

## **PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Date: Thursday 7 June 2018  
Time: 5.30 pm  
Venue: Rennes Room - Civic Centre

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), Foggin, Holland, Owen, Pattison, Pierce, Robson, Vizard N and Wright

## **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 approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2018.

(Pages 5 -  
12)

#### **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 - <https://exeter.gov.uk/councillorsfaq/>

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

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

**PRESENTATION TO COMMITTEE**

**7 What is Citizenship - Accessibility and Inclusion**

To welcome Sally O'Donnell, Involvement Officer, Devon County Council and Robert Hawkins, Joint Chair of the Devon Learning Disability Partnership Board

**ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

**8 Housing Revenue Account - 2017/18 Budget Monitoring Report - Outturn**

To consider the report of the Chief Finance Officer.

(Pages 13  
- 30)

**9 People - 2017/18 Budget Monitoring Report - Outturn**

To consider the report of the Chief Finance Officer.

(Pages 31  
- 38)

**ITEM FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE EXECUTIVE**

**10 Financial Assistance Policy for the Better Care Fund**

Report of the Environmental Health and Licensing Manager.

(Pages 39  
- 64)

## ITEMS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

- |    |  |                    |
|----|--|--------------------|
| 11 | <b>Implementation Plan and Impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act</b>                                | (Pages 65<br>- 70) |
| 12 | <b>Performance Scrutiny Partnership - Minutes of the meeting held on 19 February and 12 March 2018</b> | (Pages 71<br>- 76) |
| 13 | <b>Exeter Community, Health and Wellbeing Board - Minutes of the Meeting held on 26 February 2018</b>  | (Pages 77<br>- 80) |

### **Date of Next Meeting**

The next scheduled meeting of the People Scrutiny Committee will be held on **Thursday** 6 September 2018 at 5.30 pm in the Civic Centre.

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

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## PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday 12 March 2018

### Present:

Councillor Wardle (Chair)

Councillors Foale, Branston, Foggin, Hannan, Hannaford, Holland, Thompson and Vizard N

### Apologies:

Councillor Morris

### Also Present:

Director (BA), Principal Accountant Corporate, Programme Manager - Communities, Technical Accounting Manager, Housing Enabling Officer and Democratic Services Officer

### In attendance:

Councillor Hannah Packham  
Councillor Phil Bialyk

Portfolio Holder for the Housing Revenue Account  
Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing, Communities  
And Sport

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### MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 January 2018 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

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### DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest were made.

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### QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL UNDER STANDING ORDER

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In accordance with Standing Order No 20, Councillor Hannaford had submitted questions on LGBTQ issues and the Transgender Day of Remembrance.

A copy of the questions had been previously circulated to Members and these, together with the responses from Councillor Bialyk, Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing, Communities and Sport is appended to the minutes.

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### QUESTION FROM THE PUBLIC UNDER STANDING ORDER 19

In accordance with Standing Order No 19, Diana Jones submitted a question on the Advisory Service. Responding to a Member, she advised that she had been prompted to ask the question as there had been insufficient commentary in the Committee papers for a lay person to fully understand the report detail.

A copy of the question had been previously circulated to Members, and this, together with the response from Councillor Packham, Portfolio Holder for the HRA is appended to the minutes.

## **ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

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### **HRA BUDGET MONITORING TO DECEMBER 2017**

The Technical Accounting Manager advised Members of any major differences, by management unit between the approved budget and the outturn forecast for the first nine months of the financial year up to 31 December 2017 in respect of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and the Council's new build schemes. An outturn update in respect of the HRA Capital Programme was also incorporated in the report in order to help provide a comprehensive financial update in respect of the Housing Revenue Account.

During this period, the total budget variances indicated that there would be a net surplus of £1,180,101 in 2017/18. This represented a significant movement of £3,667,716 compared to the 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. This meant that the HRA was forecast to transfer over £1 million into its Working Balance, rather than taking £2.5 million out of its Working Balance, at the end of the financial year.

The current HRA Capital Programme showed a total forecast spend of £7,414,521 compared the £10,497,645 revised programme, a decrease of £3,083,124.

The Chair reported that the Financial Reporting Working Group had met and reviewed the financial reports ahead of their presentation to Scrutiny Committees and that he had subsequently put a number of questions to officers for reporting to this meeting. In respect of these, the following responses were provided:-

- certain vacant posts in Housing Assets and Council Own Build had been covered using temporary arrangements, as recruitment to the vacant posts was pending the outcomes of the Housing Quality Network review of the Assets team which completed in December 2017 and the completion of the stock condition survey. These posts had now been filled and there were no longer multiple vacancies. The posts were necessary as an extensive level of capital works were planned, to the value of £12 million in 2018/19 and £37 million over the next 5 years; and
- an employers' liability insurance claim had been settled by the Council and related to a former council employee. Both the Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing, Communities and Sport and the Planned Repairs Lead enlarged on health and safety precautions that would be in place for the re-development of the Bus Station site in order to manage exposure to asbestos.

The Planned Repairs Lead updated Members on progress with an extensive procurement programme still taking place and the Director (BA), in response to a Member's query, advised that any identified risks within the housing service were included on the Housing Risk Register, which fed into the Corporate Risk Register. In respect of the filling of posts, she also confirmed that agency staff were only used in extremis and that the Council had been successful in recruiting to the permanent posts.

Responding to a Member, the Portfolio Holder for the HRA agreed that the lack of sufficient Central Government funding and the imposition of various controls was a significant contributory factor to the nation's housing crises and that this Council continued to make representations to Government on this issue, emphasising that it had serious ambitions to provide more homes, including social housing. She also highlighted the inequitable restriction on the use of Right to Buy receipts in

accordance with the One-for-One Replacement agreement, which sets out the strict criteria for retaining and spending the receipts. A detailed report would be submitted to a future meeting of this Committee and Executive in respect of the St Loyes Extra Care Scheme, which included the use of retained right-to-buy receipts towards the financing of the project.

People Scrutiny Committee noted the report.

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### **PEOPLE BUDGET MONITORING TO DECEMBER 2017**

The Principal Accountant advised Members of any material differences, by management unit between the approved budget and the outturn forecast for the first nine months of the financial year up to 31 December 2017 in respect of People Services. An outturn update in respect of the People Capital Programme was also incorporated in the report in order to help provide a comprehensive financial update in respect of the People Services budget.

The current forecast suggested that net expenditure would increase from the approved budget by a total of £305,840 after transfers from reserves and revenue contributions to capital. This represented a variation of 10.17% from the revised budget and included a supplementary budget of £372,160.

The System Lead Finance responded to questions from the Chair on Housing Benefits which is attached to the minutes.

People Scrutiny Committee noted the report.

### **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE EXECUTIVE**

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#### **HOUSING STOCK CONDITION SURVEY**

The Director (BA) introduced the report indicating that the Stock Condition Survey was critical to the Business Planning for the Council's Housing Stock. The survey allowed for work on the viability of the stock and the development of an Asset Management Plan to identify future investment needs. Traditionally, only 10% of stock had been surveyed but the Survey undertaken last year had surveyed 40% of the stock and the service was working towards 100% completion.

The Director (BA) welcomed Adrian Pengelly to the meeting who was new in post as the Planned Repairs Lead within the Housing Assets Service.

The Planned Repairs Lead presented the report informing Members of the condition of the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) properties and setting out the plan for the continuation of stock surveys until 100% of properties have been surveyed. The Council in February 2017, had commissioned a stock condition validation exercise via external consultants Michael Dyson Associates (MDA). MDA had been commissioned to undertake 3,528 surveys - 2,991 dwellings (60%) and 537 blocks (100% of blocks - in line with industry best practice). The survey data had subsequently been combined with the existing data held to inform the overall stock investment programme.

The Planned Repairs Lead presentation covered the need for the survey, the historic and current position, the criteria for decent homes standard, the investment requirements for each ward and, in summary, he advised that the survey information of 64% provided a robust platform for investment planning purposes, offered medium (5-year) and long (30-year) term assurance and would help deliver

the Government's energy efficiency targets. He also reported that the stock viability assessment would complement stock condition data analysis, inform the Asset Management Strategy and ensure that active asset management principles are applied to investment.

Responding to Members' queries, he advised that there was strong competition between potential contractors and that Council contracts were attractive logistically because of the City's compact nature which, in turn, also helped the Council achieve economies of scale. The elements of each contract were tightly drawn up and included requirements for a living wage etc. He would be available to discuss in further detail the individual ward investment requirements with ward councillors as required.

Another Member referred to the previous tenant liaison arrangements and the Director confirmed that future minutes of the performance scrutiny partnership meetings could be made available to the Committee.

Scrutiny Committee - People noted the stock condition survey data and the plans for continual assessment of investment requirements.

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### **COMMUNITY GRANTS AND COMMUNITY UPDATES**

The Programme Manager Communities presented the report providing the following updates on community issues:-

#### **Community Grants**

The City Council had an extensive Community Grants Programme with around £1.5 million awarded annually to community organisations through a range of grant processes. A breakdown of the grants was provided and Members were advised of the intention in 2018 to review the city council policy, system and process in order to consolidate the programmes and revise criteria to link to council priorities. One Member queried how information on the grant process was filtered through to the community and it was generally recognised that a simplification of the grants process would be beneficial because of the varying grant application processes.

A further report on process and recommendations would be submitted at a later date.

#### **Community builders**

Council on 25 July 2017 had agreed £610,000 over five years (£300k New Homes Bonus (£300k) and £310k from neighbourhood portion of Community Infra-Structure Levy: CIL) to fund Community Builders across the City. This would build on the existing community builder roles funded through the Integrated Care Exeter (ICE) Wellbeing Exeter programme until March 2018. Because of the expansion of Wellbeing Exeter and the Sport England Local Delivery Pilot status, it was proposed to expand community building so that all wards would have access to a community connector and community builder. It was proposed that funding be front-loaded in light of the Wellbeing Exeter and Sport England programmes for a three year period in the first instance: 2018/2020. Anecdotal feedback indicated that the community builders could have a real impact on improving people's lives and supporting the local community.



Responding to a Member, the Programme Manager advised that documentation such as evaluation reports on the community builders could be made available to Members on request and the Community builders could also be requested to provide feedback on their work at a ward level. Members were encouraged to have good contact with their local community builder.

Delegated powers had been given to the Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing, Communities and Sport and the Programme Manager to agree adjustments to the original plans for the deployment of Community Builders and for them to do this in consultation with the Chair of the Exeter Community Forum.

#### Grass Roots Grants/Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy

The Council received recommendations from the Exeter Community Forum (ECF) Grass Roots Grants Panel on expenditure for the neighbourhood portion of the Community Infra-Structure Levy (CIL) (£3.75 million over 10 years ring-fenced for community led initiatives) The Grass Roots Grants criteria included a number of programmes contributing towards the goals of the ECF Community Strategy endorsed by the Council.

To date, eight organisations had been awarded a grant through the Grass Roots Grants process totaling £167,913. It was noted that the Portfolio Holder for Health, Wellbeing, Communities and Sports represented the Council on the grants panel.

#### Exeter : A young people friendly city - Exeter Youth Voice.

The City Council was taking the lead co-ordination role for this next stage of developing a Youth Strategy for the city and had recently contracted Young Devon to facilitate the 'Exeter Youth Voice' initiative with young people across the city over the next 12 months. This work would build on the consultation that had taken place with young people during 2016/17 resulting in the launch of the Youth Strategy in March 2017. The project would be delivered through a steering group including Exeter City Council Communications and Marketing Team who would be supporting the process and helping to profile the views of young people. Members were reassured that the project had and would continue to engage with Black and Minority Ethnic young people through the process of the project.

Members queried the level of Member involvement in the work of the Exeter Community Forum notably the grant making process where a significant level of funding had been made available. Some concern was expressed at the level of democratic accountability and transparency in the operation of the Grass Roots Grants Panel and it was suggested that a cross party, Member led body would be more appropriate to provide greater accountability and community leadership. Because of the significant level of funding, a Member felt that greater scrutinisation of the decisions was required and he and another Member referred to play equipment in particular as one area where funds could be better directed.

The Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing, Communities and Sport acknowledged the complexity of the grant making process and advised that the rationale behind this community work was greater synergy and extended community involvement and that reviewing the grant making process which Executive would now be asked to support was a logical step in this process. He also felt that a further briefing session for Members would be appropriate following the review of grants.

Scrutiny Committee - People supported the report and asked Executive to request Council to:-

- (1) approve the recommendation to review the grant allocation policy and process in 2018 to consider modernisation and consolidation of the grant programmes and revised criteria linked to council priorities;
- (2) approve the recommendation that the Neighbourhood CIL and New Homes Bonus funding agreed for community building in the city should be front-loaded in light of the Wellbeing Exeter and Sports England Local Delivery Pilot programmes for an initial 3 year period 2018 / 2020;
- (3) notes the progress of the Grass Roots Grants/Neighbourhood CIL spend over the first year of this funding being available and recognizes the contribution of the Exeter Community Forum Grass Roots Panel in supporting this process;
- (4) note the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage of the Exeter Youth Strategy work in terms of the launch of the Exeter Youth Voice project; and
- (5) review the role of the Exeter Community Forum Grants Panel and to consider whether there was a need for greater accountability and scrutinisation of its processes and to examine if a change of approach through increasing the involvement of Members was desirable.

17 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985 - EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED** that, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the next item on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

18 **RENNES HOUSE OPTIONS**

The Director (BA) and Housing Development Officer presented the report outlining the history behind Rennes House, past decisions made and setting out costed options for the refurbishment works required to the building. Rennes House was a 10 storey tower block used as older persons accommodation (over 60's) located in the Whipton Barton Area of Exeter providing 61 homes to Council tenants on a social rent.

The four options presented were:-

- (1) full refurbishment;
- (2) minimal refurbishment;
- (3) demolition; and
- (4) wider regeneration.

Refurbishment would necessitate the relocation of tenants either internally or externally as work progresses. This would be a complex process to ensure that internal moves and decants are undertaken in the most efficient way to ensure both minimal disruption to the residents and not to disrupt the build programme.

The Portfolio Holder for the HRA enlarged on the advantages and disadvantages of each option and explained the reasons behind her preference for the first option of full refurbishment. It would provide a high quality refurbishment which would guarantee the lifespan of the building going forward for a minimum of 40 years, would be in keeping with Chester Long House another new development in the immediate area, it provided significant savings in heating costs and would improve thermal comfort and indoor air quality and it was the preferred option of tenants.

It was noted that the report recommended the following work which did not form part of the options:-

- (1) carry out fire engineering recommendations including Automatic Opening Vent installation and new dry riser; and
- (2) replace service risers including water and electrical distribution and remove asbestos from the risers.

Decant costs would also need to be included and final costs would depend on whether a partial or full decant was required.

Members discussed the options, one Member referring to three earlier schemes for re-development which he felt should also have been put forward as options at this stage. It was noted however that these were conceptual rather than detailed plans.

A Member supported the re-modelling of the ground floor which would make the laundry and scooter storage more accessible for all and create additional communal space, whilst other Members welcomed the proposal as the one supported by the residents themselves.

There was unanimous support for the option of full refurbishment and Members were presented with, and supported, a series of sub options within the main proposal, costs of which were circulated.

Scrutiny Committee - People noted:-

- (a) the report setting out the refurbishment works required to Rennes House, alongside the costs of refurbishment in relation to the value of the building; and
- (b) the responses to the consultation undertaken with Rennes House residents as detailed in the report; and

requested Executive to support the option for proceeding with a full refurbishment of Rennes House, with sub options as circulated.

(The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 7.55 pm)

Chair

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## EXETER CITY COUNCIL

**REPORT TO:** PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
**DATE OF MEETING:** 7 JUNE 2018  
**REPORT OF:** Chief Finance Officer  
**TITLE:** 2017/18 Budget Monitoring Report - Outturn

### Is this a Key Decision

No

### Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Council

#### 1. What is the report about?

To advise Members of any major differences, by management unit, between the approved budget and the outturn for the financial year up to 31 March 2018 in respect of the Housing Revenue Account and the Council's new build schemes.

An outturn 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.

#### 2. Recommendations:

**That Members of People Scrutiny Committee note the content of this report in order to be satisfied that prudent steps have been taken during the year to address any areas with significant variances, as highlighted in this report, and note the actual cost of delivering services for the HRA in the 2017/18 financial year.**

#### 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. Members are presented with a quarterly financial update in respect of the HRA and this is the final report for 2017/18.

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

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

#### 5. Section 151 Officer comments:

The outturn performance demonstrates the impact that the capital programme has on budgeting for the Housing Revenue Account. Delays in significant projects have a significant impact on the Account. The medium term financial plan does provide for the working balance to reduce over the period.

#### 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 Final Accounts to 31 March 2018

#### 8.1 Key Variations from Budget

The 2017/18 financial year has ended with an overall net surplus of £1,644,790. This represents a significant movement of £4,132,405 compared to the 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.

A projected under-spend of £3,667,716 has previously been reported Scrutiny Committee – People as part of the quarterly budget monitoring updates. The variances in the final quarter of the financial year have therefore resulted in further savings of £464,689, of which Executive approval to carry forward £335,000 into 2018/19 will be sought. The reasons for this and the main deviations from budget for the financial year are set out below. Please also refer to Appendix 1.

MU Code	Management Unit	Quarter 3 Forecast Variance (Under)/Overspend	Actual Budget Variance (Under)/Overspend	Explanation of Actual Budget Variance
	<b>Budgeted Deficit</b>		<b>£2,487,615</b>	
85A1	Management Costs	(£60,000)	(£75,233)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• (£48k) savings have arisen in respect of training on the new Housing Management System. Implementation of the new system will commence in 2018/19 following Executive approval in October '17 for temporary staff resources to manage the project in conjunction with Strata.</li><li>• (£23k) reflects a reduction in the provision for insurance excess payments in-line with current insurance claims.</li><li>• £70k additional recharge for Procurement, which reflects both Corporate Procurement and the appointment of a</li></ul>

				dedicated HRA Procurement Manager. Offset by a combination of savings; employee costs (£30k) due to vacant posts and (£40k) saving in tenant participation activities (e.g. STAR survey and annual conference).
85A2	Housing Customers	£20,400	£45,339	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>£45k additional employee costs have been incurred in respect of covering maternity leave and long term sickness.</li> </ul>
85A3	Sundry Land Maintenance	(£101,000)	(£87,840)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(£60k) tree inspections and works to trees identified as 'at risk' have been prioritised during 2017/18, including diseased trees, those in natural decline and those in unsuitable locations. Lower level remedial works are pending the appointment of a dedicated Tree Officer for Housing, within Public Realm, on a 12 month fixed term contract. A saving is therefore reported for this year.</li> <li>(£28k) saving in respect of the Garden Assistance Scheme and initial cultivation works, due to no inflationary increase in contract costs and a review of eligibility.</li> </ul>
85A4	Repairs and Maintenance Programme	(£644,000)	(£953,332)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This represents a combination of savings, most notably due to:   <u>Asbestos Survey &amp; Removal (£220k)</u>  Reflects a lower than anticipated level of asbestos removal works originating from planned capital projects, most notably due to lower kitchen and bathroom</li> </ul>

				<p>replacements. Asbestos removal works are also pending the decant of tenants, for this reason Executive approval will be sought to carry forward £100k into 2018/19.</p> <p><u>General Maintenance (£208k)</u> of which (£93k) relates to savings in larger general reactive repairs (&gt;£10,000) and (£115k) relates to general reactive repairs. A minor backlog of repairs occurred in March due to contractor capacity, which were dealt with as a priority early in the new financial year. For this reason, Executive approval will be sought to carry forward £100k into 2018-19.</p> <p><u>Repairs to Void Properties (£102k)</u> Savings occurred in respect of void properties, which reflects the number of void properties and the condition that they were returned to the Council during 2017/18.</p> <p><u>Service Contracts (£143k)</u> Reflects a combination of savings in respect of service and maintenance contract costs including a £60k under-spend in fire risk assessment costs. The appointment of a main contractor is pending the procurement process, in the interim priority fire risk assessments have been undertaken including sheltered sites.</p>
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				<p><u>Low Maintenance and Painting (£132k)</u> Final accounts for previous year's contracts were settled at lower than provided for levels. Certain works instructed under the 2017/18 contract will be completed early in the new financial year, therefore Executive approval will be sought to carry forward £30k into 2018/19.</p>
85A5	Revenue Contribution to Capital	(£2,700,000)	(£2,700,000)	<p>• The amount of revenue monies required towards financing HRA capital expenditure in 2017-18 has reduced by £2.7m, from £6.5m to £3.8m.</p> <p>In March 2014 Executive approved a £2.7m contribution towards the St Loyes Extra Care scheme, but delays to the scheme mean that the contribution is not required in 2017/18. Officers are currently preparing a detailed report for committee with the outcomes of a recent tender process.</p>
85A6	Capital Charges	£64,684	£64,684	<p>• Depreciation charges are higher than budgeted due to a rise in the valuation of council dwellings.</p> <p>Depreciation is a real cost to the HRA as it represents the amount of money which needs to be set aside in the Major Repairs Reserve to provide for the cost of future capital works or to repay debt.</p>
85A7	Housing Assets	(£127,800)	(£92,918)	<p>• (£57k) savings in employee costs due to vacant posts during the year.</p>

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (£53k) tenant decants from LAINGS properties were not required during 2017-18. Executive approved the budget for the demolish and re-build option on 9 January '18. A saving is therefore reported in 2017-18, as the cost of decanting tenants has been factored into next year's budgets.</li> <li>• The additional cost of settling an employer's liability insurance claim, was offset by savings in the consultant's budget. However, Executive approval will be sought to carry forward the consultant's budget (£45k) to support continuation of stock condition surveys in 2018/19.</li> </ul>
85A8	Rents	(£20,000)	(£227,509)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rental income from council dwellings was higher than budgeted; representing a 1.1% variance. Partly attributable to a lower than anticipated number of empty properties for major works such as Rennes House and the LAINGS properties. Delays with the rollout of Universal Credit Full Service have also meant that rent arrears have remained stable during the year, resulting in only a minor change to the provision for bad debts.</li> </ul>
85B2	Interest	(£100,000)	(£105,596)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflects additional interest earned on HRA balances (Working Balance, Major Repairs Reserve and capital receipts). The revenue and capital under-spends in 2017-18 combined with retaining</li> </ul>

				right-to-buy receipts rather than surrendering them back to DCLG have resulted in higher balances.
	<b>Total budget variances</b>		<b>(£4,132,405)</b>	
	<b>HRA Surplus</b>		<b>(£1,644,790)</b>	<b>Transfer to the HRA Working Balance</b>

## 8.2 HRA Working Balance

The total budget variances for 2017/18 have resulted in a surplus of £1,644,790, which will be transferred to the HRA working balance, as set out below.

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.

<b>Movement</b>	<b>2017/18</b>
Opening HRA Working Balance, as at 1/4/17	£8,567,454
Surplus for 2017/18	£1,644,790
Balance resolved to be retained (HRA contingency)	(£4,000,000)
<b>Balance Available, as at 31/3/18</b>	<b>£6,212,244</b>

## 8.3 Major Repairs Reserve

Under self-financing Councils are expected to set aside some of their income each year into the Major Repairs Reserve, in order to ensure appropriate provision is made towards financing future capital works or to repay debt. The balance held in the reserve at the end of the financial year is set out below:

<b>Movement</b>	<b>2017/18</b>
Opening Major Repairs Reserve, as at 1/4/17	£8,719,199
Revenue monies set aside during 2017/18	£3,000,614
Amount used to finance capital expenditure during 2017/18	(£550,801)
<b>Balance, as at 31/3/18</b>	<b>£11,169,012</b>

## 8.4 HRA Capital Programme

The 2017/18 HRA Capital Programme was last reported to Scrutiny Committee - People on 12 March 2018, since that meeting the following changes have been made that have reduced the programme.

<b>Description</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>Approval / Funding</b>
<b>HRA Capital Programme, reported as at 12 March</b>	<b>£10,497,645</b>	
Budgets deferred to future financial years	(£2,807,720)	Executive 10 April 2018
Savings declared	(£275,404)	Executive 10 April 2018
<b>Revised HRA Capital Programme</b>	<b>£7,414,521</b>	

## 8.5 HRA Capital Expenditure

The total amount of HRA capital expenditure for 2017/18 was £6,264,876, which equates to 84.5% of the revised approved capital programme (as set out above). The nature of capital investment in the financial year comprised:

<b>HRA Capital Expenditure</b>	<b>£</b>
Capital investment in existing stock	3,264,077
Capital investment in the provision of new council homes	3,000,799
<b>Total HRA Capital Expenditure</b>	<b>6,264,876</b>

A detailed list of HRA capital budgets and actual expenditure is set out in Appendix 2.

## 8.6 Capital Variances from Budget

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

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Overspend / (Underspend)</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Kitchen Replacement Programme	(£68,409)	A saving is reported in respect of both programmes which reflects a lower level of kitchen and bathroom replacements in void properties and the scaling down of the programmes to one contractor, ahead of a procurement exercise in 2018/19.
Bathroom Replacement Programme	(£51,462)	
Electrical Re-wiring	(£113,007)	A saving is reported in respect of electrical re-wires, whilst officers review demand arising from electrical testing and planned capital works (e.g. kitchen replacements). The outcomes will be factored into future budget setting cycles.
Central Heating Programme	(£25,464)	Higher than budgeted boiler failures and parts for certain boilers now obsolete resulted in additional boiler replacements. However, the overspend is partially offset by savings in respect of the central heating programme, due to a lower level of systems required in void properties.
Boiler Replacement Programme	£57,919	

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Budget to be deferred to 2018/19</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
LAINGS Refurbishments	£245,580	Following Executive approval on 9 January for the demolish and re-build option, the budget has been re-profiled in accordance with the latest project cash-flow forecasts.

Balcony Walkway Improvements	£60,000	It has not been possible to advance these works during 2017/18 as it is pending contract procurement. This programme will form part of procurement priorities for the new financial year.
Re-roofing Works Shilhay	£164,800	The re-roofing of 70 properties together with vertical tile hanging is expected to complete by mid-June resulting in slippage of the budget into 2018/19. This represents a minor delay, in part due to the time required to deal with asbestos and adverse weather conditions.
Replacement Housing Management System	£175,096	Implementation of the new IT system will commence in 2018/19 following Executive approval in October '17 for temporary staff resources to manage the project in conjunction with Strata.
COB Wave 2 – Rennes House Car Park	£271,500	The new social housing development, Chester Long Court, was officially opened on 16 March. However, final snagging issues, commissioning of equipment and external works were undertaken in April and May, resulting in minor slippage of the budget into 2018/19.
Acquisition of Social Housing - Market	(£145,000)	A property formerly used for temporary accommodation has been appropriated into the HRA for use as social housing during 2017/18 at a market value of £220k, but the planned acquisition of a shared ownership property is not expected to complete until 2018/19 (£75k). The net effect is £145k has been accelerated from next year's approved budget for property acquisitions.
Estate Regeneration	£88,162 (across all sites)	In March 2017 the Council received £1.295m Estate Regeneration funding. The grant is to be used across four HRA sites to progress them to the pre-construction stage. The overall forecast costs remain at £1.295m, but

		spend of the grant has now been profiled in accordance with the project timetables, which run into 2018/19.
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## 8.7 HRA Capital Financing

The total HRA capital expenditure for 2017/18 will be financed as follows:

HRA Capital Finance	£
Major Repairs Reserve	550,801
Revenue Contribution to Capital	3,796,640
Capital Receipts	1,117,568
External Grants/Contributions	799,867
<b>Total HRA Capital Financing</b>	<b>6,264,876</b>

The impact on the capital resources available to the HRA over the next 3 years is set out in Appendix 3.

## 8.8 HRA Debt

The Government have put a limit on the amount of borrowing the authority can have for the purposes of the HRA, called the 'debt cap'. As at 31 March 2018, the amount of debt attributable to the HRA remains up to its 'debt cap' of £57,882,413.

## 9. Council Own Build (COB) Final Accounts to 31 March 2018

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 Key Variations from Budget

The 2017/18 year has ended with an overall net surplus of £48,846, which will be transferred to the COB working balance. This represents an increase of £12,876 compared to the budgeted transfer to the working balance of £35,970.

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

Management Unit	Quarter 3 Forecast Variance (Under)/Overspend	Actual Budget Variance (Under)/Overspend	Explanation
COB	(£7,000)	(£12,876)	Lower management costs due to vacant posts combined with lower maintenance costs.

## 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?

It is not permissible for the HRA to go into an overall financial deficit position, it is therefore important to ensure that an adequate level of HRA balances is maintained as a contingency against risks.

A key risk that officers are aware of relates to 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?**

The revenue service costs for the year have helped the HRA provide tenancy management services and maintain the condition of council dwellings, which has a positive impact on the health and well-being of Council tenants. In the delivery of services, housing officers are able to identify and manage issues relating to safe-guarding, vulnerabilities and community safety.

In terms of capital expenditure, the 2017/18 capital programme has enabled enhancements to existing dwelling stock to be undertaken and helped support the provision of new housing, both of which will have a positive impact on those in housing need.

**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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**HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT  
OUTTURN**

**APPENDIX 1**

**APRIL 2017 TO MARCH 2018**

Code		APPROVED BUDGET	QUARTER 3 FORECAST OUTTURN	2017-18 OUTTURN	VARIANCE SINCE QUARTER 3	OVERALL VARIANCE TO BUDGET	VARIANCE TO BUDGET
		£	£	£	£	£	%
85A1	Management	1,074,785	1,014,785	999,552	(15,233)	(75,233)	(7)
85A2	Housing Customers	1,344,180	1,364,580	1,389,519	24,939	45,339	3
85A3	Sundry Lands Maintenance	538,660	437,660	450,820	13,160	(87,840)	(16)
85A4	Repairs & Maintenance Programme	6,148,870	5,504,870	5,195,538	(309,332)	(953,332)	(16)
85A5	Revenue Contribution to Capital	6,496,640	3,796,640	3,796,640	0	(2,700,000)	(42)
85A6	Capital Charges	2,935,930	3,000,614	3,000,614	0	64,684	2
85A7	Housing Assets	1,385,610	1,257,810	1,292,692	34,882	(92,918)	(7)
85A8	Rents	(19,295,820)	(19,315,820)	(19,523,329)	(207,509)	(227,509)	1
85B2	Interest	1,858,760	1,758,760	1,753,164	(5,596)	(105,596)	(6)
85B4	Variance in Working Balance	(2,487,615)	1,180,101	1,644,790	464,689	4,132,405	
	<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
	<b>Working Balance</b>	<b>1 April 2017</b>	<b>8,567,454</b>	<b>31 March 2018</b>	<b>10,212,244</b>		

**COUNCIL OWN BUILD SITES**

Code		APPROVED BUDGET	QUARTER 3 FORECAST OUTTURN	2017-18 OUTTURN	VARIANCE SINCE QUARTER 3	OVERALL VARIANCE TO BUDGET	VARIANCE TO BUDGET
		£	£	£	£	£	%
H005	Management	14,120	12,120	12,493	373	(1,627)	(11.5)
H006	Rowan House	(10,480)	(10,480)	(11,374)	(894)	(894)	8.5
H007	Knights Place	(59,550)	(64,550)	(69,770)	(5,220)	(10,220)	17.2
H008	Interest	6,980	6,980	6,430	(550)	(550)	(7.9)
H009	Capital Charges	12,960	12,960	13,375	415	415	3.2
	<b>Variance in Working Balance</b>	<b>35,970</b>	<b>42,970</b>	<b>48,846</b>	<b>5,876</b>	<b>12,876</b>	<b>35.8</b>
	<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
	<b>Working Balance</b>	<b>1 April 2017</b>	<b>208,097</b>	<b>31 March 2018</b>	<b>256,943</b>		

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APPENDIX 2

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT  
CAPITAL MONITORING TO 31 MARCH 2018

		2017-18 Capital Programme	2017-18 Spend	2017-18 Budget to be Carried Forward to Future Years	2017-18 Programme Variances Under ( )
		£	£	£	£
	<b>HRA CAPITAL</b>				
7HHOME	<b>EVERYONE HAS A HOME</b>				
Z4212	Adaptations	450,000	454,025	(4,025)	0
Z4402	Re-rendering	6,000	6,000		0
Z4703	Environmental Improvements - General	50,760	32,365	18,395	0
Z4705	Re-roofing	0	2,995	(2,995)	0
Z4713	Garage Upgrades	11,000	0	11,000	0
Z4718	LAINGS Refurbishments	250,000	4,420	245,580	0
Z4719	Kitchen Replacement Programme	345,000	276,591		(68,409)
Z4721	Balcony Walkway Improvements	60,000	0	60,000	0
Z4724	Bathroom Replacements Programme	261,000	209,538		(51,462)
Z4742	Fire Precautionary Works to Flats	231,090	202,560	28,530	0
Z4743	Communal Areas	86,980	78,067	8,913	0
Z4745	Structural Repairs	43,384	45,150	(1,766)	0
Z4755	Rennes House Structural Works	25,000	4,725	20,275	0
Z4758	Common Area Footpath/Wall Improvements	372,000	382,213	(10,213)	0
Z4764	Electrical Central Heating	0	1,695	(1,695)	0
Z4765	Smoke/Fire Alarms - Older Persons	84,250	68,526	15,724	0
Z4802	Electrical Re-wiring	587,870	474,863		(113,007)
Z4901	Central Heating Programme	87,540	62,076		(25,464)
Z4903	Boiler Replacement Programme	123,200	181,119		57,919
Z4906	Communal Door & Screens	70,000	81,369	(11,369)	0
Z4909	Fire Risk Assessment Works	21,550	20,740	810	0
Z4914	Re-roofing Works Shilhay	839,840	675,040	164,800	0
Z4916	Replacement Housing Management System	175,096		175,096	0
	<b>HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT TOTAL</b>	<b>4,181,560</b>	<b>3,264,077</b>	<b>717,060</b>	<b>(200,423)</b>
	<b>COUNCIL OWN BUILD CAPITAL</b>				
Z3214	COB Wave 2 - Rennes Car Park	2,319,066	2,057,566	271,500	10,000
Z3212	COB Wave 1 - Merlin Crescent	0	(13,618)		(13,618)
Z3219	COB Wave 2 - Bennett Square	0	(3,204)		(3,204)
Z3220	St Loyes ExtraCare	35,000	28,643	6,357	0
Z4751	Acquisition of Social Housing - Section 106	55,103	55,103		0
Z3201	Acquisition of Social Housing - Market	196,887	337,566	(145,000)	(4,321)
Z5101	Estate Regeneration - Heavitree (COB Wave III)	433,890	399,294	34,596	0
Z5102	Estate Regeneration - Whipton (Clifford Close)	3,280	0	3,280	0
Z5103	Estate Regeneration - Whipton (Vaughan Road)	6,040	0	6,040	0
Z5104	Estate Regeneration - St Davids (South Street)	183,695	139,449	44,246	0
	<b>COUNCIL OWN BUILD TOTAL</b>	<b>3,232,961</b>	<b>3,000,799</b>	<b>221,019</b>	<b>(11,143)</b>
	<b>OVERALL HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT TOTAL</b>	<b>7,414,521</b>	<b>6,264,876</b>	<b>938,079</b>	<b>(211,566)</b>

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APPENDIX 3

HRA AVAILABLE RESOURCES

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT	2017-18 £	2018-19 £	2019-20 £	2020-21 £	2021-22 £	TOTAL £
<b>CAPITAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE</b>						
Usable Receipts Brought Forward						5,607,226
Major Repairs Reserve Brought Forward						8,719,199
Other HRA Sales	47,364	392,000	0	0	0	439,364
RTB sales	3,167,725	500,000	500,000	400,000	400,000	4,967,725
Surrender back to DCLG - pending St Loyes financing decision	(4,729,876)	0	0	0	0	(4,729,876)
Major Repairs Reserve	3,000,614	3,006,450	3,006,450	3,006,450	3,006,450	15,026,414
Revenue Contributions to Capital	3,796,642	7,196,555	2,500,000	3,000,000	4,500,000	20,993,197
External contributions	58,121	364,000	228,424	0	0	650,545
Grant funding - HCA grant (St Loyes)	0	1,490,000	0	0	0	1,490,000
Grant funding - Estate Regeneration Funding	538,743	756,257	0	0	0	1,295,000
Grant funding - Zero Energy Buildings Project	0	216,000	0	0	0	216,000
Commuted sums	203,003	404,576	5,360,000	156,360	0	6,123,939
<b>Total Resources available</b>	<b>6,082,336</b>	<b>14,325,838</b>	<b>11,594,874</b>	<b>6,562,810</b>	<b>7,906,450</b>	<b>60,798,733</b>
<b>CAPITAL PROGRAMME</b>						
HRA Capital Programme	7,414,521	20,984,940	15,244,030	7,782,810	8,045,830	59,472,131
Outturn - Overspends / (Savings)	(211,566)					(211,566)
Outturn - Slippage / Re-profiling	(938,079)	(1,816,288)	1,568,417	172,092	1,013,858	0
<b>Total Housing Revenue Account</b>	<b>6,264,876</b>	<b>19,168,652</b>	<b>16,812,447</b>	<b>7,954,902</b>	<b>9,059,688</b>	<b>59,260,565</b>

<b>UNCOMMITTED CAPITAL RESOURCES:</b>						
Usable Receipts Brought Forward	5,607,226	2,974,873	2,791,873	2,541,873	1,441,873	5,607,226
Major Repairs Reserve Brought Forward	8,719,199	11,169,012	6,509,198	1,541,625	12,495,312	8,719,199
Resources in Year	6,082,336	14,325,838	11,594,874	6,562,810	7,906,450	46,472,308
Less Estimated Spend	(6,264,876)	(19,168,652)	(16,812,447)	(7,954,902)	(9,059,688)	(59,260,565)
<b>Uncommitted Capital Resources</b>	<b>14,143,885</b>	<b>9,301,071</b>	<b>4,083,498</b>	<b>2,691,406</b>	<b>12,783,947</b>	<b>1,538,168</b>

<b>WORKING BALANCE RESOURCES:</b>						
Balance Brought Forward	8,567,454	10,212,244	6,115,099	6,587,717	6,985,908	8,567,454
HRA Balance Transfer - Surplus/(Deficit)	1,644,790	(3,762,145)	472,618	398,191	(623,006)	(1,869,552)
Supplementary Budget Requests	0	(335,000)	0	0	0	(335,000)
Balance Carried Forward	10,212,244	6,115,099	6,587,717	6,985,908	6,362,902	6,362,902
Balance Resolved to be Retained	(4,000,000)	(4,000,000)	(4,000,000)	(4,000,000)	(4,000,000)	(4,000,000)
<b>Uncommitted HRA Working Balance</b>	<b>6,212,244</b>	<b>2,115,099</b>	<b>2,587,717</b>	<b>2,985,908</b>	<b>2,362,902</b>	<b>2,362,902</b>

<b>TOTAL AVAILABLE CAPITAL RESOURCES</b>	<b>20,356,129</b>	<b>11,416,170</b>	<b>6,671,215</b>	<b>5,677,314</b>	<b>15,146,849</b>	<b>3,901,070</b>
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**REPORT TO:** PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
**Date of Meeting:** 7 JUNE 2018  
**Report of:** Chief Finance Officer  
**Title:** 2017/18 Budget Monitoring Report – Outturn

**Is this a Key Decision?**

No

**Is this an Executive or Council Function?**

No

**1. What is the report about?**

This report advises Members of any material differences, by management unit, between the approved budget and the outturn for the financial year up to 31 March 2018 in respect of People Scrutiny Committee.

An outturn update in respect of the People Capital Programme is also incorporated into this report in order to help provide a comprehensive financial update in respect of the People Scrutiny Committee Budgets.

**2. Recommendations:**

**That Members of People Scrutiny Committee note the content of this report in order to be satisfied that prudent steps have been taken during the year to address any areas with significant variances, as highlighted in this report, and note the actual cost of delivering services for this Committee in the 2017/18 financial year.**

**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 and this is the final report for 2017/18.

**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:**

Whilst there has been an overspend in respect of the People Committee, overall Services across the Council have underspent by £1.223 million. Taking into account all other income and expenditure, the transfer from the working balance is £0.964 million lower than budget, leaving the working balance at £4.692 million.

**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 report raises no issues for the Monitoring Officer.

## 8. Report Details:

### Revenue Final Accounts to 31 March 2018

#### 8.1 Key Variations from Budget

The final outturn has been calculated and the report below highlights the major differences by management unit from the approved annual budget after adjusting for supplementary budgets.

The total variance for the year shows a deficit of £449,548 after transfers from reserves, as detailed in Appendix 1. This represents a variation of 15.36% from the revised budget.

#### 8.2 The significant variations by management unit are:

MU Code	Management Unit	Q3 Forecast Variance (Under)/ Overspend	Actual Budget Variance (Under)/ Overspend	Explanation of Actual Budget Variance
81E1	General Fund - Housing	(55,000)	2,905	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An underspend was previously reported, but a combination of former tenant rent arrear write-offs during March and a reduction in housing benefit income following the hand-back of Private Sector Leased properties have mitigated the underspend.</li> </ul>
86A1	Revenue Collection & Benefits	400,000	507,268	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As reported at quarter 3, income is lower than anticipated; Real time information updates received from the DWP over the past 2 years led to an increase in the recovery of overpayments of Housing Benefit. However, as the majority of historic cases have been dealt with the recovery has reduced. The Council does not set the amounts of overpayments that is considered recoverable.</li> <li>The amount of unsubsidised housing benefit expenditure is also higher than forecast due to a higher number of temporary and supported accommodation claims. The Council has a duty to accommodate and so these costs are not avoidable.</li> <li>£33k of expenditure has been financed from the Local Welfare Support Reserve</li> </ul>



## 9. Capital Budget Monitoring to 31 March 2018

To advise members of the financial performance in respect of the 2017/18 People Capital Programme.

### 9.1 Revisions to the People Capital Programme

The 2017/18 Capital Programme was last reported to People Scrutiny Committee on 12 March 2018. Since that meeting the following changes have been made to the programme.

Description	£	Approval/Funding
<b>Capital Programme, as reported to People Scrutiny Committee, 12 March 2018</b>	<b>1,697,210</b>	
Budget Deferred to 2018/19 & Beyond at Quarter 3	(328,950)	Approved by Council 24 April 2018
<b>Revised Capital Programme</b>	<b>1,368,260</b>	

### 9.2 Performance

The current People Capital Programme is detailed in Appendix 2. The appendix shows a total spend of £959,437 in 2017/18 with £408,823 of the programme deferred until 2018/19.

### 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

Schemes which have been identified as being wholly or partly deferred to 2018/19 and beyond are:

Scheme	17/18 Budget £	Budget to be Deferred £	Reason
Disabled Facility Grants	685,820	356,071	The level of grants awarded was less than the Better Care Fund income received from Devon County Council, however, this money can be carried forward to 2018/19 to fund further expenditure.
Wessex Loan Scheme	107,820	79,033	Take up of loans has been less than predicted.
Temporary Accommodation Purchase	450,000	(26,281)	The purchase of the property was completed in February this year. There is £109k budget remaining in 2018/19 to carry out the property refurbishment.

**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 to committee as part of the quarterly budget monitoring updates.

**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  
2017/18 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - OUTTURN**

CODE		APPROVED BUDGET £	OUTTURN £	OUTTURN VARIANCE £	QTR 3 FORECAST VARIANCE £
81C2	ADVISORY SERVICES	1,053,080	1,046,811	(6,269)	0
81C3	AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT	343,610	326,517	(17,093)	0
81C4	PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING	127,830	123,216	(4,614)	0
81C5	SUNDRY LANDS MAINTENANCE	87,790	87,790	0	0
81E1	GF HOUSING - PROPERTY	91,980	94,885	2,905	(55,000)
86A1	REVENUE COLLECTION/BENEFITS	1,222,840	1,730,108	507,268	400,000
	<b>NET EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>2,927,130</b>	<b>3,409,328</b>	<b>482,198</b>	<b>345,000</b>

**TRANSFERS TO / (FROM) EARMARKED RESERVES**

86A1 - Expenditure funded from Local Welfare Support Reserve	(32,672)
81C2 - Transfer surplus to Devon Home Choice Reserve	22

<b>EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR AFTER MOVEMENTS TO/FROM RESERVES</b>	<b>3,376,678</b>
<b>REVISED BUDGETS</b>	<b>2,927,130</b>
<b>ADJUSTED OUTTURN VARIANCE</b>	<b>449,548</b>

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**PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**2017/18 CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - OUTTURN**

	2017/18 Capital Programme	2017/18 Spend to 31 March	2017/18 Budget to be Carried Forward to 2018/19 and Beyond	2017/18 Programme Variances (Under)/Over
	£	£	£	£
<b>PEOPLE</b>				
<b><i>HELP ME FIND SOMEWHERE TO LIVE</i></b>				
Disabled Facility Grants	685,820	313,629	356,071	(16,121)
Warm Up Exeter/PLEA Scheme	124,620	140,741	0	16,121
Wessex Loan Scheme	107,820	28,787	79,033	0
Temporary Accommodation Purchase	450,000	476,281	(26,281)	0
<b>PEOPLE TOTAL</b>	<b>1,368,260</b>	<b>959,437</b>	<b>408,823</b>	<b>0</b>

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**REPORT TO:** PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
**DATE OF MEETING:** 7 JUNE 2018

**REPORT TO:** EXECUTIVE  
**DATE OF MEETING:** 12 JUNE 2018

**REPORT TO:** COUNCIL  
**DATE OF MEETING:** 24 JULY 2018

**REPORT OF:** Environmental Health and Licensing Manager  
**TITLE:** Financial Assistance Policy for the Better Care Fund

**Is this a Key Decision?**

No

**Is this an Executive or Council Function?**

Council

**1. What is the report about?**

- 1.1 The report presents a revised Financial Assistance Policy under Article 4 of the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 to ensure policies are in place to maximise grant spending of the Council's Better Care Fund Allocation. The policy has been developed by both the County and district Councils to ensure a consistent approach across Devon.

**2. Recommendations:**

- 2.1 People Scrutiny Committee supports the recommendation to approve the proposed Financial Assistance Policy in order to ensure increased funding provided via the Better Care Fund is delivered to those who have not previously been able to obtain financial assistance.
- 2.2 Executive supports the recommendation to Council to approve the proposed Financial Assistance Policy in order to ensure increased funding provided via the Better Care Fund is delivered to those who have not previously been able to obtain financial assistance.
- 2.3 Council adopts the Financial Assistance Policy.

**3. Reasons for the recommendation:**

- 3.1 Funding for Disabled Facilities Grants, which is administered through the Better Care Fund, has been increased by central government to ensure that vulnerable individuals can remain safe and healthy in their homes.
- 3.2 This policy allows the Council to broaden its ability to provide financial assistance to those disabled persons who do not qualify for the mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant system, provide financial assistance to undertake preventive measures reducing hospital admissions and demand for social care and reduce delayed hospital discharges by working in collaboration with health services to provide funding to remove housing related obstacles preventing discharge.

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

- 4.1 The assistance detailed in the policy will be fully funded by the Council's national allocation received through the Better Care Fund managed by Devon County Council.
- 4.2 Exeter City Council is not expected to provide its own capital towards the delivery of the assistance as the national allocation through the Better Care Fund is currently sufficient to cover existing demand.
- 4.3 Future allocations of the Better Care Fund for mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants from Devon County Council will be made to each District Council on a demand basis. This is to ensure that mandatory demand for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) is met throughout the County before any remaining funding is distributed to the district councils for the other forms of assistance.
- 4.4 There is an ability for the Council to suspend all or parts of the discretionary elements of the policy if funding is not adequate within any given year to meet statutory demand for mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants.

**5. Section 151 Officer comments:**

- 5.1 The funding and financial assistance is allocated from Better Care Funding. Exeter City Council is awarded funding from Devon County Council and presently provides no additional top up funds. Any recovered funds under the policy would be used to provide additional grants or assistance and as such there are no financial implications affecting the Council to consider.

**6. What are the legal aspects?**

- 6.1 In formulating this policy reference has been made to The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 and Better Care Fund guidance.
- 6.2 The impact of the proposed Financial Assistance Policy is one of providing a greater level of financial and other interventions by the Council for those with a disability, are vulnerable or have a specific health condition. The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 makes it clear assistance is primarily based on need of the individual, although the health and safety concerns of carers and other family members are also considered.
- 6.3 Procedures have been put in place in an attempt to avoid fraud and misappropriation of funds.

**7. Monitoring Officer's comments:**

- 7.1 This report raises no issues to concern the Monitoring Officer.

**8. Report details:**

- 8.1 The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 [the RRO] came into force on the 18 July 2003 giving local authorities discretion to tailor the financial assistance that they make available to householders to suit local needs. The Regulatory Reform Order also encourages local authorities to move away from



awarding grants for assisting with the maintenance of the private sector stock to either awarding loans directly or enabling home owners to take up loans through a third party.

- 8.2 Since 2010 Exeter City Council has been offering home improvement loans through a partnership with Wessex Reinvestment Trust, and have awarded 131 loans with a value of over £900,000 which has been recycled to fund further loans. Following a recent independent review which highlighted the potential for more households to benefit from this loan offer, improved branding and marketing of the scheme is underway.
- 8.3 The Council continues to have a mandatory duty to award Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) to applicants who need to adapt their homes due to a disability. The purposes for which grants can be awarded and the method of delivery are proscribed in legislation.
- 8.4 In addition to mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants, the Regulatory Reform Order allows local authorities to develop their own discretionary grants to assist householders with flexibility on the method of their delivery
- 8.5 In 2015 the Government changed the way in which Disabled Facilities Grants are funded by introducing the Better Care Fund (BCF) in an attempt to bring health and social care together in an integrated way. The fund is a combination of government funding from the Department of Health and the Department for Communities and Local Government and includes the grant allocation for disabled facilities grants.
- 8.6 The Better Care Fund allocation for all second tier councils in the county is paid directly to Devon County Council who are obliged to passport the entire allocation granted to each district. Unlike the previous method of allocation the funding is not ring fenced for Disabled Facilities Grants but can be used flexibly to meet the Better Care Fund objectives. The 2017/18 allocation for the City Council was £660,128 with the 2018/19 allocation likely to be more.
- 8.7 The 2017-19 Integration and Better Care Fund policy framework document sets out the objectives for which Better Care Fund monies can be used. These objectives include:
- Objective 1 - Assist disabled residents to remain in their own homes through supporting the provision of adaptations (so far as this is necessary, appropriate and reasonably practicable) to prevent admissions to care and to assist with delayed transfers where possible.
- Objective 2 – Safeguard the health and well-being of vulnerable residents by removing unnecessary hazards to health and safety in the home to reduce avoidable emergency admissions
- Objective 3 – Provide adaptations that are suitable for the future by ensuring the scheme of works is dementia aware.
- Objective 4 – assist vulnerable people to afford to heat their homes through appropriate energy efficiency and heating measures.
- 8.8 The Better Care Fund currently provides more funding than is required to meet the demand for mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants. A recent independent review highlighted that for Exeter, the demand is lower than expected and plans are underway

to provide more accessible information and marketing to provide better information to residents and health and care workers to increase the number and success of applications. In addition a flexible policy allowing assistance to a wider range of households, beyond the scope of Disabled Facilities Grants, which meets the Better Care Fund objectives will allow the City Council to fully utilise the Better Care Fund allocation.

- 8.10 The proposed new policy can be found in Appendix A to this report. The policy will provide the flexibility and discretion for the council to provide appropriate assistance to residents who could benefit and meet the objectives of the Better Care Fund.

### ***Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)***

- 8.11 The Disabled Facilities Grant programme is mandatory and a statutory function of the local housing authority undertaken by the Private Sector Housing Team within Environmental Health and Licensing.
- 8.12 Disabled Facilities Grants will continue to be operated in line with the Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, with a maximum of £30,000 being available and means testing being undertaken on all applicants except for child applications. Conditions will also be placed on all grants over £5,000 requiring repayment in certain specific circumstances. Given their mandatory status funding Disabled Facilities Grants will take precedence over any discretionary funding, so if in the future allocations are reduced then certain discretionary funding would, as a necessity, reduce or cease.

### ***Accessible Homes Grant***

- 8.13 The Accessible Homes Grant enables an enhanced offer in addition to the Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant subject to available funding. This grant is available in the following circumstances:
- To top up a mandatory grant where the cost of the work exceeds £30,000 (in certain circumstances)
  - To fund works beyond the scope of a Disabled Facilities Grant to make a property safe for the disabled occupant.
  - To fund a Disabled Facilities Grant clients contribution (in certain circumstances) identified as a result of the means test.
  - To fund the cost of moving house where moving is more appropriate than adapting the existing property.

### ***Healthy Homes Grant***

- 8.14 The Healthy Homes Grant will provide urgent/essential repairs to the home to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the occupier. The grant is only available where a Home Improvement Loan is unavailable.

### ***Home Improvement Loans***

- 8.15 Wessex Resolutions Community Interest Company currently administers loans within the requirements of this policy and the local policies of each district council within Devon. The Home Improvement Loan is a flexible product that can be used for the following purposes:

- Home repairs and improvements
- Adaptation works where a grant is not available
- To cover a client contribution to a grant
- To cover the cost of the work over the grant maximum.
- To bring empty homes back into use
- For landlords to carry out repairs or improvement to rented accommodation
- For energy efficiency improvements

### ***Warm Up Grants***

- 8.16 Warm Up Grants aim to provide top up funding for energy efficiency measures, e.g. loft and cavity wall insulation or boiler replacement, where funding from energy companies under their Energy Company Obligation (ECO) have been awarded but the available funding does not cover the full cost of the work.
- 8.17 Funding will also be given for energy efficiency measures not currently funded through Energy Company Obligation, for example insulating mobile homes, fuel switching (from electricity to gas) and first time central heating installations

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

- 9.1 The Financial Assistance Policy relates to the key actions of 'Help me find somewhere suitable to live' and contributes to 'a healthy and safe city.' Addressing housing conditions contributes not only to the objective within the Council Corporate Plan but also more widely as:-

- Good quality housing attracts companies and workers - leading to an economically prosperous city
- Children and young people are better able to benefit from education if they are well housed – leading to a city of excellence in learning
- Good quality housing promotes community safety – leading to a safer place in which to live, work and visit
- High quality, affordable, warm homes promote health and wellbeing – leading to a healthy city

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

- 10.1 There are no major risks associated with the policy which only slightly amends the existing policy which has been fully funded by the Better Care Fund. Not having a policy could mean that the Council would be unable to utilise the Better Care Fund for anything other than the mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants.

## **12. Are there any other options?**

- 12.1 It could be decided not to adopt the new policy, however given the current policy does not reflect the current situation and solutions for the demands placed upon Private Sector Housing Team by the Better Care Fund, this option would prevent assisting vulnerable customers.

Originating Officer: Simon Lane, Environmental Health and Licensing Manager

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

**Background papers used in compiling this report:-**

- The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002
- Technical Guidance Annex 4: Better Care Fund Planning Requirements for 2016/17  
<https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/technical-guidanceannex--bf0.pdf>

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# **Financial Assistance Policy for the Better Care Fund**

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## SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Purpose

- 1.1.1 This policy is required under Article 4 of the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002. The Order provides councils with the discretion to develop schemes to provide financial assistance to deal with a range of housing issues.
- 1.1.2 This policy sets out the areas on which The City Council will focus Better Care Fund resources in order to improve housing conditions across the district whilst contributing to the delivery of the Better Care Fund, Health and Wellbeing Board and local priorities.
- 1.1.3 This policy provides Exeter City Council with the flexibility and discretion to provide appropriate assistance to meet the aims and priorities set out in section 3 below and had been developed in association with Devon County Council and all the district councils in the county.

### 1.2 Funding

- 1.2.1 The assistance contained within this policy is only available subject to the availability of funding. Where funding is limited priority for spend will be given to the Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant.

## SECTION 2 - CONTEXT

### 2.1 Housing and Health

- 2.1.1 Housing is a key determinant of health, and by promoting good quality housing this policy can contribute to reducing health inequalities for the residents of Exeter.
- 2.1.2 In 2002, flexibilities were introduced enabling councils to use government grant that has been allocated for disabled facilities grants to be used more intelligently to deliver adaptations for disabled people outside of the mandatory grant regime.
- 2.1.3 Research has shown that there is a direct impact on the health and well-being of residents resulting from the homes in which they live; therefore, poor housing can contribute to poor health.
- 2.1.4 Each year hazards in the home result in unnecessary injuries, episodes of ill-health, and harm to mental health and in many cases the occupiers do not link the poor condition of their homes with a potential negative impact on their health. The poorest housing stock can be found in the private sector, and in some cases residents who own their own home are not able to maintain them and as a result hazards can develop.
- 2.1.5 An estimated 34,400 excess winter deaths were recorded in England and Wales in 2016/17 as reported by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) in their document Excess Winter Mortality in England and Wales 2016-17. Many of these people die unnecessarily as a result of living in cold homes

### 2.2 Better Care Fund

- 2.2.1 In 2015 the government introduced the Better Care Fund in an attempt to bring health and social care together in an integrated way. The fund is a combination of government funding from the Department of Health and the Department for Communities and Local Government and includes the grant allocation for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG). The 2017-19 Integration and Better Care Fund policy framework document lists the conditions that the better care fund must be used to address.

- 2.2.2 These are:

**Condition 1:** *Plans to be jointly agreed* – The plan to use the Better Care Fund allocation must be jointly agreed and signed off by the Health and Wellbeing Board, and constituent councils and clinical commissioning groups. The local housing authority must also be involved due to the inclusion of the Disabled Facilities Grants allocation, which forms part of the fund

**Condition 2:** *NHS contribution to social care is maintained in line with inflation.* - The funding must be used to contribute to the maintenance of adult social care services in each local authority, which also has a health benefit. However, beyond this broad condition, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) wants to provide flexibility for local areas to determine how this investment in adult social care services is best used.



**Condition 3:** *Agreement to invest in NHS commissioned out of hospital services, which may include 7 day services and adult social care.* This should be achieved by funding NHS commissioned out-of-hospital services, which may also include 7-day services and adult social care, as part of the agreed Better Care Fund plan.

**Condition 4:** *Managing Transfers of Care* - Plans should set out how local partners will work together to fund and implement transfers of care effectively.

- 2.2.3 More detail can be found in the 2017-19 Integration and Better Care Fund Policy Framework.
- 2.2.4 Based on these broad conditions, Devon County Council and the District Councils have identified an opportunity to provide additional grant and loan products to meet these conditions and deliver against the Health and Wellbeing Board priorities.

## SECTION 3 - PRIORITIES

### 3.1 General

3.1.1 In Devon, the Better Care Fund priorities aim to achieve the following outcomes:

- Reduced admissions to residential and nursing care homes
- Reduce delayed transfers of care
- Reduce avoidable emergency admissions
- Increase dementia diagnosis rates

3.1.2 To meet these priorities this policy aims to focus on the following areas:

**Objective 1** - Assist disabled residents to remain in their own homes through supporting the provision of adaptations (so far as this is necessary, appropriate and reasonably practicable) to prevent admissions to care and to assist with delayed transfers where possible.

**Objective 2** – Safeguard the health and well-being of vulnerable residents by removing unnecessary hazards to health and safety in the home to reduce avoidable emergency admissions

**Objective 3** – Provide adaptations that are suitable for the future by ensuring the scheme of works is dementia aware.

**Objective 4** – Assist vulnerable people to afford to heat their homes through appropriate energy efficiency and heating measures.

## **SECTION 4 – MANDATORY DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS (DFGs)**

### **4.1 Background**

- 4.1.1 The delivery of the disabled facilities grant programme is mandatory and a statutory function of the local housing authority. The delivery of this function is governed by the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.

### **4.2 Eligibility**

- 4.2.1 Any disabled householder seeking financial assistance with the cost of adaptations to their home must be assessed by an Occupational Therapist (OT) working on behalf of, or approved by Devon County Council.

- 4.2.2 A person aged eighteen or over shall be considered disabled if:

- they are registered under section 29(1) of the National Assistance Act 1948 (disabled persons' welfare), or
- they are a person for whose welfare arrangements have been made under that provision or, in the opinion of the social services authority, might be made under it.

- 4.2.3 A person under the age of eighteen shall be considered disabled if:

- they are on a register of disabled children maintained under paragraph 2 of Schedule 2 to the Children Act 1989, or
- they are in the opinion of the social services authority a disabled child as defined for the purposes of Part III of the Children Act 1989 (local authority support for children and their families).

- 4.2.4 All owner-occupiers, tenants, licensees or occupiers who meet the above criteria are eligible to apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant.

### **4.3 Conditions**

- 4.3.1 All grants other than those for children are subject to a test of financial resources, which is prescribed by The Housing Renewal Grants Regulations 1996.

- 4.3.2 The grant maximum is £30,000 and the disabled person must intend to occupy the property as their only or main residence for a period of five years after the works are complete (or such shorter period as the person's health or other relevant circumstances permit).

- 4.3.3 In order to make an application the client must supply the following:

- A completed and signed application form
- Evidence of financial situation
- Evidence of ownership of the property or the right to reside at the property
- Permission for the works to be carried out

- A detailed schedule of works and plans for complex works that must be agreed by the council
  - Any planning or building regulation approvals
  - Tenders for the works unless using an agreed procurement framework.
- 4.3.4 Only the works agreed by the council will be covered by the grant.
- 4.3.5 If the grant is approved there are 12 months to complete the works.
- 4.3.6 The works must be completed by the contractor stated on the approval document
- 4.3.7 No grant works should proceed until the grant application has been processed and all relevant planning, Building Regulation or landlord approval has been obtained.
- 4.3.8 If the applicant has a contribution to pay they must ensure they have funds in place to cover their share of the costs before the work begins on site.
- 4.3.9 Unforeseen and additional costs will only be paid for where they are necessary to complete the adaptation and must be agreed by the council before they are undertaken.
- 4.3.10 Any increase in the grant may have an impact on the charge placed against the property.
- 4.3.11 Applicants who are successful in their application for assistance will be required to maintain the adaptation.
- 4.3.12 The contract for the works is the responsibility of the applicant.
- 4.3.13 The grant will normally be paid direct to contractors in all but the most exceptional cases.
- 4.3.14 No grant will be paid until a satisfactory invoice has been received and the works have been carried out to the satisfaction of the Council.
- 4.3.15 Only works falling within the mandatory elements will be covered by the grant, these are works to:
- Facilitating access
  - Make a dwelling safe for the disabled occupier or persons residing with him/her
  - Provide rooms useable for sleeping
  - Provide bathrooms
  - Facilitate the provision for cooking of food
  - Provide heating, lighting and power
  - Adapt a property to enable a disabled occupier care for a dependant
  - Adapt the common parts
  - Provide access to garden
- 4.3.16 Where the grant is in excess of £5,000 a local land charge will be placed on the property for the amount over £5,000 up to a maximum of £10,000, requiring repayment of the grant becomes repayable (e.g. if the property is sold within a period of 10 years or a breach of conditions).
- 4.3.17 Where the cost of the work exceeds the mandatory grant limit of £30,000 the applicant may be eligible to an Accessible Homes Grant, subject to available funds.

## SECTION 5 – ACCESSIBLE HOME GRANTS

### 5.1 Background

5.1.1 The Accessible Homes Grant enables an enhanced offer in addition to the Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant subject to available funding and can be used for, amongst other things

- the provision of safe play areas;
- adapting or providing a room in order for the disabled occupier to work from home;
- the installation of domestic automatic sprinkler systems into the homes of the most vulnerable;
- the installation of hard-wired interlinked smoke detectors in the hall and landing areas.

5.1.2 This grant is available in the following circumstances:

- Where a mandatory grant has been approved but the cost of the work exceeds £30,000
- Where there are works that may not be covered by the Disabled Facilities Grant in relation to adapting the home and making it safe.
- Where the means test identifies that a contribution is required.

### 5.2 Eligibility

5.2.1 To be eligible for this grant the applicant must meet the following:

- The applicant must be eligible to apply for a mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant
- All applicants are subject to a means test including the parents and/or guardians of a disabled child.
- An applicant will only be eligible to apply for a grant to cover their assessed contribution in respect of a mandatory Disabled Facility Grant where the contribution is a third or more of the applicant's savings.

### 5.3 Conditions

5.3.1 The grant maximum is £20,000. Anything over £20,000 will not attract any further public grant.

5.3.2 Where additional funding is required to cover either a contribution or the cost of works over £50,000 (£30,000 from the Disabled Facilities Grant and £20,000 from the Accessible Homes Grant), then a Home Improvement Loan application can be made.

5.3.3 The Disabled Facility Grant paperwork will be used to assist the applicant in making an application for this grant.

- 5.3.4 A local land charge will be placed on the property for the full value of the grant which will be repayable if the property is sold, assigned or transferred within 25 years of the grant being completed.
- 5.3.5 Only the works agreed by the council will be covered by the grant
- 5.3.6 If the grant is approved there are 12 months to complete the works
- 5.3.7 The works must be completed by the contractor stated on the approval document
- 5.3.8 No grant works should proceed until the grant application has been processed and all relevant planning, Building Regulation or landlord approval has been obtained.
- 5.3.9 Unforeseen and additional costs will only be paid for where they are necessary to complete the adaptation and must be agreed by the council before they are undertaken.
- 5.3.10 Any increase in the grant may have an impact on the charge placed against the property.
- 5.3.11 Applicants who are successful in their application for assistance will be required to maintain the adaptation.
- 5.3.12 The contract for the works is the responsibility of the applicant.
- 5.3.13 The grant will normally be paid direct to contractors in all but the most exceptional cases.
- 5.3.14 The council will only offer grant for those works that are considered mandatory to meet the needs of the disabled person.
- 5.3.15 No grant will be paid until a satisfactory invoice has been received and the works have been carried out to the satisfaction of the Council.

## SECTION 6 – ACCESSIBLE HOME GRANTS – MOVING APPLICATION

### 6.1 Background

- 6.1.1 This grant may be available to assist a disabled person to move to more suitable accommodation subject to available funding.

### 6.2 Eligibility

- 6.2.1 An applicant will be eligible for this grant where:

- The applicant meets the eligibility criteria for a Disabled Facility Grant.
- Where the Occupational Therapist and/or Exeter City Council consider re-housing to be more appropriate than adapting the existing accommodation.
- To be eligible for this grant the total cost incurred in the eligible 'moving on' expenses and any estimated eligible adaptation costs at the 'new' property should not be greater than the cost of adapting the applicant's current home.
- The 'new' property shall in the opinion of Exeter City Council provide a long term, sustainable home for the person for whose benefit the works are required.
- If the property is within a neighbouring authority the new authority will need to ensure the new property is suitable. This should also be agreed with the occupational therapist. The applicant must ensure that Exeter City Council's Private Sector Housing Team and Occupational Therapist have been consulted.

- 6.2.2 In determining the 'reasonable expenses' regard shall be had to the following criteria:

- The cost of the eligible works at the applicants existing property are not deemed reasonable, or;
- The eligible works at the applicants existing home are not technically feasible, or;
- The adaptation of the applicants existing property does not provide a sustainable, long term solution for their housing needs.

### 6.3 Eligibility

- 6.3.1 **Owner Occupier** - The expenses that can attract grant under this section may include the cost of:

- Any fees associated with obtaining a mortgage.
- Conveyancing fees.
- Land Registry Fee
- Local Authority Searches
- Stamp Duty
- Valuation, Homebuyers or Full Structural Survey
- Professional or other removal costs
- Estate Agent Commission.

- 6.3.2 The maximum grant payable for eligible expenses under this heading for an owner occupier is £10,000.

- 6.3.3 **For a tenant** - the expenses that can attract grant under this section may include the cost of:

- Letting agent fees
- Rent deposit
- Professional or other removal fees

6.3.4 The maximum grant payable for eligible expenses under this heading for a tenant is £5,000.

#### **6.4 Conditions**

6.4.1 Grant assistance is only payable to an owner occupier upon the successful completion of the purchase of the 'new' property and the disabled person then occupying that property as their only and main residence.

6.4.2 When moving to rented accommodation the applicant must obtain permission from the landlord for any adaptations to be carried out before the grant will be paid.

6.4.3 To qualify for this grant, the applicant must have been resident in their current property for at least 2 years prior to making an application to move.

6.4.4 The applicant must agree to live in the property as their only or main residence for a period of 5 years (or such shorter period as the person's health or other relevant circumstances permit).

6.4.5 For owner occupiers a local land charge or a charge against the deeds will be placed against the property for a period of 5 years.



## SECTION 7 – HEALTHY HOMES GRANTS

### 7.1 Background

- 7.1.1 The Healthy Homes grant is a flexible grant to provide urgent/essential repairs to the home to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the occupier.

### 7.2 Eligibility

- 7.2.1 An applicant must apply for a Wessex loan first and will only be eligible to apply for this grant if a loan is refused.
- 7.2.2 Where the client is not eligible for a Wessex loan then they may apply for this grant.
- 7.2.3 To qualify for this grant the applicant must be in receipt of one of the following benefits:
- Housing Benefit
  - Disability Living Allowance
  - Personal Independent Payment with the daily living component
  - Attendance Allowance
  - Guarantee Pension Credit
  - Income support
  - Council tax support (not the single person discount)
  - Universal Credit – universal credit replaces the following means tested benefits – Housing Benefit, income related ESA, Income based JSA, Child tax credit, working tax credit and income support.

### 7.3 Conditions

- 7.3.1 The maximum grant available is £5,000 over a rolling two year period.
- 7.3.2 The grant is only available for owner occupiers and will have no repayment conditions attached.

## SECTION 8 – HOME IMPROVEMENT LOANS

### 8.1 Background

- 8.1.1 Wessex Resolutions Community Interest Company (WRCIC) is a not-for-profit company contracted by Exeter City Council to deliver loans to residents in the city.
- 8.1.2 Wessex Resolutions Community Interest Company administer loans within the requirements of this policy. Home Improvement Loans are flexible and can be used for the following purposes:
- Home repairs and improvements
  - Adaptation works where grant is not available
  - To cover a client contribution to a grant
  - To cover the cost of the work over the Disabled Facilities Grant or Accessible Homes Grant maximum.
  - To bring empty homes back into use
  - For landlords to carry out repairs or improvement to rented accommodation
  - For energy efficiency improvements

### 8.2 Eligibility

- 8.2.1 This will vary and is based on the individual circumstances of each client. Loan advisors will carry out an assessment and provide independent advice on ethical and responsible lending the most appropriate product to suit their needs.

### 8.3 Conditions

- 8.3.1 Conditions may vary depending on the loan product selected and the individual circumstances of each applicant.
- 8.3.2 Typical 4.2% APR, loans are subject to status. Wessex Resolutions Community Interest Company may insist on loans being protected at the Land Registry by a Title Restriction. Missing payments could affect your credit rating and ability to obtain credit in the future.

## SECTION 9 – WARM UP GRANTS

### 9.1 Background

9.1.1 These grants, up to a maximum £2,000 per property, provide top up funding for energy efficiency measures where energy providers are part funding energy efficiency measures under their Energy Company Obligation (ECO) or to fund energy efficiency measures which do not attract Energy Company Obligation, for example insulation to mobile homes and the installation of central heating for the first time.

9.1.2 Works will generally include:

- Mains gas boiler replacement,
- Loft insulation,
- Cavity wall insulation,
- Non-gas boiler replacements,
- Replacement storage heaters,
- Internal or external wall insulation,
- Room in roof insulation,
- Flat roof insulation

### 9.2 Eligibility

9.2.1 Applicants must have been identified through the Council's Energy Company Obligation flexible eligibility Statement of Intent which can be found on the council's website.

9.2.2 To qualify for the top up a survey must be carried out by the energy provider, a local installer, or an agent and qualifying works identified. Provisions will be in place to ensure value for money.

9.2.3 For owner occupiers and private landlords a maximum of up to £2,000 is available.

9.2.4 If more than £2,000 is needed then the client should apply for a Wessex loan subject to availability and eligibility

### 9.3 Conditions

9.3.1 The contract for the works is the responsibility of the applicant.

9.3.2 The grant will normally be paid direct to contractors in all but the most exceptional cases.

9.3.3 No grant will be paid until a satisfactory invoice has been received and the works have been carried out to the satisfaction of the client and Council.

## SECTION 10 – MISCELLANEOUS

### **10.1 Exceptions to this Policy**

- 10.1.1 Exeter City Council accept that applications may be received for adaptations not covered by the circumstances listed above which will need to be formally determined. Any such application will be referred through the appropriate process of the council managing the application.

### **10.2 Appeals and Complaints**

- 10.2.1 Where the applicant has a complaint about the manner in which Exeter City Council is applying this policy, then they should follow the Council's formal complaints process.
- 10.2.2 Where the complaint is in respect of works, the complaint should be made to the contractor in the first instance, if this does not resolve the problem then the Exeter City Council should be contacted for advice.
- .

## APPENDIX A – ELIGIBLE WORKS

### **A1. Disabled Facilities Grant and Accessible Homes Grant**

- A1.1 An assessment by an agreed Occupational Therapist must be carried out that recommends the type of adaptation required. Minor works are assessed by the Occupational Therapist and may be dealt with outside of the grant process.

### **A.2 Facilitating access**

#### **A2.1 Facilitating access by the disabled occupant**

- to and from the dwelling
- to a room used or usable as the principle family room
- to a room used for or usable for sleeping
- to a room in which there is a lavatory
- to a room in which there is a bath or shower
- to a room with a wash hand basin

#### **A2.2 Such works may include:**

- Ramping and/or handrails to the main external door. This could instead be a rear door in the case of a rear access. Only one access point will be allowed for each dwelling. External lifts will be considered if reasonably practicable and they are not prone to vandalism.
- Widening the main entrance door and the doorways to the bedroom, bathroom and living room to facilitate wheelchair access. Automatic door opening to main entrance doors will only be allowed for persons who are otherwise unable to open the door. Door entry systems will be considered where the person has severe mobility problems.
- Access to other rooms may be considered where the disabled person is also a carer.
- Other adaptations that are necessary to facilitate access to any of the relevant rooms by the disabled person, for example, stair lifts or vertical lifts in some cases. Where a stair lift breaks down and it is 5-10 years old, a manufacturers report is needed before it can be replaced. If it is over 10 years, a report may not be required.
- Provision of hard standings (3.6 m x 4.8 m max unless exceptional circumstances) and associated crossover for vehicle access where the disabled person is in a wheelchair or has difficulty walking to the house. This will only be given where existing on-street parking is considered unsatisfactory and a marked disabled parking bay is not possible or where it affords a more economical solution than providing additional paths/ramping from the roadside. Provision of off-street parking on its own is not eligible. (Please note: Being a holder of a blue badge is not an eligibility criterion for this item).
- Washing facilities Facilitating the use of washing facilities by the disabled occupant
- Adaptation of the facilities in the bathroom and toilet, including the provision of level access showers, lever taps and specialist automated WCs. The adaptation

or provision of more than one bathroom to a house e.g. additional ground floor wc, will only be considered if evidenced by functional need.

### **A3 Kitchen Facilities Facilitating the preparation and cooking of food**

A3.1 Where someone other than the disabled person does and will continue to do the cooking and preparation of meals, normally it will not be necessary to carry out full adaptations.

However, it may be possible to carry out minor adaptations to allow the disabled person to prepare light meals or hot drinks, typically this may include a low-level worktop with power points for a kettle/microwave.

A3.2 Full adaptations can be considered where the disabled person is the only or main user of the kitchen. The following adaptations can be considered:

- a. Kitchen sink, including alteration to its height or position or the type of taps fitted to it. Powered, adjustable-height sinks will not generally be allowed, as the provision of a second sink is a more economical solution.
- b. Cooker point and oven-housing unit ensuring its height and position is in a safe location and the provision of worktops on either side.
- c. Work surfaces located beside the sink and on each side of the cooker having a total length of approximately 1.5m, all at a suitable height for the disabled person.
- d. Food storage in an accessible position, usually space for a refrigerator with power supply.
- e. Wheelchair access, if necessary, including wider doors, rearrangement of facilities etc.
- f. Alterations to the kitchen door, light switches and power points, but only if it is necessary.
- g. Extensions or enlargement to kitchens can only be agreed where they are absolutely necessary in order to provide turning space for a wheelchair and if suitable space cannot be achieved by rearrangement of the existing facilities.
- h. The provision of cupboard and storage units on an "essential" basis. (2x1m base units and baskets or equivalent).
- i. Mechanical ventilation where kitchen schemes require Building Regulation approval.

### **A4 Electrical work**

A4.1 Alterations to the height and/or position of light switches and power points to make them accessible to the disabled person.

A4.2 Upgrading of electrical installation where the current installation is considered unsafe.

### **A5 Heating**

A5.1 Heating the rooms that are in everyday use by the disabled person where a medical need can be demonstrated. Changes to the type of heating system will only be allowed if evidenced by medical need (e.g. change from solid fuel to gas where applicant can no longer carry fuel) and the applicant is not eligible for other types of grant such as Eco Flex

A5.2 Upgrading/replacing of boilers/radiators where the property has been extended as part of the adaptation.

### **A6 Guarding**

A6.1 Provision of laminate glass or specialist lighting or guards to fires and around radiators where disabled children with violent behavioural problems may harm themselves.

A6.2 Restrictors or works to windows for the safety of the disabled person.

## **A7 Alarms**

A7.1 Provision of enhanced fire alarm systems for those with hearing difficulties.

## **A8 Structural alterations**

A8.1 Carrying out structural alterations where necessary to provide fixings for disabled equipment provided by Social Services e.g. fixing for tracking /overhead hoists.

A8.2 Storage or space for essential medical equipment as part of the adaptation works but not as a standalone item.

A8.3 Where an adaptation is required to a listed building and additional works are required to comply with requirements.

A8.4 Where an adaptation cannot be carried out due to disrepair issues those repairs, within reason, may be carried out. Such works may include replacement of rotted flooring or strengthening of the floor as part of a flush floor shower installation, electrical repairs to enable works to be carried out safely, and dealing with low water pressure. More substantial repairs that are not directly affecting the adaptation will need to be referred to a home improvement loan or healthy homes grant.

A8.5 Additional bathrooms or bedrooms may be allowed where they are specifically for the disabled person and it can be demonstrated that adaptation of other rooms or space or access to those rooms in the property is unsuitable. Extensions will only be allowed following a detailed cost/benefit analysis of alternative options.

A8.6 Requests are sometimes received to provide separate bedrooms where disabled children with behavioural difficulties share a room with other siblings and disturb their sleep. This will only be considered where it can be demonstrated the child is prone to violent outbursts and there is risk of physical harm to the child or to the other siblings. Families will first be expected to re-arrange the sleeping arrangements in their home to try to eliminate the need for extra bedrooms. If there is more than one reception room the family will be expected to use the extra room(s) for sleeping purposes.

## **A9 Garden and external access**

A9.1 In cases of small terraced properties with narrow passageways or very difficult access, effective adaptation can only proceed where it can be reasonably and practicably carried out without having a detrimental impact on neighbouring properties.

A9.2 Access to the garden may be given to improve an existing access to make it safe for the disabled occupant to use. It does not include extending an existing access e.g. creating a side access so a person can also go around the side of a house. Generally, the most modest solution for providing access to both the house and the garden will be considered and this can mean that one access may be sufficient to access both the house and the garden. Where homes have communal gardens, e.g., blocks of flats served by a single access, grants will not normally be provided for an individual access to the garden unless it can be demonstrated that because of the

disabled persons condition the travel distance to the garden would be excessive and unreasonable.

- A9.3 The grant will only be for providing immediate access to the garden and does not include landscaping gardens to make them more suitable for the disabled person to access. However, to assist a disabled person to live independently, an allowance of 4m<sup>2</sup> of pathway, (which may include a turning circle for a wheelchair user), will be considered to assist access to any specific areas enjoyed by the disabled person. □ Provision of fencing or guarding for the safety of the disabled person when in the garden.

## **A10 Healthy Homes grant**

- A10.1 An assessment of the property may be necessary to determine the scope of the work and does not cover the full renovation of a property. It is intended that the grant is sufficient to make safe a defect that is considered to pose a risk to the health, safety or welfare of the occupier.

- A10.2 This could include but is not limited to the following:

- Electrical safety- where the condition of the electrical wiring could lead to imminent risk of electrocution or fire or accidents as a result of inadequate lighting.
- Falls – where the condition of the stairs or floors are in such a state as to provide an imminent risk of a fall in the home.
- Cold – where the heating is inadequate or lacking, and the condition of the doors and windows are contributing to the home being cold in the winter and there is a risk of falls or other ill effect from cold temperatures.
- Dampness – damp conditions so significant that a roof is failing and water is visibly entering the property. Rising damp, condensation or minor leaks may not be covered by this grant.
- Structural collapse- where a structural part of the building is in such a state as to constitute an imminent risk.
- Amenities – the lack of a functioning basic amenity such as a toilet, bath, wash hand basin or kitchen sink.
- Hot water – where there is no hot water available for the occupier due to a fault with a boiler or hot water tank.

- A10.3 This list is not exhaustive and each case will be assessed based on its individual circumstances.

## **A11 Home Improvement Loan**

- A11.1 The loan will cover those works covered by this policy and any other works specified by Exeter City Council.



**REPORT TO:** PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**Date of Meeting:** 7 June 2018

**Report of:** Richard Crompton – Interim System Lead, Housing Needs.

**Title:** Implementation Plan and Impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act (Progress report)

**Is this a Key Decision?**

No

\* One that affects finances over £1m or significantly affects two or more wards. If this is a key decision then the item must be on the appropriate forward plan of key decisions.

**Is this an Executive or Council Function?**

Executive.

## **1. What is the report about?**

This report summarizes the main changes and measures being introduced as part of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (which came into effect on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2018) and updates on the implementation of measures, challenges and impact for the Council in meeting the legal requirements of the act (HRA 2017) to date.

## **2. Recommendations:**

That Committee notes the progress and actions undertaken to date and further plans to develop the service in accordance with the Act.

## **3. Reasons for the recommendation:**

To ensure members are informed of the operational, legal and financial implications of the Act upon the Council and the implementation of measures to meet these new obligations and improvements for the delivery of homelessness services to customers

## **4. What are the resource implications including non-financial resources?**

There are no new resource implications. A restructure of the Housing Needs department with additional staffing resources was approved by Executive in February 2018 and recruitment is underway at present. Whilst the restructure and recruitment process is drawing on management time simultaneous to the implementation of the HRA 2017 a completion date for recruitment is anticipated by mid-July.

Additional staffing resources are being subsidized through the diversion of money from the Resettlement Strategy, savings from changes to temporary accommodation, and DCLG grant funding. These savings remain on track so no additional resources are anticipated at present.

The Government has also provided short-term funding to aid local authorities to prepare and implement for HRA 2017. The allocation of “new burdens funding” to Exeter City Council is £124k over a three year period (£41.3k pa). The funding awarded to Exeter is ring-fenced in terms of a requirement to spend to alleviate additional service delivery costs in homelessness and housing advice. There are no specified prescriptions for spending these funds although MHCLG have stated they intend to audit expenditure and most authorities are expected to use the funding to increase frontline staffing. The Council has already allocated the funds to

staffing resources built into the current housing needs service restructure).

MHCLG has also provided a capital fund component of £9k specifically for I.T. enhancements. The money has been committed to paying for the necessary HRA 2017 upgrade to the current homelessness database CDP Hoams.

#### **5. Section 151 Officer comments:**

There are no additional financial implications arising from this report.

#### **6. What are the legal aspects?**

Please note the legal implications are set out in more detail in paragraph 8.4 below.

The right to appeal the Council's decision operating previously remain largely the same and intact under the new legislation. However, under HRA 2017 the number of review points has more than doubled, thereby likely to increase the number of appeals received as well as increasing the number of complaints received by the Ombudsman.

#### **7. Monitoring Officer's comments:**

The in house legal team deal with all housing appeals that are received. Given the number of appeals are anticipated to increase, the level of legal support may need to be reviewed accordingly. Otherwise, this report raises no issues for the Monitoring Officer.

#### **8. Report details:**

##### Background

The Homelessness Reduction Bill received Royal Assent and therefore became an Act of Parliament on the 27 April 2017. The new acts puts more emphasis on homelessness prevention activities by placing new legal duties on local authorities to provide meaningful support to everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness, regardless of whether they are in priority need or 'intentionally homeless', as long as they are eligible for assistance.

Exeter City Council has adopted a preventative approach to service delivery over recent years, which is assisting with the transition to the new requirements. However, the change in law contains a new suite of assessments and a new pathway which requires the service to adapt its processes and procedures as well as adopt new templates of work.

##### Details of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017:

##### **"Threatened With Homelessness"**

Current legislation (Housing Act 1996 as amended by Homelessness Act 2002) defines that a person is considered to be threatened with homelessness if it is likely that they will become homeless within 28 days. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 doubles the number of days from 28 to 56. Anyone accepted by the Council as being threatened with homelessness will be owed the new prevention duty and we must take 'reasonable steps' to help them avoid becoming homeless.

This could include activities to help retain accommodation such as mediation or arrears management plans or assisting them to access new accommodation through the private rented sector, social housing or supported accommodation.

### **Providing Advisory Services**

The Housing Act 1996 requires that local authorities must ensure advice and information around homelessness and preventing homelessness is available free of charge to everyone in their district. The new act will require a more robust approach to advisory services with the need to provide information and advice on:

- Preventing homelessness
- Securing accommodation if homeless
- The rights of people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, and
- Any other support (provided by the local authority or any other local organisations) that is available for people who are homeless or likely to become homeless as well as how to access that help.

Local authorities will also need to ensure that advisory services can be tailored to meet the needs of particular groups who are at increased risk of becoming homeless e.g. care leavers, prison leavers, former armed forces personnel, domestic abuse victims, hospital leavers and people with mental health and / or substance misuse issues.

### **Duty to Assess and Agree a Plan**

The Homelessness Reduction Act also stipulates that the support offered to eligible applicants is to be more robust than currently required. Once a local authority is satisfied that someone is eligible for assistance and homeless or threatened with homelessness an assessment should be carried out which includes;

- The circumstances that have caused homelessness / potential homelessness
- The housing and other support needs of the applicant and their household
- A personalized plan (PHP) setting out steps for the applicant and the Council to take to ensure accommodation is secured and/or retained.

An applicant's assessment and plan must be kept under review and updated as necessary, until the local authority has determined that no further duty is owed.

### **Duty to Relieve Homelessness**

Under the new Act, the Council will have a duty to help all eligible homeless applicants to secure accommodation for a period of at least 6 months, regardless of whether they are in priority need or 'intentionally homeless'. This is a change from the current position where advice and assistance is required to this cohort. The new legislation requires that practical steps are taken to relieve the homelessness and advice alone is not sufficient. Those in priority need will be provided with interim accommodation whilst steps are taking place to secure future settled accommodation.

### **Right to Review**

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 gives applicants the right to request a review of any decision made by the local authority (in addition to those laid down in current legislation) regarding:

- Steps set out in assessment plans;
- Giving notice to withdraw prevention or relief duties;
- The Suitability of accommodation offered.

### **Public Authority Duty to Refer**

Finally, under the new act, a new 'public Authority Duty to Refer will be introduced in October of this year'.

Under this duty, “specified public authorities” e.g. other statutory services such as prisons, social services departments etc., will be required to refer details of people who they consider being homeless or threatened with homelessness to their local authority (if the person agrees to the notification being made). The Council will then need to make contact with this individual for assessment.

## **9. Impact of HRA 2017 to date**

With it being only 6 weeks since the Act came into effect it is difficult to precisely predict the impact on service demand. However the Government predicted that homelessness prevention caseloads will increase by approximately 25%- 30%. The Council has not to date experienced a rise in numbers presenting for advice or to make homeless applications. This may be partly due to the low level launch of the Act coupled with the fact that there has been no additional funds to increase housing options and supply.

The profile of contacts has also not altered in terms of the number of enquiries and applications made either in person at the Customer Service Centre, over the phone or via email, or through community services and partner agencies. However presentation numbers and profiles continue to be monitored. It is reasonable to expect slight increases in the number of applications from out of area (e.g. anyone can now apply from any area of the country to any authority under the new prevention duty) and across local borders.

Under the duty to refer (due October 2018) it may also be that certain statutory services increase referrals to the Council. The housing needs department is liaising with those partner agencies in preparation for this new duty to streamline local protocols and ensure referral criteria and eligibility are clearly understood and expectations are managed.

Based on early adopters of the Act (e.g. Southwark Borough Council) the Government also estimated that there would be an increase of 50% for review requests (appeals) in line with the new duties. Again, it is too early to identify any changes; the Council receives approximately 25 review requests per annum regarding homelessness decisions and this number also remains constant at present. However this is likely to be influenced by case-law expected to emerge with larger authorities once some of the technicalities and nuances of the Act are examined in court.

## **10. Implementation Work**

The Council devised a bespoke Implementation plan in collaboration with Teignbridge District Council back in September 2017 in order to prepare the ground for the new Act. This has focused on the following areas:

### Frontline service delivery

- A suite of new template letters has been produced in order to account for all of the different sections of the Act and to maximize efficiency in producing letters to customers.
- Whilst the housing needs assessment is largely unchanged the new personal housing plan was piloted in March and introduced on 3<sup>rd</sup> April. As an extra recording tool devised for the purpose of clarifying the reasonable steps both the applicant and the Council agree to take in order to resolve the homelessness issue, experience to date is that it is positively received by the customer. However it does add on average an hour to the interview and follow-up process which means that average initial interview times for homeless applications have increased from 1 hour to 2 hours.

- In order to manage this doubling of time the housing advice service has doubled the number of appointment slots in the weekly diary whilst still preserving the “emergency” duty service for households presenting as “homeless tonight”
- New advice guides have been written (and uploaded to the Council website) for general information as well as for relevance to specific groups of need / circumstance (e.g. prison leavers, young persons, hospital patients etc)
- A new pathway of decisions has been produced in order to enable customers and staff to better navigate their respective applications through the new duties and various stages of the Act
- The homelessness database system has been updated with HRA 2017 specific recording fields and case-management dashboards. Improvements have been funded by a one-off government grant of £9k. Further improvements in terms of a customer access portal are being explored.

### Staff

- Staff (including managers) have received training from national trainers NHAS, and some staff have also received training from Homeless Link and Shelter. Further additional training is due to be delivered to all staff by a nationally recognized HRA expert on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2018. The training covers the new Code of Guidance and technical knowledge in depth and also includes cross-authority referrals and the duty to refer.
- As previously mentioned the restructure is running in parallel with the implementation plan and the service is being remodeled to incorporate an additional 9.0 FTE staff in housing advice and assessment, temporary accommodation access and management, and housing resettlement (move-on from temporary housing) into the private rented sector, social or supported housing. There are no redundancies within the re-structure.
- Specialisms for staff will also be developed once full recruitment is complete. Specialisms will focus on continuous service improvement with partner agencies whilst enabling better staff professional development.

### Information & Learning Forums

- Information on the HRA 2017 has been shared with partner agencies through the revival of the homelessness forum. 3 events have been held to date with further dates planned.
- Partner agency staff have also received training in the form of assessments and referrals under the respective duties of the Act
- The personalized housing plans are being piloted by some agencies with a view to dissemination of practice (and reduction of duplication / inefficiencies).
- Advice guides have been co-designed with partner agencies and are being progressively reviewed for further improvements in terms of content and accessibility.

### Public Information and Accessibility

Alongside the revision and expansion of online information on the Council website advice leaflets have also been produced and circulated amongst partner agencies and public services

A digital private rented housing access platform is under development at present in the form of a partnership project with Exeter CAB on an online housing tenancy passport to enable prospective tenants and landlords faster access to key information, training and funds to deliver tenancies

Housing Needs has also successfully been nominated as one of 5 authorities nationally to participate in a Local Government funded program to deliver an online triage, homelessness assessment and social housing application toolkit. This is a 6-12 month delivery project to enable households to self-diagnose and be signposted to appropriate services as well as remotely complete and submit information and evidence in support of homelessness applications and their ongoing management.

#### **11. Impact on staff**

(see Staff section above)

#### **12. How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan?**

Delivery of the Homelessness Strategy, Reducing Rough Sleeping and Cost Effective Alternatives to Temporary Accommodation are corporate plan actions for the Housing Needs Team. The implementation of the HRA 2017 alongside the housing needs re-structure is designed to address these three areas.

#### **13. What risks are there and how can they be reduced?**

As per legal implications there is a risk of increased appeals against decisions on homelessness applications, especially whilst the new legislation is largely untested and interpretations of specific meaning are emerging. This carries both a reputational risk as well as financial risk in terms of potential legal fees and fines in the event of service errors or omissions. Case-monitoring will also be improved with an additional senior staff post and the improved I.T. database dashboard.

Another risk is reduced performance and low staff morale during the combined restructure and HRA 2017 implementation process. With recruitment currently underway and training programs having been delivered, staff have had the opportunity to trial-implement the new code of guidance without demand in terms of numbers of homelessness applications increasing as yet. Further training from external experts alongside internal procedural training will help to mitigate risk of malpractice and morale-related issues.

#### **14. 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?**

Homelessness affects many of the most vulnerable people in our community. The proposed changes enhance the service provided with greater attention upon a holistic approach to the individual.

#### **15. Are there any other options?**

n/a

**Richard Crompton**  
**Interim System Lead, Housing Needs**

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

Background papers used in compiling this report:- None

Contact for enquires:  
Democratic Services (Committees)  
Room 2.3  
01392 265275

## PSP Meeting

Held on: 19/02/18

Present: Cindy, Debbie, Donna

In attendance: Jan, Jason, Mark J, Sarah, Bindu, Mark D and Adrian

	Agenda item	Discussion/ decision made	Lead person(s) responsible & timescale
1.	<i>Welcome and matters arising</i>	Cindy opened the meeting and welcomed all those present. Staff and PSP members introduced themselves to each other.	/
2.	<i>Recruitment</i>	VL feedback that she had received an expression of interest from a potential PSP member.  Vicky agreed to follow up this expression of interest by meeting with the potential PSP member along with Cindy.	
3.	<i>Meet with Mark and Adrian</i>	Mark Dale provided a quick overview of his previous history as a Carpenter and then in a similar role to his new post in a different Local Authority.  Mark summarised his priorities as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Working with Mears to ensure we are able to deliver the best possible service to our customers whilst ensuring value for money.</li><li>• He will also be working closing with Adrian to reduce repair figures by ensuring ECC operate the most effective improvements/maintenance programme possible.</li><li>• He would also like to ensure that customers receive continuity in the services which ECC provide.</li></ul> Adrian introduced himself and provided a brief description of his career history which included the role of Head of Housing Assets at Cornwall County Council.  He discussed how he would be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adopting a 30 year maintenance programme which he will formulate using data from the Stock Condition Survey.</li><li>• This programme will be complimented by smaller maintenance programmes such as kitchens and bathroom replacement programmes.</li></ul>	TBC

	Agenda item	Discussion/ decision made	Lead person(s) responsible & timescale
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In order to drive up value for money in his area, Adrian had already started to embark on a new programme of procurement for all future contractors.</li> </ul> <p>A wider discussion followed about the Housing Assets service and the group challenged how service improvements could be made by improving/changing how we manage our contracts and contractors. It was agreed that ECC need to work positively with our contractors to drive up service improvement and potentially explore alternative maintenance contract styles.</p>	
4.	<i>PSP – future projects</i>	<p>The group reviewed and agreed to adopt a ‘standing orders’ document which outlines PSP agenda items throughout the year. This structured approach to planning future meetings can be complimented with additional agenda items on an ad hoc basis. The ‘standing order’ document included the ‘Performance Scorecard’ which will be adapted to reflect the previously made ‘Customer Pledges’ in order to allow the PSP to monitor progress.</p> <p>The group also agreed to be involved with the following future projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clean air policy review</li> <li>Tenancy agreement review</li> <li>Empty Homes Strategy review</li> </ul>	
5.	<i>Fire Safety Video</i>	<p>Jason provided an update about the video which is being produced to support the implementation of the Clear and Safe policy. The progress of which had been slowed as ECC’s contact at Devon and Somerset Fire Service had been heavily involved with the new Ikea store and had not been able to spend much time on the project. Progress was also hindered by ECC’s Health &amp; Safety Lead being away from work for the next six weeks. The PSP members requested that once ECC appoints the new Fire Implementation Officers they are invited to attend a PSP meeting.</p>	VL in due course.
6.	<i>Universal Credit rollout</i>	<p>Vicky informed the group that staff would be attending training on 14<sup>th</sup> March. Vicky and Mark J had also been working with a colleague in a separate department (Payments &amp; Collections) to help identify ways of ensuring a smooth transition for our customers. Chris Buckman (Customer Access, Benefits &amp; Welfare Lead) would be attending the next meeting to provide an overview of UC to the PSP.</p>	
7.	<i>Tenant Annual Report</i>	<p>Due to time constraints the group agreed to consider the Tenant Annual Report further at the next meeting. The PSP members agreed that it should include data from the previously discussed ‘Customer Pledges’</p>	



	Agenda item	Discussion/ decision made	Lead person(s) responsible & timescale
8.	<i>AOB</i>	Cindy thanked all PSP members and invited guests for their attendance. The date of the next meeting was agreed for 12 <sup>th</sup> March at 5:30pm (venue to be agreed)	

**Name of Chair:**\_\_\_\_\_ **Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## PSP Meeting

Held on: 12/03/18

Present: Cindy, Debbie, Donna, Jan

In attendance: Sarah, Vicky & Elaine

	Agenda item	Discussion/ decision made	Lead person(s) responsible & timescale
1.	<i>Welcome and matters arising</i>	Cindy opened the meeting and welcomed all those present. Potential agenda items for the next meeting were discussed, it was agreed to include 'Fire Safety video'.	Vicky
2.	<i>Empty Homes Strategy</i>	<p>PSP members were joined by Elaine Oliver (Housing Development Officer) who is leading with current review of the Empty Homes Strategy. The PSP were asked by Elaine for their involvement with the Strategy review as she valued their contribution. Elaine informed the group that the purpose of the review is to ensure that the Council has an effective and Strategy which will help to bring back empty homes into much needed use.</p> <p>The group undertook a number of exercises which were designed to challenge their opinion of what a long-term empty home looks like, as well as highlighting the potential associated problems e.g. vandalism. As a result of the exercise, the group agreed that it is not always possible to tell if a property is empty just by looking from the curb. The PSP agreed that the Strategy should outline how Exeter City Council will work in partnership with local communities in order to help identify empty properties.</p> <p>The use of low rate homeowner loans (e.g. Wessex loans) to facilitate property improvements was discussed. Such loans have historically had little uptake in Exeter compared to other local authority areas. These loans can be used to help bring properties up to a standard so they can be brought back into use. The PSP supported this initiative and felt that future promotion should be increased.</p> <p>Elaine informed the group that she had asked for feedback from the private sector in order to establish how Exeter City Council can help to prevent properties becoming empty in the first place. The group discussed deterrence methods such as a Council Tax increases if a property has been empty for two or more years. The group agreed that such methods should be used in conjunction with more facilitatory methods such as homeowner loans. The PSP members agreed that they would be happy to be consulted further should it be necessary.</p>	

	Agenda item	Discussion/ decision made	Lead person(s) responsible & timescale
3.	<i>Recruitment update</i>	Vicky informed the group that the person she was in correspondence with had decided to not take the expression of interest any further.  A group photo was taken of the members so it could be used in an advertising leaflet for the PSP. Vicky to email photo to Sarah.	Vicky asap
4.	<i>Response Repairs Survey</i>	Vicky provided the group with a copy of the draft response repairs survey. The purpose of the survey is to allow the Council to monitor customer satisfaction with the service and identify any possible areas for improvement. The group reviewed the survey and made some minor amendments, including the adding an additional question 'was your repair completed first time). It was agreed that Vicky would pass them on to Mark Dale (Response Repairs Lead).	Vicky
5.	<i>Tenant Annual Report</i>	Because of time constraints the group decided to defer this agenda item until the next meeting.	Vicky
6.	<i>Feedback from TPAS training event</i>	The group reviewed the TPAS training event which Cindy and Debbie had attended. The training on scrutiny techniques was aimed at identifying how tenant volunteers can challenge and scrutinise performance of housing providers. Cindy and Debbie agreed that they would be putting into practice what they had learnt.	
8.	<i>AOB</i>	The group discussed the possibility of ID cards for PSP members to use when they are networking at events.  As a fact finding exercise, the PSP members asked if a member of the team administering Universal Credit could attend a future meeting for a Q&A session.  The group discussed an old 'doodle poll' which was set up by a former PSP member. It was agreed that this should now be closed and Vicky should contact the former member as she has the administration privileges and make this request.  Cindy thanked all PSP members and Elaine for their attendance. The date of the next meeting was agreed for 16 <sup>th</sup> April at 5:30pm (venue to be agreed)	Vicky  Vicky  Vicky

Name of Chair: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **EXETER COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD**

Monday 26 February 2018

### **Present:-**

Councillors Bialyk (Chair)	Exeter City Council
Councillor Edwards	Exeter City Council
Councillor Morse	Exeter City Council
Councillor Randall-Johnson	Devon County Council
Virginia Pearson	Public Health, Devon County Council
Simon Bowkett	CoLab
Julian Tagg	Exeter City Football Club
Diana Moore	Exeter Community Forum
Stephen Spartling	RD&E NHS Foundation Trust
Simon Chant	Devon County Council
Jo Yelland	Exeter City Council
Simon Lane	Exeter City Council
Dawn Rivers	Exeter City Council
Howard Bassett	Exeter City Council

### **Also Present**

Chris Broadbent	South West Youth Games
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### **APOLOGIES**

These were received from Councillors Leadbetter and Newby, Gillian Champion, Adel Jones with Stephen Spartling deputising, Tim Golby and Martha Wilkinson.

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### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 31 OCTOBER 2017**

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

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### **SOUTH WEST YOUTH GAMES**

The Chair welcomed Chris Broadbent, Chief Executive of the South West Youth Games who spoke on the Youth Games.

Introduced as part of the Millennium Games in 1999, where every county created a Youth Games of their own, in the South West it had been going for 18 years. The South West Rotary Youth Games was now the largest community sports event for children and young people in Devon and Cornwall, offering over 20 sporting competitions. Despite lottery funding ending in 2014 the Youth Games had continued with a new board of trustees obtaining local sponsors, including the headline sponsor, South West Rotary Clubs and the support of Teignbridge District Council.

The Games introduced children to a sport or activity at a level under County standard including a number of targeted groups that did not usually get the opportunity to take part in such events. Street sports, such as skateboarding etc., indoor cycling and rowing were notable recent additions.

Responding to Members' queries, Chris Broadbent recognised that increased female and disabled participation were an important focus and that the new Exeter Youth Voice project set up as part of the Exeter Youth Strategy could help promote and advise.

Chris Broadbent would be developing this work further in conjunction with Matt Evans of Active Devon and welcomed the opportunity to work with the Board and the City Council in the future.

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### **STRATEGIC NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

Simon Chant spoke to the presentation, data drawn from the JSNA, Annual Public Health profile report, Integrated Care Exeter Risk stratification reports and National Public Health Profiles:-

The following were covered:-

- population structure and change;
- indicators with worse outcomes than England average;
- index of Multiple Deprivation and deprivation Profile by Domain;
- deprivation and the health inequalities gap and health related behaviours;
- loneliness and risk of loneliness;
- Integrated Care Exeter (ICE) Risk Stratification Model and the findings on frailty which were age related presenting good opportunities for early detection, prevention and treatment; and
- the data would assist the community builders and community connectors with their work in the community.

There would now be a Devon wide roll out of the ICE linked data risk stratification tool.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

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### **SPORT ENGLAND LOCAL DELIVERY PILOT**

Jo Yelland updated the Board on preparations for the Sport England Local delivery pilot, James Bogue to be seconded for two and half days a week to the City Council from Active Devon to assist with the work. A sum of £100 million from Sport England was to be distributed amongst the 12 pilot areas, the split to reflect the differing plans and resources of each area, the Exeter/Cranbrook bid benefitting from the significant data analysis already undertaken which would assist in measuring impact and monitoring outcomes. A learning network had been established, information on the Exeter/Cranbrook data gathering to be shared with the other pilot site. With satisfactory progress on outcomes there was potential to expand for another four years and the pilot status would not preclude funding available from other Sport England sources although this would need to be co-ordinated through the delivery pilot programme.

The Exeter/Cranbrook pilot target was 10,000 newly active individuals, particularly families being active together with low income and deprivation groups especially targeted. It would align with the work of Wellbeing Exeter and green travel and congestion reduction aspirations of Exeter City Futures.

The Chair remarked that the successful bid dovetailed with a number of other initiatives including the Greater Exeter Strategic Sports Board, City Council emerging strategies on Facilities and Pitches as well as the new Leisure Centre.

Jo Yelland advised that a stakeholder meeting was scheduled for 23 March after which initial plans for the pilot would be clearer and could be more widely publicised.

**RESOLVED** that the update be noted, Gillian Champion to be asked to comment on the potential of co-locating primary care services with community and leisure facilities if health and well being hubs were to be developed in the future.

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**EXETER COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD - TERMS OF REFERENCE AND WAY FORWARD**

Jo Yelland presented the final draft terms of reference for the Exeter Community Health and Wellbeing Board including potential membership. The paper would be updated to refer to Exeter City Community Trust instead of Exeter Football in the Community Trust.

The Chair suggested that the membership could be broadened with further representation as appropriate and the proposal for Chris Broadbent of South West Youth Games to be added was agreed.

**RESOLVED** that:-

- (1) the terms of reference be adopted; and
- (2) Chris Broadbent of South West Youth Games become a Board Member.

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**EXETER YOUTH VOICE**

Dawn Rivers reported that the City Council was taking the lead co-ordination role for this next stage of developing a Youth Strategy for the city and that, after inviting Expressions of Interest from a number of organisations, Young Devon had won the contract to facilitate the 'Exeter Youth Voice' initiative with young people across the city. This work would build on the consultation that had taken place with young people during 2016/17 resulting in the launch of the Youth Strategy in March 2017. The project would be delivered through a steering group including Exeter City Council Communications and Marketing Team who would be supporting the process and helping to profile the views of young people, Devon County Council and other agencies.

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**DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

10 April 2018  
10 July 2018  
11 September 2018  
30 October 2018  
29 January 2019

(The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and closed at 3.30 pm)

Chair

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