Exeter for 6 months out of the last year or 3 out of the last 5 years.
- Work in Exeter.
- Want to live near a close relative who has lived in Exeter for more than 5 years.
- Need to live in Exeter for a particular reason such as you or your family needing to go to a hospital here.

(Exeter City Council 2016)

Overview of Local Connection



Local Connection by Authority/Country



As seen in the table above the established Local Connection for those using SafeSleep is diverse, including 4 non British EU Nationals and people from Liverpool, Manchester and Tyne & Wear. However, the majority of clients have an established connection to Exeter or Devon as shown in the two tables below.

78% of clients have an established Local Connection to Exeter or Devon. Of the remaining 22% of

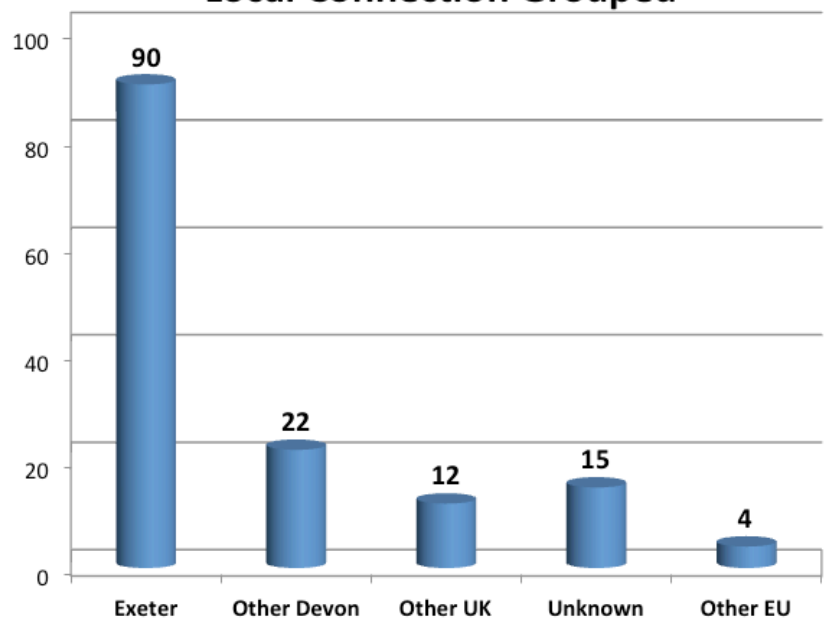
clients, nearly half have an “unknown” Local Connection and it should be assumed that some of these will either have a claim on connection to Exeter or wider Devon or have no Local Connection at all and a connection should be established within the Authority where they are assessed.

Reconnections of clients were made to their area of connection, including a flight back to Athens

for a Greek worker who had been injured at work and had no means of financially supporting himself in the UK.

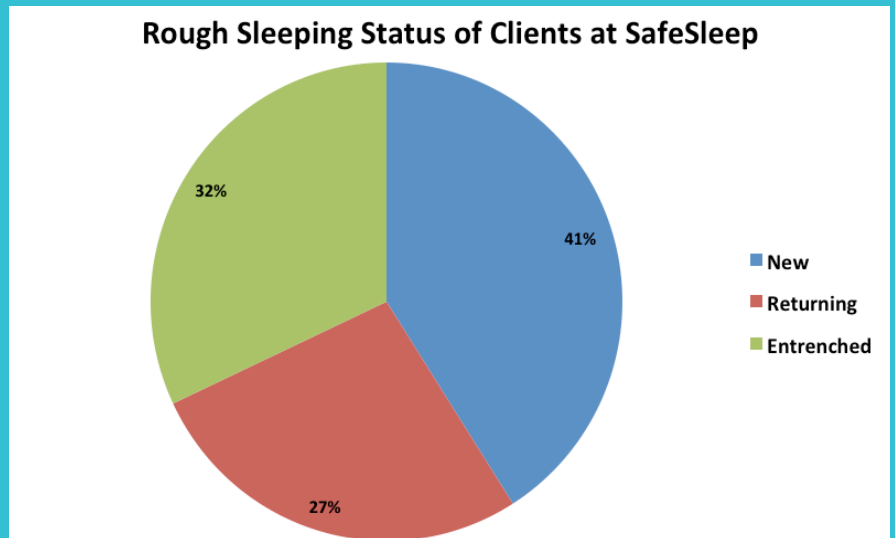
Fears that the open access approach adopted at SafeSleep would act as a magnet to rough sleepers from outside of the area have proved to be largely unfounded.

Local Connection Grouped



Client Rough Sleeping Profile

Nearly 60% of clients accessing SafeSleep were people who had a previous history of rough sleeping, either as longer term “entrenched” rough sleepers or those who have had prior episodes of street sleeping and are now returners to the streets. 60 new clients were seen, with nearly half of these staying for 5 nights or fewer.

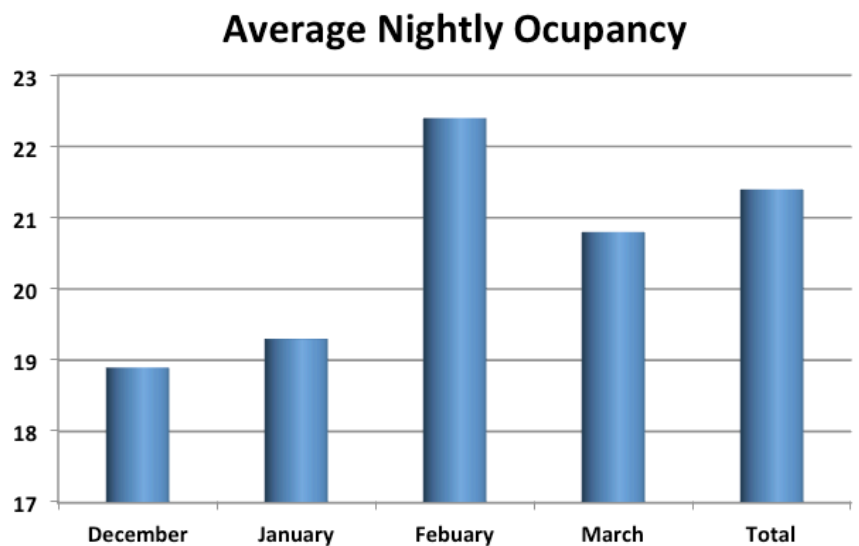


Occupancy & Usage

SafeSleep had capacity to accommodate up to 35 single homeless men and women on each night that it was open, with an additional stretch capacity of up to 40 if required during periods of SWEP. SafeSleep provided accommodation for 143 individual clients, 36 women and 107 men.

Average nightly occupancy across the 89 nights of service was 21.4 people per night, with a low of 12 clients on 6th January and a high of 31 clients reached on 7th March.

Typically occupancy on Friday and Saturday nights were lower than that during the rest of the week, reflecting increased opportunities to stay with friends, to socialise or to earn money through a busy night time economy.



SafeSleep provided 1909 bed nights of accommodation with the net effect of reducing visible rough sleeping on early morning and late evening homeless outreach sessions to low single figure or zero numbers throughout the operation of the winter hostel.

On some nights clients would access the service and then chose to leave and not return that night.

The individual client decision was sometimes related to confrontation or ongoing argument between themselves and other clients, a need to access drugs or money to buy drugs and sometimes the option of a friend's floor or sofa for the night.

At other times when clients left, the reasons were more difficult to fully understand, although some people made active choices to leave the building when they were wound up or angry in order to avoid confrontation and the risk of being excluded from the service.

Due to the policy of active engagement and implementation of only short term exclusions for breaches of rules at the hostel many clients sustained continuous multiple night stays within the service and through doing this increased their level of engagement and improved their options for referral into more permanent accommodation.

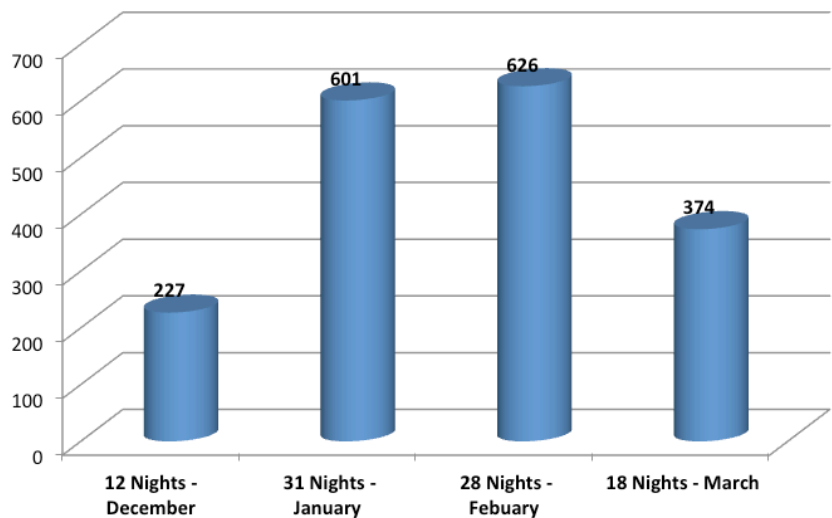
Of the 19 clients who stayed for only a single night 10 were New, 3 Entrenched and 6 were returners.

Of the 10 New clients in this group, one returned to their tenancy, one to Rough Sleeping

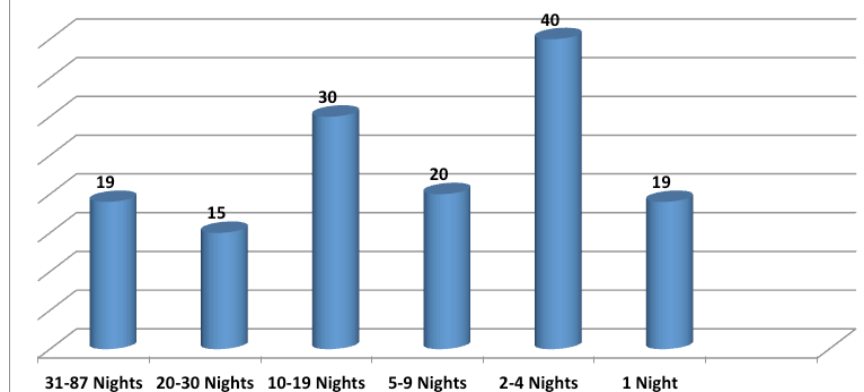
in East Devon and one has moved into a flat through Housing Options.

For the remaining 7 single night stay clients we have no record of what their move on was.

Total Bed Nights Utilised



No. of Nights Clients Accessed SafeSleep



As important as ensuring that those who would otherwise be living on the street could access SafeSleep, was the need to do all that we could to prevent return to the streets and provide first steps on a positive housing pathway for each client.

No one size solution is suitable for all clients and there were clients at SafeSleep who were a very long way from starting a journey to sustained accommodation.

The table above displays the wide range of outcomes achieved by clients following use and engagement with services at SafeSleep.

Sadly far to any of the outcomes are negative in nature e.g.

detention under Mental Health Act, imprisonment, return to the streets and death.

If “Unknown or Moved Away” outcomes are excluded then achievement of positive outcomes for clients is above 65%.

Evidence that focussed and sustained engagement can make a significant difference even with the hardest to reach and those with multiple and complex needs.

The 21 clients who returned to rough sleeping have mainly done this in Exeter and neighbouring Authority districts.

The Assertive Homeless Outreach Team has been

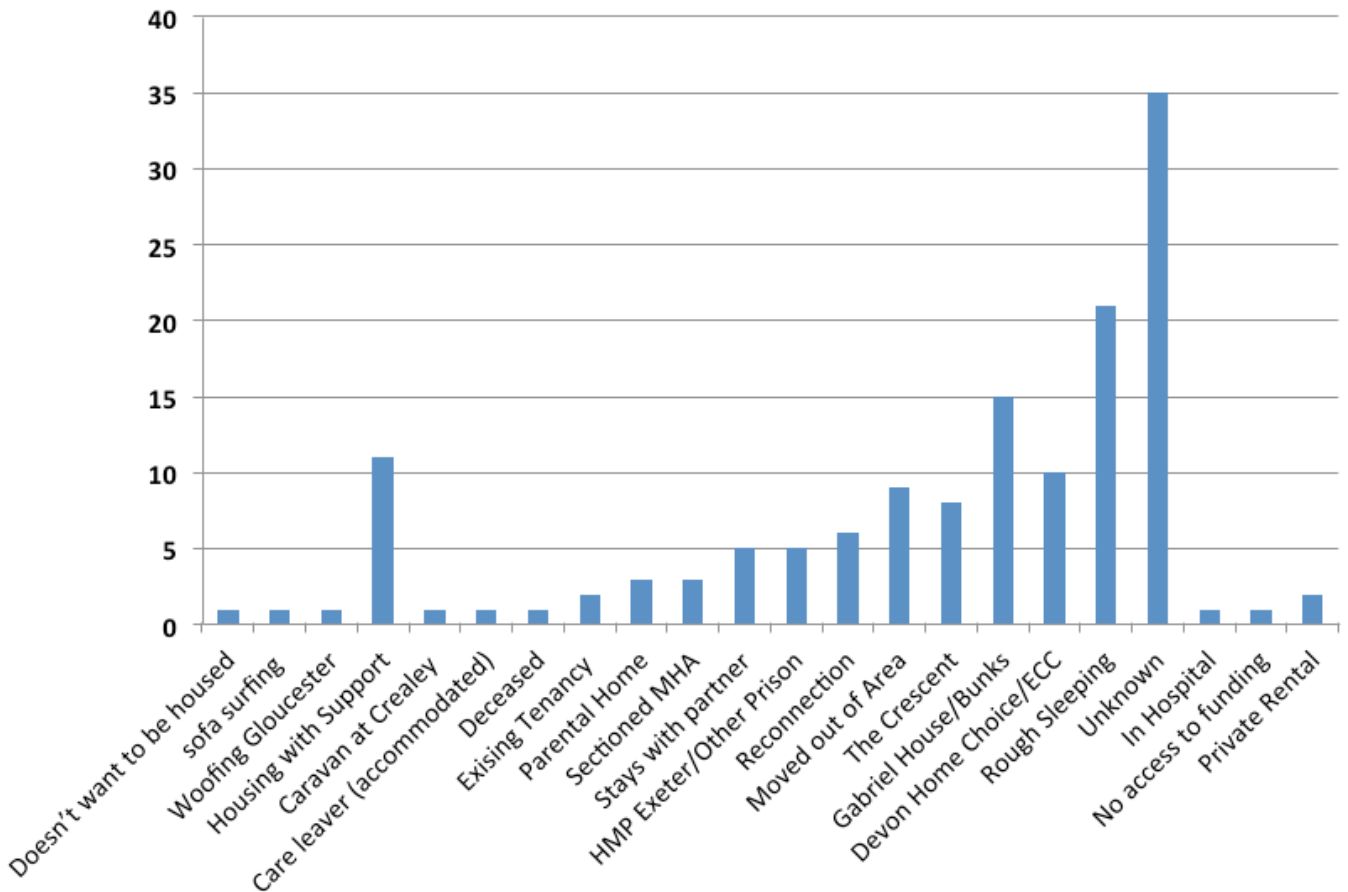
following up with these clients and trying to sustain a focus on moving away from the streets through active engagement with services.

One male client who had stayed with us on 87 out of a possible 89 nights has returned to the streets.

This older man has been offered a range of housing options but has chosen not to accept any of them.

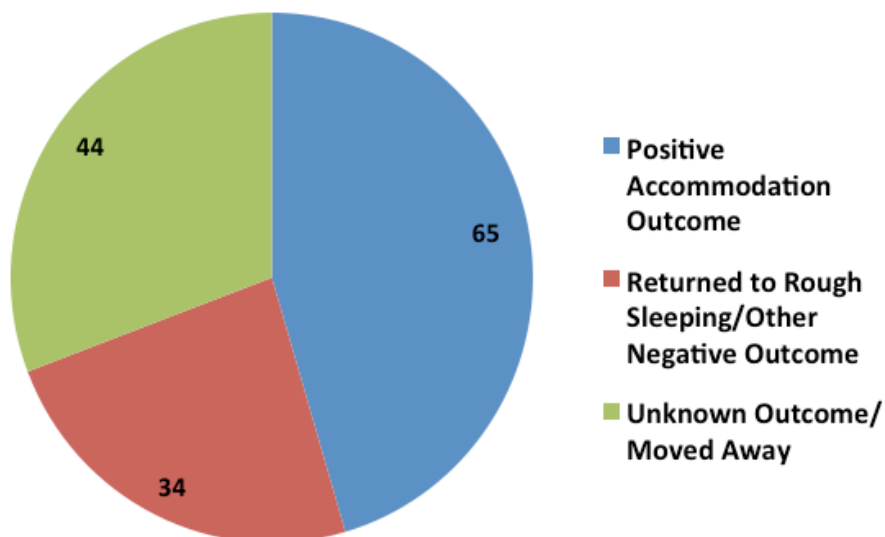
His primary reasons for rejecting good housing offers are that he would have to pay towards his housing costs and then pay costs within his accommodation.

Client Departure Outcomes



He liked SafeSleep as it provided, a warm bed, meals, showers and ash facilities and company he could engage with or remain separate from and at no financial cost to himself. Assertive Outreach and others will continue to offer him options for accommodation, with the best option likely to be shared housing with other men of a similar age and low level support needs.

Aggregated Client Outcomes



Case Study

43-year-old man with a history of returning to rough sleeping after relationship breakdowns. Low level mental health problems connected with alcohol misuse.

Accessed SafeSleep for 32 nights which provided client with stability and allowed outreach worker to engage more with him. Joint working with Probation and RISE provided client with consistent support.

Client had abandoned placements at the hostel on several occasions to return to ex-partner, only to end up homeless again when she kicked him out. Client wanted new start with different accommodation out of area to avoid repeating the same pattern. Also keen to reduce drinking and eventually get back into work.

Client referred and accepted by Alexandra House in Exmouth due to good engagement and outreach worker advocating on their behalf. Moved in on 20/03/17 and remains in accommodation. Continues to engage with Probation and RISE. Involved in meaningful occupation at current housing project.

Personalised female bed space



SafeSleep 2016-17 succeeded in;

- Reducing numbers of rough sleepers on the streets of Exeter and surrounding Authorities,
- Preventing deaths of rough sleepers on the streets due to cold weather
- Providing safe, secure accommodation
- Achieving a high level of positive outcomes for those who wished to take advantage of the support, links and signposting available.

SafeSleep posed challenges to the local community due to it being sited in an area where

rough sleeping, street attached lifestyles and the presence of Gabriel House and St Petrocks are already features of the immediate environment.

That said, the service was well managed and neighbour complaints raised with the team or management were at a very low level and were all addressed in a satisfactory manner.

The negative impact of SafeSleep was felt most strongly in the early morning, around 08:00 as clients left the hostel and made their way towards the Cathedral Green area and St Petrocks Day Centre.

The impact of this movement of people past an off licence and in

relative large numbers created problems at the Day Centre which ultimately led to it having to review its opening time.

The influx of clients at St Petrocks, became unmanageable at 08:00 and in order to reduce levels of confrontation and pressure the service moved to an 09:00 opening time.

Clients at SafeSleep had been, in most cases, abstinent from alcohol or their drug of choice overnight whilst in the hostel and where dependencies were present clients were driven to meet this need soon after leaving SafeSleep and on their way to St Petrocks, further adding to the presenting chaos on arrival.

Case Study

55 year old man with a history of entrenched rough sleeping in Exeter and East Devon. He has two diagnosed personality disorders. He is not medicated. He had no accommodation options. He is a high risk client that is part of the MAPPa process. He was evicted from his last accommodation for ASB.

Accessed SafeSleep for 44 nights and was furthered engaged through Assertive Homeless Outreach Team. AHOT assisted MH intervention whilst at Safe Sleep. AHOT looked at possible move on for this complex need client

Client was isolated, he now has a reasonable working relationship with an Outreach worker. Development of a trusting and empathic relationship with the client has allowed him to develop a belief that support is available and that people are interested in him.

Client has moved towns, the last town, he was presenting with ASB, he was accommodated by night at Safe sleep. The AHOT team engaged with him to ask him to access Safe sleep.

Client has had an extensive assessment completed for access to housing.

Client was moved on into accommodation that was suggested through the MAPPa process.

He is now registered with the Clocktower surgery, taken by SafeSleep member of staff.

He has engaged with the GP around possible other medication he will take to increase his chances of sustaining accommodation. Ongoing work with AHOT is in place.

Accommodating typically 25 or more clients each night was testing for the staff team in a building which had been rapidly set up and lacked a containment space at the entrance to the building which would have provided a better filter for those coming in.

The creation of this sort of containment space allows for better initial risk assessment on an individual basis and the ability for staff to make decisions about access at the door rather than inside the building, which can be less manageable.

There was widespread support for SafeSleep from across communities and organisations in Exeter and as a result the service benefitted from high levels of donations of food, blankets, toiletries and clothing from across the community.

The set up of the service received great support from Smile at a Stranger, who provided furniture, bedding, kitchen equipment and tables.

SafeSleep was also the recipient of very generous investment by the Pret Foundation who took our shopping list for Camp Beds, Sleeping Bags, High Quality Microwaves and the essential Tea Urn and arranged delivery to us in readiness to start the service.

Meals at the project were largely created based on donations and cooked by staff and volunteers and through the generosity of the Salvation Army, St Davids Church and other community groups who came and delivered meals to the site, ensuring that clients had varied, sustaining hot food on each night.

It had been hoped that member groups within the Exeter Soup Kitchen Network would be able to provide a support to create and serve meals each night of

An unexpected donation at SafeSleep



the week and reduce the draw of their meals service in other parts of the city.

Members of the network didn't all feel able to commit to this involvement as many of the people they provide meals to are not from within the homeless community and so delivering their service at SafeSleep would have meant its removal from others who rely upon it.

One area where SafeSleep was not able to deliver as it had hoped was in respect of creating a good pool of volunteers to support the employed staff at the service.

Several factors played into this, most significantly the loss of the Outreach Manager shortly before the hostel opened and interim management arrangements which meant that there was less overall capacity to recruit, process and train volunteers.

Although there were many volunteer offers, without suitable induction and training there was a risk that staff would have spent their time supporting and guiding volunteers rather than focussing

on maintaining a safe and orderly service for clients.

The volunteers who were able to come and work at SafeSleep provided excellent engagement with clients including playing board games and cards, helping with forms and simply engaging in positive social interaction.

The work of staff from the Exeter City Council Housing and Benefits team was greatly appreciated in the way it helped us to develop monitoring systems and ensure that as many clients as possible were processed properly in order to claim Housing Benefit.

Similarly the support from the Housing Options Team staff, who regularly came to the hostel to work with clients and help with assessment and referral into accommodation was absolutely invaluable.

As important as ensuring that those who would otherwise be living on the street could access SafeSleep, was the need to do all that we could to prevent return to the streets and provide first steps on a positive housing pathway for each client.

Whilst we got lots of general feedback from clients during SafeSleep, most of it positive, some of it critical, we also undertook a questionnaire survey of clients during the last three weeks of the service in order to learn from their experience, observations and insights. The questions are set out below with a balanced summary of 33 responses provided.

+ We have a curfew time of 11:30, what time do you think the curfew should be?

The range for this answer was split between two camps with one or two outliers.

17 clients felt that the time was fine, with 13 clients feeling that the last access to the hostel should be between midnight and 1.00am.

Two clients felt that there should be no curfew and one client that the curfew should be at 10pm

+ We turn the lights down and television off at 11:30, what time do think this should happen?

Most clients (23) felt that this was a reasonable time, some saying that it was very good.

Six clients felt that it was too early and that lights and TV should be turned down or off between 12.30 and 1.00am

+ We have tried to make sure the service is safe and calm. When things have gone wrong we have excluded people for very short periods e.g. 2 nights

(i) Was this the right approach?

Most clients felt that this was the right approach, with none suggesting that it was too tough or managed unfairly. Several clients commended staff for their relaxed and tolerant approach, which had helped to keep the space calm most of the time.

Staff were seen as tolerant and understanding, able to defuse situations and exercise good judgement in overturning exclusions.

(ii) What could we have done differently?

One client felt that a First Verbal Warning, Second Written Warning and finally Exclusion process should have been in place.

One client felt that the rules were too relaxed and that "some clients got away with murder".

+ If we could have been open during the day for groups and activities e.g. art groups, resilience groups, harm minimisation etc. Would you have used these or similar groups?

Only 11 clients gave a response to this question, all of them stated that they would have been interested in using groups and activities during the day had they been available.

The range of interests covered, included computer skills, art groups, cookery, help with forms and simply "space away from the streets".

+ What have you liked least about SafeSleep?

A wide range of responses to this question with common themes being "I have to get up and out of here too early in the morning", "noisy disruptive people", "people snoring", "people not being respectful of the hostel", "drug paraphernalia in the toilets".

+ What things about SafeSleep have been most helpful to you?

Many positive responses about the warmth and friendliness of staff, "I always felt welcome", "the staff were really helpful".

Many clients commented on getting a good nights sleep in a warm bed.

Clients also commented positively on the food, ability to watch DVDs, the hot showers and the donated clothing

+ If we need to run SafeSleep again next winter, what one change could we make to improve the service?

Clients had lots of suggestions from "banning people who snore", "keeping the dickheads out" to making computers and WIFI connection available.

Three clients wanted a space with fewer people in it, four clients wanted more activities and things to do, fourteen clients wanted the service to be open for longer hours and for more nights.

Unfortunately there was limited feedback received from stakeholders, with only 20% of potential responses returned. However the feedback received is valuable in helping to understand what we got right and where we got things wrong. Feedback from the sector gives us valuable insight into the impact of the winter hostel, as perceived by other agencies and services beyond the doors of SafeSleep.

Which service or area of influence are you responsible for?

Of the 11 respondents, 4 work for Devon and Cornwall Police, 4 work for organisations providing direct support to homeless and marginalised people 2 work for coordinating voluntary organisations and 1 works for Public Health.

What was your overall impression of the impact of SafeSleep whilst it was running?

Largely a very positive impression, "SafeSleep made a massive impact", "far fewer people on the street", "a huge impact, people were accommodated who had no other place to go". Three of the police respondents felt that the impact was less successful, "didn't notice any real change and some people still chose not to go inside" and "overall the behaviour of those in safe sleep was detrimental to the way St Petrocks was able to support those that needed it", "I didn't see any real impact".

Were you aware of any positive changes as a result of SafeSleep? What were these?

All those providing feedback were able to identify positive impacts of SafeSleep, both for individuals using the service and across Exeter. "Hugely reduced rough sleeping in the city centre, and an increased level of engagement from the client group as a whole", "An opportunity to engage with complex entrenched clients, linking clients in with services and moving people on to other accommodation." One respondent felt that it gave the public "a chance to see who is just sleeping rough for money" and another reporting "less people sleeping in shop doorways and upsetting the staff".

Were you aware of any negative changes as a result of SafeSleep? What were these?

Respondents were clear that their had been some negative impact on the immediate vicinity of SafeSleep, pressures on other services and a sense that there was an overall increase in numbers of rough sleepers

"Aware of some feeling the impact of 'turning out time' in the morning, and a few feeling the premises were under supervised. However, I see these as a resource challenge". "There was an influx of homeless from outside of Exeter that have contributed to the crime and ASB in the city. Some of which have stayed in Exeter", "A lot of new people used SafeSleep who had never been at St. Petrock's or rough sleeping before so there was a lot more work to do"

One respondent felt that there was another negative impact; "SafeSleep hides the problem - takes it out of public view and priority agenda"

If SafeSleep is needed in the colder winter months of 2017-18 what improvements should be made to the way it is delivered?

Only a few responses to this question with one theme echoed by three respondents that SafeSleep should be sited away from existing homeless provision. Other comments included; "A referral co-ordinator is desperately needed. Also, having two venues - one high support, one low support would be better" "Open longer in the morning to link in with St Petrocks" "They should be allowed to keep their alcohol - this was cited as a reason by many for not wanting to use safe sleep".

In your view should SafeSleep operate from a single venue or multiple dispersed units?

Views here were split pretty much down the middle, with four respondents saying that a single venue was fine although probably needed higher staffing levels than had been available during this year's SafeSleep.

Two people felt that whether it was delivered from single or multiple venues, what was required was a day service integrated within the provision in order to maximise engagement and impact. A further suggestion was that there might be value in creating specific needs group accommodation at its simplest this could be High Needs and Low Needs, or in a more complex version could be a range of accommodation based on primary need e.g. mental health, addiction etc.

Five respondents, including all of the police, felt that multiple separate venues were the best option with three of the police officers stating that any SafeSleep venue should be sited at distance from existing supported housing or accommodation for vulnerable people. One of the officers felt that the venue should be well outside of Exeter central area.

Has SafeSleep created any local change beyond providing accommodation during the winter months?

Most people responded to this question with a divide between those responsible for enforcement, who felt change had been negative and those from other services who felt that there was a significant positive impact that extended well beyond the direct service offered to clients and had produced the opportunity for a change of approach within the supported housing sector.

So on the one side:

"SafeSleep has meant that St Petrocks had to open late each day to protect their staff and also contributed to the alcohol related ASB" "It changed the opening hours of St Petrocks, meaning that homeless had no where to go for an hour while waiting for Petrocks to open" and "Hard to quantify too many variables. There are a lot of new faces in the city who may (or may not) have travelled to the area for the provision"

And on the other side:

"I would hope one of the things learnt is that it is ok to house people that other providers perceive to be high risk", "It started a debate among the people when the idea was being mooted. As ever views were fairly polarised but for me it raised the issue of community responsibility for homelessness. It was good to see the number of local businesses and individuals who supported the project", "It has raised awareness about the need for provision longer than just the winter months" "Yes, clients have been engaged in services and moved through to other housing accommodation."

Is there anything else that you would like to say about SafeSleep

Only four answers were received to this question, including "great work", "it worked really well" and "a real success, why not do it all year round". One respondent commented on the difficulty of making contact with staff, which had caused problems.

Unfortunately there was limited feedback received from stakeholders, with only 20% of potential responses returned. However the feedback received is valuable in helping to understand what we got right and where we got things wrong. Feedback from the sector gives us valuable insight into the impact of the winter hostel, as perceived by other agencies and services beyond the doors of SafeSleep.



The three most challenging aspects of delivering Exeter SafeSleep 2016-17 were:

1

Planning consent

Failure to secure a venue for the service, with relevant planning consents until early December, after the project was due to have commenced.

In future years a suitable building needs to be agreed no later than September allowing a two month lead in to deliver a more effective service.

2

Lack of on site day facilities.

This was not possible due to limits of Change of Use Planning Consent and what would have been significant and probably compelling local objection.

Ability to deliver some day services from a SafeSleep venue would increase client engagement, offer diversionary activity away from less positive behaviours, provide space for specialist agencies to come and engage with hard to reach clients and further contribute to preservation of life and health during very cold weather.

The additional benefit would also be that on site staff, during the day, could manage access for contractors and liaise better with services and delivery companies.

3

Limited use of volunteers.

Again, a feature of the limited lead in time and changes in management of the Assertive Homeless Outreach Team, which occurred as the service was due to commence.

Developing a good pool of trained and well supported volunteers would be an enormous asset to SafeSleep. With volunteers able to support staff with administration, house keeping tasks and providing meals and also being able to work directly with clients through positive social activities, befriending and supporting.

Volunteers are also valuable as a conduit for positive publicity across a wide cross section of society, creating further interest and buy into valuable project, addressing key social challenges.

There are so many people to thank for making SafeSleep happen and for it becoming the success that it was this year, so apologies to any individual or organisation I have forgotten to name.

Firstly I want to thank the staff, who worked in a developing project from very difficult beginnings, but learnt and grew alongside the service as it developed: John Clarke, Natalie Dagger, Gerry Hunt, Charles Carson, Adam Kerswell, David Twomey and Stephanie Chivers who stepped into manage the service late in the day.

Exeter City Council Planning Committee for unanimously supporting the temporary Change of Use planning consent.

Nicola Forsdyke and Chris Stocks for always being there and always being supportive and gently critical when needed.

The Pret Foundation for their generous support and interest.

Smile at Stranger for helping us to get going.

Salvation Army and St Davids for regular meals and support.

Exeter City Council Revenue and Benefits Team and Housing Options Team, especially Gillian Litley and Kelly Rigler.

Partners and supporters from the Street Attachment Group (StAG) and Community Safety Partnership.

Devon and Cornwall Police and in particular Superintendent Sam

de Reya and Inspector Colin Harper.

Colleagues and friends at CVS and CoLab for continued interest and support.

Exeter Express and Echo for publicity and help.

All the volunteers, supporters and gift givers from across Exeter, who supported us and made life better for each of our clients.

All of our clients for putting up with our imperfections, a cold building and service which grew around them and which they helped to shape.

Two Self-Contained Shower, wash basin and toilet pods at SafeSleep – a real hit with cold clients able to warm up and freshen up.



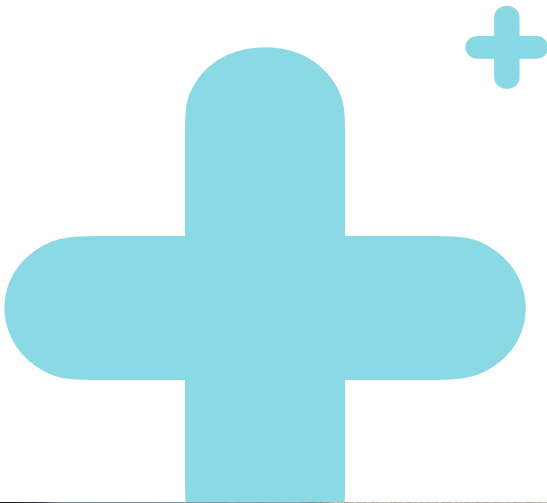
The Next Chapter

So as SafeSleep closed, we packed away client belongings for collection and equipment was gathered for storage for another year.

A new crew of staff moved into the building, to transform it into Exeter Bike Workshop.

A partnership between Julian House and ECI, providing a cycle shop, maintenance, refurbishment of old and neglected bikes, a purpose built training suite to give greater access to online service to our clients who need to have a foot in the digital doorway.

And as well as all those great things a Comic Relief funded part time post, to work with homeless and rough sleeping clients to ensure that they get access to training and support within the new workshop.





EXETER HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

Tuesday 11 July 2017

Present:-

Councillor Bialyk (Chair)	- Exeter City Council
Councillor Edwards	- Exeter City Council
Councillor Morse	- Exeter City Council
Councillor Leadbetter	- Devon County Council
Councillor Randall-Johnson	- Devon County Council
Dr Virginia Pearson	- Public Health
Jo Yelland	- ICE
Martha Wilkinson	- Devon Community Foundation
Sarah Yelland	- Devon Community Foundation
Matt Evans	- Active Devon
Julian Tagg	- Exeter City Football Club
Simon Bowkett	- Exeter CVS
Dawn Rivers	- Exeter City Council
Howard Bassett	- Exeter City Council

8

APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) Councillor Bialyk of Exeter City Council be appointed Chair of the Board for the next 12 months; and
- (2) Dr Virginia Pearson be appointed Deputy Chair of the Board for the next 12 months.

9

APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE

This was received from Gillian Champion.

10

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 31 JANUARY 2017

The minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2017 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as correct.

11

WELLBEING EXETER AND EXETER COMMUNITY FORUM/EXETER CITY COUNCIL COMMUNITY BUILDERS' WORK

Jo Yelland updated the Board on the background to Integrated Care Exeter and overview of one of the main programmes - Wellbeing Exeter. This programme had been developed over a two year period and aimed to support the development of more resilient and connected individuals and communities with a focus on early intervention and prevention. Wellbeing Exeter is one of around 100 programmes nationally using social prescribing to empower individuals to improve health by connecting to non-medical and community support services.

Martha Wilkinson of the Devon Community Foundation spoke in detail about Wellbeing Exeter and its three components of:-

- neighbourhood asset based community building;
- person-centred, non-medical support (social prescribing); and
- Informed with population data backed up with grassroots knowledge

Central to Wellbeing Exeter, were GP's introducing people to community connectors who were co-ordinated by Exeter CVS, to offer alternatives to traditional services. It was estimated that between 20% to 30% of patients visiting a GP with medical concerns had underlying social problems. Through signposting and one-on-one work, Wellbeing Exeter was helping people improve their mental wellbeing, reduce loneliness, re-engage with their community and manage their own health.

Simultaneously, community builders working within communities, identifying social resources, helping communities to develop and providing a resource for community connectors. Since the inception of Wellbeing Exeter, there had been over 900 referrals, one of the highest in the country, with an average of 22 a week from nine practices with 70+ GP's referring electronically with open referral criteria.

The New Devon CCG and Devon County Council funding had been extended until March 2018 with City Council funding for community building coming on line from September 2017 from CIL monies. There was an in principle agreement to expand across all Exeter practises with funding for a further two years and with potential to expand into Eastern Devon. ICE had been invited to give a presentation on Wellbeing Exeter at Public Health England national conference in October.

Responding to Board members, Jo Yelland and Martha Wilkinson explained further the process of data evaluation through GP practices and the future use of control areas. Positive results and evidence of potential savings would, it was hoped, lead to greater support from social investors. Social prescribing could benefit the wider system including lifelong learning, employment and reduction in benefits etc. Further liaison would take place with community based partners such as Active Devon, with physical activity a good example of social prescribing, potentially stopping visits to GP's in the first place.

Dawn Rivers referred to examples of community projects run by community builders such as Britain in Bloom work including improvements to the St Thomas rail halt, community orchards and the Wonford planters group. Community builders provided the necessary "kick start" when individuals were not sure about how to get involved and access permissions and resources to make a difference in their community.

Julian Tagg reported that the Exeter City Football in the Community Trust would be re-branded as the City Community Trust (CCT) to embrace all organisations in the City rather than focusing solely on football. Julian was interested in how CCT could support the work of the Wellbeing Exeter programme.

The Chair thanked Jo Yelland and Martha Wilkinson for their updates.

RESOLVED that updates on Wellbeing Exeter and the City Community Trust be made to the September board meeting.

12

FUTURE OF EXETER HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

Jo Yelland sought Members views on the way forward for the Exeter Health and Wellbeing Board, an Exeter City Council forum established in September 2013 as a re-fashioning of the former Social, Health and Inclusion Partnership (SHIP) to form

a single Exeter Health and Wellbeing Board involving partners from a political, professional and voluntary perspective together with those representing users.

As Wellbeing Exeter was now to be mainstreamed there was potential for a revised Board to become the new stewardship/governance body. Referring to the previous focus of the Board on specific projects, there was consensus that mental health should be elevated given its recognition in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and by the Police as an area of concern.

Matt Evans agreed a review would be timely and stated that the value and achievements of the Exeter Health and Wellbeing Board should not be overlooked. Active Devon worked across the whole of Devon and this forum, with positive, joined up intent from key local strategic organisation was a huge asset that did not exist in all areas.

The value of continued partnership involvement was recognised.

RESOLVED that Jo Yelland would draft a discussion paper and facilitate a discussion on future options to the September Board meeting.

13

SPORT ENGLAND LOCAL DELIVER PILOT

Matt Evans reported that, of the 113 nationally, the expression of interest (Eol) submitted by Exeter City Council was one of only 19 shortlisted Eol's to progress to the second stage for potential selection as one of 10 Sport England pilots. The pilots would focus on achieving broader social outcomes by tackling inactivity at population level and reducing inequality in physical activity participation. The particular aims of the Exeter Eol were: reducing congestion through active travel; improving health and wellbeing in Exeter's lower socio-economic areas, and; wellbeing outcomes. The Exeter Eol included the wider Exeter area bringing in Cranbrook NHS Healthy Town initiative.

The Eol carried the full support of the Exeter Health and Wellbeing Board and other key local partners in the Greater Exeter area and their further support and input would no doubt be called upon as the Stage II bid was prepared for assessment in September.

14

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Future meetings, commencing at 2.00pm, were scheduled for:-

12 September 2017
31 October 2017
30 January 2018
10 April 2018
10 July 2018
11 September 2018

(The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and closed at 3.40 pm)

Chair

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