

PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date: Thursday 1 November 2018

Time: 5.30 pm

Venue: Rennes Room, Civic Centre, Paris Street, Exeter

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

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

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

Membership -

Councillors Wardle (Chair), Foale (Deputy Chair), Foggin, Holland, Owen, Pattison, Pierce, Robson and Vizard N

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 6 September 2018.

(Pages 5 -
8)

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.

ITEM FOR INFORMATION ONLY

7 Annual Scrutiny Report : 2017/18

To consider the report of the Corporate Manager Democratic and Civic Support. (Pages 9 - 26)

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

8 Accessibility and Inclusion Task and Finish Working Group

The report will be presented by Councillor Lyons. (Pages 27 - 34)

9 Housing Revenue Account - Budget Monitoring to September 2018

To consider the report of the Chief Finance Officer. (Pages 35 - 50)

10 People - Budget Monitoring to September 2018

To consider the report of the Chief Finance Officer. (Pages 51 - 60)

11 Rough Sleeping Initiative 2018-2020

To consider the report of the Director. (Pages 61 - 76)

ITEM FOR INFORMATION ONLY

12 Performance Scrutiny Partnership - Minutes of the Meetings held on 13 August 2018

(Pages 77
- 80)

Date of Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the People Scrutiny Committee will be held on **Thursday** 10 January 2019 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

Thursday 6 September 2018

Present:

Councillor
Councillors Holland, Owen, Pattison, Pierce, Robson, Vizard N and Wright

Apologies:

Councillors Wardle, Foale and Foggin

Also present:

Chief Executive & Growth Director, Housing Lead - Tenancy Services, Principal Accountant Corporate, Technical Accounting Manager and Democratic Services Officer

In Attendance:

Councillor Philip Bialyk	- Exeter City Council
Councillor Emma Morse	- Portfolio Holder for People
Councillor Hannah Packham	- Portfolio Holder for Housing Revenue Account

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CHAIR

In the absence of the Chair, Councillor Wardle, the meeting was chaired by Councillor Owen.

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MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of People Scrutiny Committee held on 7 June 2018 were approved and signed by the Chair as correct.

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DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest were made.

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QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC UNDER STANDING ORDER 19

None.

33

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL UNDER STANDING ORDER 20

None.

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PORTFOLIO HOLDERS REPORT 2017/18 - YEAR END REPORT

The Portfolio Holders presented the year-end report for 2017/18.

The Portfolio Holder for People (Councillor Morse) highlighted the following areas:-

- purchase of 25 Queens Road for temporary accommodation;
- progress on implementing the action plan for the Homelessness Strategy;
- high percentage of Integrated Care Exeter clients in temporary accommodation with tenancies maintained through work of new complex needs accommodation support team; and
- seeking to mitigate the impact of Welfare Reform on residents.

In respect of the latter, she informed Members that the rollout of Universal Credit had commenced in September and was currently applied in respect of those with changed circumstances such as employments status and that the impact would be clearer when all claimants moved across in March/April 2019. She also stated that the Council was working with Citizens Advice Bureau and the Foodbank on mitigating the impact.

The Portfolio Holder for the Housing Revenue Account (Councillor Packham) highlighted the following areas:-

- continued work on benchmarking performance with comparative housing providers to improve the effectiveness of the housing function;
- a Better Homes Document created as a template for improved tenant liaison;
- a memorandum of understanding agreed with the Development Company - Exeter Living - to protect tenant and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) interests. The setting up of a HRA Management Board was progressing;
- Chester Long Court opened and tenants aware of downsizing opportunities and work shortly to start on the St Loyes Extra Care Scheme;
- stock condition survey completed to inform the Asset Management Strategy; and
- a model for supporting residents of older persons' accommodation with three Older Persons Property Support Officers directly liaising with older tenants had been in place for 18 months.

The Portfolio Holder and the Housing Lead Tenancy Services advised that the Government was inviting authorities to bid for additional HRA borrowing above the existing cap. The 7 September 2018 deadline for submissions to the Department of Communities and Local Government had been extended by three weeks with £500 million to be made available over three years for authorities outside London. The Council bid would be in respect of 11 HRA sites. It was hoped it would be successful in two or three with potentially up to 400 new affordable homes being provided. There could be scope to use the skills of Exeter City Living to bring forward these schemes if successful.

The Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing, Communities and Sport (Councillor Bialyk) highlighted the following areas:-

- commenced review of community grants with consultants Red Quadrant. Improving the health and wellbeing of communities was seen as one area where grant support could be directed;
- Kier had commenced de-risking works on the bus station site and tendering preparation works continued to proceed with regard to the procurement of the operator for St Sidwell's Point. The leisure offer would seek to appeal to the whole family;
- review of Community Safety Partnership completed with the Portfolio Holder now a member of the Partnership

- the successful bid to Sport England for Local Delivery Pilot status was being developed with projects including work with the Whipton and Pinhoe Football Club and the Exeter Cycle Speedway Team;
- two main elements of Wellbeing Exeter programme - community connectors operating in conjunction with GP surgeries and community builders helping develop community projects such as the Friends of Merrivale being rolled out across the City; and
- working with Fairtrade Exeter to renew Fairtrade City Status due again in November 2018. During Fairtrade Fortnight the Portfolio Holder held a Twitter competition encouraging the public to see how many Fairtrade products they could purchase.

The Portfolio Holder provided further information regarding on-going works to both the Pyramids and Riverside Leisure Centres. Works to the former were necessary to keep the pool in operation pending construction of St Sidwell's Point and there had been a regrettable delay on the refurbishment of the latter following the fire. Both he and the Chief Executive & Growth Director explained the technical background and the shared frustrations of the contractors on the Riverside site.

People - Scrutiny Committee noted the reports of the Portfolio Holders.

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HRA 2018/19 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - QUARTER 1

The Technical Accounting Manager advised Members of any major differences, by management unit between the approved budget and the outturn forecast for the first three months of the financial year up to 30 June 2018 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 deficit of £3,977,827 in 2018/19. This represented a movement of £119,318 compared to the revised budgeted deficit of £4,097,145 for 2018/19.

The total amount of HRA capital expenditure for 2018/19 showed a total forecast spend of £17,327,852 compared to the £19,168,652 approved programme, a decrease of £1,840,800.

It was noted that the Government had announced in August that it would not bring the Higher Value Assets Levy into effect. The £4million HRA contingency would therefore be reviewed as part of the 2019/20 estimates process, as it had been increased from £3million in 2016/17 to help mitigate against the risk of the new levy.

Responding to a Member, the Service Lead - Tenancy Services explained that the delay on the commencement of the St Loyes Extra Care Scheme had been caused by the original contractor chosen withdrawing and extended negotiations with the contactor subsequently appointed.

People Scrutiny Committee noted the report.

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PEOPLE 2018/19 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - QUARTER 1

The Principal Accountant advised Members of any material differences, by management unit between the approved budget the outturn forecast for the first three months of the financial year up to 30 June 2018 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 programme showed a total spend of £93,392 in the first three months of 2018/19.

The 2018/19 Capital Programme, including commitments brought forward from 2017/18, was £1,192,660, as set out in the report.

People Scrutiny Committee noted the report.

37 **PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY PARTNERSHIP - MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 16 APRIL AND 21 MAY 2018**

The Portfolio Holder for the HRA advised that the Performance Scrutiny Partnership sought to enhance tenant engagement and, through the Better Homes Document, was encouraging greater involvement. A review was to be undertaken of the approach to resident involvement and community development and the resources needed to deliver a modern approach.

People - Scrutiny Committee noted the minutes of the meetings of the Performance Scrutiny Partnership of 16 April and 21 May 2018.

38 **EXETER COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD - MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10 JULY 2018**

People - Scrutiny Committee noted the minutes of the meeting of the Exeter Health and Wellbeing Board of 10 July 2018.

(The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 6.24 pm)

Chair

REPORT TO: PEOPLE SCRUTINY
PLACE SCRUTINY
CORPORATE SERVICES SCRUTINY

Date of Meetings: 1st November 2018, 8th November 2018, 22nd November 2018

Report of: The Scrutiny Programme Officer,
Democratic Services and Civic Support

Title: Annual Scrutiny Report 2018

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Council

1. What is the report about?

To provide an annual update in respect of the Scrutiny work achieved during the municipal year 2017/2018.

2. Recommendations:

The Annual Scrutiny Report 2018 is acknowledged and approved.

3. Reasons for the recommendations:

The Annual Scrutiny Report provides the Scrutiny Committees with an opportunity to:-

- a) track the progress of the Scrutiny function and process at Exeter City Council;
- b) comment upon the progress and direction of Scrutiny over the past year and into the future;
- c) ensure that the Scrutiny Committees are kept fully up to date as to the Task and Finish Groups and what they have achieved;
- d) illustrate how effective Scrutiny can contribute towards an accountable, transparent and democratic process.

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

None.

5. Section 151 Officer comments:

There are no financial implications contained within this report.

6. What are the legal aspects?

None identified.

7. Monitoring officer Comments

This report raises no issues for the Monitoring Officer.

8. Report Details:

This update concentrates on providing Members with an overview of the work and achievements of Scrutiny during 2017/2018 and is set out in detail at Appendix A attached to this report.

This update is divided into five main areas:-

- The Scrutiny Work Programme
- Task and Finish Group priority topics
- Summary of Task and Finish Group work
- Outstanding Task and Finish Group work
- Profile of Scrutiny at Exeter City Council

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

None in respect of the recommendation contained within this report.

**Anne-Marie Hawley : Scrutiny Programme Officer,
Democratic Services and Civic Support
Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)**

Background papers used in compiling this report: None

Contact for enquiries : Anne-Marie Hawley
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REPORT TO: PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
CORPORATE SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meetings: 1st November 2018, 8th November 2018, 22nd November 2018

Title: Annual Scrutiny Report 2018

1. The Scrutiny Work Programme

Following discussion at the Annual Scrutiny Work Programme meeting in July 2018, the Scrutiny Work Schedule has been amended as follows:-

- a) The Council Tax Support Scheme and the Increase in the Council Tax Empty Premium reports will both be submitted to the Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee.
- b) An overview presentation on Exeter City Futures Urbanisation issues will be provided to each of the Scrutiny Committees.
- c) The Annual Health and Safety Report will now appear on all three Scrutiny Committee Agendas since the interest spans across all areas.
- d) The Local Air Quality Action Plan progress report and recommendations will appear on the Scrutiny Bulletin as an update once the report has been considered by the Place Scrutiny Committee.
- e) An overview presentation detailing Exeter's cultural offer will be provided to the Place Scrutiny Committee.

2. Task and Finish Group Priority Topics

Through the Interim and Annual Scrutiny Work Programme Meetings which took place in November 2017 and July 2018 respectively, Members identified priority topics for Task and Finish Group/Spotlight Review investigation as follows:-

- Accessibility and Inclusion
- Green Travel Plans – IKEA
- Green Travel Plans - Policy
- Impacts upon the City
- The Evening Economy
- Financial Reporting
- Member Development
- Agency Working
- Council Representation on Outside Bodies
- CCTV
- Estimates, fees and charges
- Governance Review
- Housing Tenant Involvement
- PSPO Spotlight Review

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Together with topical presentations:-

People Scrutiny Committee

- The impact of Universal Credit going live in Exeter;
- Accessibility and Inclusion – a presentation by the Joint Chair of the Devon Learning Disability Partnership Board and Devon County Council's Involvement Officer.

Place Scrutiny Committee

- Transport/buses/City/Quay

3. **Summary of Task and Finish Group/Spotlight Review Work**

Concluded Groups:-

Green Travel Plans (IKEA)

(Reported to Place Scrutiny Committee: 14th June 2018)

Green Travel continues to be high on the list of priorities both locally and nationally.

The work of this Task and Finish Group linked in with the Council's aims and priorities in terms of the Core Strategy Plan, The Air Quality Strategy 2015 – 2020, Exeter City Futures: Congestion Free by 2025, and the National Planning Framework Policy and would continue to contribute to the wider conversation around congestion and transport in Exeter.

The Group consisted of Exeter City Councillors, Devon County Councillors and officers from the respective Authorities, the Travel Devon Business Coordinator and a representative from Exeter City Futures.

Key objectives were settled upon as follows:-

- (i) To review the IKEA Green Travel Plan as a benchmark example.
- (ii) To understand how future Green Travel Plans might be improved at the planning stage.
- (iii) To understand the interconnecting role of Devon County Council in terms of performance monitoring, review and enforcement.
- (iv) To ascertain whether this Green Travel Plan aligns with the aspirations of Exeter City Council and Exeter City Futures.

Members understood the challenges and restrictions faced through planning framework limitations and considered the aspirational targets of the Council and Exeter City Futures in relation to congestion targets.

The Group were keen to hear from IKEA representatives so that they could understand IKEA's plans for the future in terms of developing and improving the existing plan. Intentions were not clear from the existing Green Travel Plan document.

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IKEA's Marketing Manager and Travel Coordinator attended and explained that IKEA's travel plan is still in its infancy in terms of development but that IKEA remain committed and very keen to make it work and continue to engage with Exeter City Council. Performance of the IKEA Green Travel Plan in terms of measured success would not be apparent until 12 months has passed. It would then be easy to identify what the successes are, what the challenges are and what could be improved.

The Group considered that early discussion of larger scheme Green Travel Plans would highlight key issues at a stage that would still allow time for the developer to adapt schemes before they are submitted to Planning Committee. At present Green Travel Plans are dealt with primarily through planning conditions and reliant upon discharge so the Group felt that early discussion with developers would ensure that they are fully aware of expectations and the standard of Green Travel Plan required, in turn creating more robust and aspirational Green Travel Plans going forward and it was agreed that this should be a key consideration of the Task and Finish Group's work.

It was established that consistency of approach, both in terms of Exeter City Council and key partners, is essential to successfully ensuring that more detailed and better quality Green Travel Plans are submitted to the Planning Committee and specific training for Members would provide them with the further knowledge required to review Green Travel Plans put forward by developers and raise the bar on expectations as they would have a better understanding as to what could be achieved with various schemes.

Recommendations were put forward to the Place Scrutiny Committee and subsequently approved as follows:-

- (a) To support a review of the performance of the IKEA Green Travel Plan in 12 months' time.
- (b) To request early discussion of Green Travel Plans for larger schemes at Planning Member Working Group (PMWG) or at Delegated Briefing as appropriate.
- (c) To agree that green travel planning should be incorporated into the yearly Planning Induction Training for Councillors.

As a side issue it was agreed that it might be helpful if Green Travel Plans in respect of future significant schemes were raised at the Highways and Traffic Orders Committee (HATOC) highlighting key issues for discussion and feedback. A member of the Task and Finish Group was also a member of HATOC and would raise this at their next meeting.

An update on the performance of IKEA's Green Travel Plan appears on the Scrutiny Work Schedule for the Place Scrutiny Committee to consider at their meeting on the 13th June 2019.

Both Councillors and Officers can request early discussion of Green Travel Plans for larger schemes at PMWG or Delegated Briefing where appropriate on a case by case basis.

In terms of training, the City Development Manager will incorporate an aspect on Green Travel planning within the induction planning training which takes place every year.

Green Travel Plans (Policy)

(Reported to Place Scrutiny Committee: 14th June)

As with the Green Travel (IKEA) Task and Finish Group, this piece of work linked in similarly with the Council's aims and priorities surrounding the Core Strategy Plan, The Air

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Quality Strategy 2015 – 2020, Exeter City Futures: Congestion Free by 2025, and the National Planning Framework Policy and the general discussions around reducing congestion and improving transport within Exeter.

Again, the Group membership consisted of Exeter City Councillors and officers, Devon County Council Officers and Exeter City Futures representatives. Members were particularly keen to look at how the City Council's policy currently interacts with planning applications.

The Group decided that the key objectives should be to:-

- (a) help shape and form a short guidance note to accompany the Sustainable Transport Supplementary Planning Document (STP);
- (b) identify how the City Council can encourage City based organisations and communities to work together to meet the City's Green Travel aspirations;
- (c) encourage improvements to existing Green Travel Plans;
- (d) identify ways in which Exeter City Council and Devon County Council can enhance their collaborative working to further improve the quality of Green Travel Plans going into the future.

Overviews were provided by both Exeter City Council's City Development Manager and Devon County Council's Principal Transport Planner to clarify the planning policy background and provide the Group with some understanding of the framework through which it is delivered.

It was accepted that the Sustainable Transport Plan sets out the minimum requirements for businesses to provide and encourage their staff to get to work using sustainable travel but that both the City Council and the County Council could call for stricter adherence to that requirement.

Through subsequent discussions consideration was given to questions such as:-

- How much can the City Council achieve through the traditional planning system?
- How much can the City Council achieve outside the planning process?
- How ambitious does the City Council want to be with regard to travel plans?
- Does the City Council work closely enough with Devon County Council and other key partners?
- Is the policy basis sufficient?
- Can the City Council become more aspirational in negotiations when it comes to green travel plans?
- Are ambitions aligned?
- How do we collectively find solutions?

Engagement with interested organisations and community groups was recognised as essential to gain a different perspective, take on board ideas and comments and to assist in encouraging employers to sign up to the green travel approach. Working with schools and the community to change the culture together with collective ownership of ideas and objectives were seen as key to improving success as was encouraging businesses to engage with each other, raising awareness of positive examples of innovative Green Travel Plans, for instance, Oxygen House.

Guidance analysis as to how much green travel could save businesses and research into what revenue businesses could lose if car parking spaces are lost to workers might encourage businesses to adopt more of a green travel approach with staff. Engagement

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with the BID was seen as key to reaching local City based businesses and encouraging their cooperation, but it was also recognised that the City Council should lead by example, through their own green travel plans.

The Group concluded that Exeter City Council and Devon County Council could further assist developers and applicants in understanding the City Council's Green travel aspirations, ambitions and direction of the policy, whilst continuing to positively promote green travel with key organisations and communities across the City of Exeter, helping to improve future and existing Green Travel Plans. Aligning aspirational targets with key partners, such as Exeter City Futures, Devon County Council and the wider business community were seen as essential to ensure a more effective and robust level of Green Travel Plans moving forward.

On the 14th June 2018 the Place Scrutiny Committee approved the Task and Finish Group's recommendations.

As a result of the Group's work, officers from Devon County Council, Travel Devon Team, Exeter City Council and Exeter City Futures have met and discussed the content which should be included in the guidance note to accompany the STP and how City based organisation and communities could be encouraged to work together to meet the City's green travel aspirations.

It was established that local case studies would be an essential component of a guidance note and that presentation would also be key. The four main sections will relate to:-

- (a) Planning Policy background
- (b) Devon Toolkit
- (c) Three good examples/case studies
- (d) A "did you know page" covering data statistics on air quality impact on knowledge workers/working days lost, for example.

The Principal Transport Planner, Devon County Council is currently drafting the guidance note in association with Exeter City Council's City Development Manager and the draft note is expected to be available by October 2018, following which it will be submitted to the Place Scrutiny Committee seeking approval for its publication against a re-launch of the Sustainable Transport Supplementary Planning Document.

Exeter City Futures and the Travel Devon team are now collaboratively working on business engagement, research and analysis.

The City Development Manager (ECC) and Principal Transport Planner (DCC) identified the following areas where collaborative working may be improved to achieve more robust Green Travel Plans going forward, which could be implemented immediately through current working practices:-

- Work more closely with key site developers during the determination period, to identify key points to be included in their proposed Green Travel Plans and overall report to the Planning Committee. This will raise the profile of Green Travel and the City's aspirations which will produce better outcomes.
- Making it clear to people what is being proposed very early on in the planning process.
- Improving engagement with various groups who provide very detailed responses to planning applications/green travel plans which are welcomed and essential in order to fully inform the proposed Travel Plan.
- avoid a "disconnect" in trying to deal with areas through discharge of planning conditions in favour of identifying opportunities at an early stage.

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Through the work of this Group Members came to the conclusion that it is important to continue with efforts to ensure public engagement and that if Green Travel Plans were discussed much earlier in the process this would ensure a better result for everyone concerned. They felt strongly that it should be made clear to developers and organisations that once a Green Travel Plan is in place, if the site is expanded in future, it would be possible to re-assess the requirements in conjunction with green travel opportunities available and this point should be highlighted during initial discussions.

Financial Reporting

(Verbal updates provided to each Scrutiny Committee: June 2018)

The intention behind this Group was to focus on the financial reports prior to their submission to the Scrutiny Committees so that Members could identify what aspects they would like to concentrate upon since these may be different from those highlighted by the accountants. This would make the scrutiny of financial reports more effective and ensure that, should Councillors have questions about service areas, Service Managers could be asked to attend to provide further information and answer service related questions. This would streamline the effectiveness and quality of scrutiny.

Members could also consider how financial reports may be improved so that they would be easier to read and understand. This would enable greater challenge of the content of the reports.

Membership of the Group consisted of:-

Cllr Sheldon (Chair of Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee)
Cllr Wardle (Chair of People Scrutiny Committee)
Cllr Owen (nominated by the Chair of Place Scrutiny Committee)
Cllr Henson
Cllr Mitchell

It was quickly established that not all underspends are necessarily good and not all overspends are bad and it was recognised that different service areas can fluctuate and budgets are set on assumptions and intelligent estimates.

The Group identified areas which Members may wish to particularly consider when reviewing financial reports such as:-

- The impact of underspends on the level of service;
- Areas which are over or under budget;
- Whether budgets previously showing underspends have been amended for future;
- Whether the budget is reasonable;
- The reason for trends and particularly consistent trends;
- If bids to the Capital Programme are accurate;
- Whether expectations as to the level of delivery are realistic when considering available budget;
- Attention to the Investment Strategy and whether the Council continues to reduce the debt;
- Whether overspends are fundamental or ongoing and the reasons for this;
- Identifying areas for savings over the next 2 years.

Various improvements could be made to the financial reports immediately and with relative ease by officers such as:-

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- (i) Future budget monitoring reports to provide both the previous outturn variance forecast and the current outturn forecast on a management unit basis, so that Members can see how forecasts have changed.
- (ii) A brief explanation will appear against each point, accompanying details of overspends and underspends, setting out clearly how the figures have changed in the last three months so that it is easier for Councillors to identify and challenge.
- (iii) Where there is an overspend split between two items, the proportions of that split will appear in brackets by the side of the item.
- (iv) The last quarter figures will be included and highlighted. At present, the standard layout of variances with details of overspend and underspend is 3 months on from the previous report figures and because of this Members cannot see how the figures have changed.

These improvements have now been implemented by the Chief Finance Officer and his team.

This Spotlight Review also acted as a timely reminder that the Chairs and Deputy Chairs of the Scrutiny Committees are entitled to attend Executive meetings to set out areas of concern to their Committees and that Executive Members would welcome this, particularly in respect of financial reporting.

Financial training continues to form part of Councillors' induction training each year. As a result of this Group, the training now includes two elements, the first being a training session delivered by the Chief Finance Officer which details an internal overview and a session delivered by an external trainer providing a general overview. The focus of the training is to understand how to effectively scrutinise accounts and ask the right questions.

Member Development

(Verbal up to Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee: 27th September 2018)

The purpose of this Spotlight Review Group was to gain feedback from Members as to the current Member Development Programme including the induction plan, training and briefings.

Members were provided with details of the current induction plan, training and briefings for 2017/2018.

In relation to Members' training the Group suggested that:-

- Planning training should be made available to all Councillors and not just those who are selected for Planning Committee;
- More indepth ipad training would be helpful;
- More detail as to the existing skills base of Councillors should be obtained so that training needs can be better assessed;
- The level of training could be structured so that, for example, Level 1 would cater for new Councillors, Level 2 for old and new Councillors (concentrating on updates) and Level 3 for all Councillors mainly concentrating on new information;

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- Understanding the difference between a “duty” and a “power” should be covered within the existing governance training for Councillors;
- The training session on Committees and roles should take place the week before the Annual Council meeting;
- Paper information on training should be made available in the Members’ room and saved on the “S drive” since it is not possible to access the documents on ipads after 6 months;
- The Party Whip should encourage attendance at training sessions.

In relation to the Induction Programme the Group suggested that:-

- Small group visits should be arranged for Councillors to Belle Isle, MRF, RAMM and the recycling and collection rounds (for example). This would give the opportunity for Councillors to integrate with services and staff and gain first hand experience of what the service does and how it operates;
- There should be a tour of developments within the City and an opportunity to meet the planning team and cleansing team given that a lot of issues Councillors deal with relate to these areas;
- The opportunity to attend Planning Committee, Planning Member Working Group and Delegated Briefings should be highlighted to Councillors in case they wish to attend;
- At least two dates should be made available for Councillors to meet Directors and senior managers and the meetings should be reduced time wise;
- Existing Councillors should attend in a group to provide details and “sign up” post Election and new Councillors should be seen at arranged individual appointments.

In relation to Members’ Briefings the Group suggested that the level of attendance may be improved by:-

- Providing more information with the invitation as to the importance of the briefing;
- Sending invitations a week or two before the date of the Briefing instead of sending Councillors a block of invitations to all planned Briefings;
- Sending weekly reminders to Councillors as to what the current week’s Briefing relates to and when it is, asking for confirmation of attendance.
- The Party Whip should encourage attendance at Member Briefings.

Other, more general suggestions related to there being a list of useful officer contacts and the responsibilities of various front line services being made available together with a list of 24 hour services and contact details, for example, to use in reporting noise nuisance during the night time. It was also felt that a general organisational structure chart would be helpful in relation to operational services so that Councillors knew immediately who to contact in the event of a problem and an escalation process regarding particular problems or complaints. It would also be useful to have details of who does what outside the Council, for example, details of organisations and contact numbers in respect of Highways and Schools.

Generally, the Group felt that the offer in respect of Member Development was currently good, but valued the opportunity to look at ways in which it could be further improved.

The Corporate Manager, Democratic and Civic Support, together with the Democratic Service (Committees) Manager are working together to bring the Group’s ideas forward.

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Agency Working

(Update reported in the Scrutiny Bulletin: 4th July 2018)

This topic was identified as high priority for Spotlight Review as Councillors wished to review agency usage figures and the reasons behind high usage in certain service areas. There was a concern that not all Councillors may be aware of the current position.

The Group were provided with a table to show the hours & cost per department for the months of October 2017 & April 2018 to give an illustrative idea of any variation, together with a spreadsheet showing "Agency Total Hours FTE" which showed a month by month breakdown of agency workers' hours as well as the pre-VAT cost (records kept since July 2017).

Prior to the meeting, the service areas of Housing, Public Realm, Refuse/MRF, Customer Access and HR were identified as having fairly significant variances and the Service Leads from these areas were invited to attend the meeting to explain the reasons for this.

In conclusion, the Group found a broad theme for variations across these front line services with reasonable explanations such as:-

- Vacant posts due to staff sickness, holiday, retirement or maternity leave;
- Pool staff are used where possible but there is a limited supply;
- Seasonal work creates fluctuation in terms of staffing required;
- Seasonal variations mean that there is a real risk that if posts are covered by recruiting permanent staff, the Department would be overstaffed for a number of weeks in the winter;
- Extra demand at various times (for instance, cleansing and refuse/student term times);
- Whilst there is a supportive and generous absence policy, long term absences can cause a staffing problem and particularly where it is not possible to offer light duties (for example MRF/Refuse);
- Staff positions need to be covered straight away in terms of front facing services (such as the Customer Service Centre for example);
- Difficulty in recruiting;
- Lack of a permanent funding stream (in respect of external funding) which can be used to secure agency staff but not to support a full time and permanent staff position;
- Re-structure resulting in the loss of staff.

It was acknowledged that the Strategic Management Board together with HR continue to monitor agency usage on a monthly basis which provides an accountability check in terms of need and necessity. However, the Group were clear that variations should be assessed on a service by service basis, since the issues affecting each service are individual rather than uniform and that it was important to recognise that the ebb and flow of agency staff usage is not evident in the information provided to the Group.

Council Representation on Outside Bodies

(Reported to Executive: 10th July 2018 and Council: 24th July 2018)

The Corporate Manager, Democratic and Civic Support put forward the suggestion for this Spotlight Review since he wished Members to have the opportunity to consider:-

- What is achieved through representation?

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- Is there merit, necessity or both in continuing with representation?
- What the Councillor attendance record is like.

Members were reminded that all appointments can be viewed on the City Council website and that the full list of Appointments to Outside Bodies is reported once a year in the first cycle in the Municipal Year.

The Group worked through the list of organisations (52 in total) to determine whether to recommend that the Council withdraw or continue with representation. Special consideration was given to charitable organisations since withdrawal of representation could mean that they would have to change their Articles of Association and make a direct approach to the Charities' Commission. This could have a negative impact on the charities concerned which Councillors wished to avoid.

Findings of the Group and recommendations as to appointments were submitted to the Executive Committee on the 10th July and subsequently to Council on the 24th July 2018 and were approved together with a recommendation that the Corporate Manager Democratic and Civic Support should be granted delegated powers, in consultation with Group Leaders to appoint, where necessary, representatives to outside bodies during the course of the Municipal Year. This would facilitate rapid appointment wherever possible and remove the need to report to Executive and Council which could cause unnecessary delay to the appointment process.

PSPO Spotlight Review

(Reported to Place Scrutiny Committee: 13th September 2018)

The purpose of this Spotlight Review was to provide the Place Scrutiny Committee with an update following implementation of the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) in June 2017 which would detail the operation and effectiveness of the PSPO in reducing problematic anti-social behaviour together with details of any negative or unforeseen impacts that may have developed and provide any recommendations for varying or discharging the Order.

The Neighbourhood Inspector for Exeter and the City Centre Sergeant attended to provide input from a police perspective. They explained that the initiative generally presented an opportunity to work with other organisations such as the City Council together with businesses, communities and agencies to collectively demonstrate that the City will not tolerate certain behaviour and to put in place prevention measures. The power to seize alcohol is used by the police on a daily basis.

In conclusion the Group agreed that:-

- The PSPO is working well with a 16% reduction in anti-social behaviour reported to the Police.
- The power to seize alcohol and disperse groups and individuals is a very effective tool in tackling anti-social behaviour,
- The area currently covered by the PSPO is sufficient.
- The collaborative, multi organisational response is working well in terms of prevention, education and enforcement.
- Communities are being encouraged and supported to tackle low level anti-social behaviour, particularly through the Community Safety Partnership.

Councillor Vizard and Councillor Wright presented a report on behalf of the Group to the Place Scrutiny Committee on the 13th September 2018 where it was agreed that the PSPO is working well and should continue in its current form.

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Governance Review

(Reported to the Audit and Governance Committee: 19th September 2018)

The basis for this cross party Review arose out of the Audit and Governance Committee meeting held on the 14th March 2018. The Committee agreed to the formation of a Governance Review Group to address the roles and responsibilities of the various Committees, to ensure that they continue to meet the Council's priorities, aims and objectives and that the standing orders and procedural rules contained within the Constitution remained fit for purpose.

There were three main aspects to the Review:-

- i. To draw a comparison between Exeter and other similar sized Authorities in terms of the democratic services offer;
- ii. Whether the Constitution and Standing Orders remain fit for purpose;
- iii. To identify ways in which the structure and content of the Council's democratic processes might be streamlined and improved.

In respect of (ii) comparisons were drawn with Norwich, Cambridge, Sedgemoor and Taunton Deane, considering in particular, staffing, committees, number of meetings and available budget for Democratic Services.

Specific aspects were considered such as:-

- The appetite for revision of the work load of the Scrutiny Committees – are they working as effectively as possible in their current form and number?
- Is there merit in introducing the facility for public speaking at all Committees?
- Should there be a restriction on the amount of time Councillors have to speak or restricted to a right to reply or point of clarification?
- Should amended recommendations be projected onto a screen at respective Committee meetings before the vote is taken so that Councillors are absolutely clear as to what they are voting upon?

The Review Group concluded that the Constitution and Council procedures largely remain fit for purpose subject to slight alterations and that, in the main, the Democratic process and structure at Exeter City Council works well with a reasonable comparison drawn with other similar sized Authorities.

The following recommendations were submitted to the Audit and Governance Committee on the 19th September 2018:-

- (i) The amendment of Standing Order 8 (3) (a) to state that questions should be submitted in written form no later than 10 am on the working day before the meeting.
- (ii) The addition to Standing Order 10 (6) of the following: "As long as the effect is not to negate the motion";
- (iii) The publicising, through social media and other means determined by officers, of the Council agenda prior to commencement of the Council meeting;

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- (iv) That Committee Chairs will move the minutes of their respective Committees for noting on block rather than minute by minute (with the exception of any minutes containing recommendations);
- (v) That Executive recommendations will be identified and highlighted more clearly at Council meetings and voted on accordingly;
- (vi) That the current system of three Scrutiny Committees be retained.

The findings of the Governance Review Group were reported by the Corporate Manager Democratic & Civic Support to the Audit and Governance Committee on the 19th September 2018 and the recommendations were approved and are being implemented.

Accessibility and Inclusion

(To be reported to the People Scrutiny Committee: 1st November 2018)

This topic was raised as high priority topic for Task and Finish Group investigation at the Interim Scrutiny Programme Meeting in November 2017. Inclusivity and accessibility remain high on the agenda both at national and local level, in particular the Council's commitment to providing a well run Council with effective, efficient, person centred services. The Equality Act 2010 sets the legislative background and requirements and the Council's Equality Policy was revised and subsequently approved by Corporate Services Scrutiny on the 28th June 2018. The adoption of this Policy further cements the Council's commitment to making information about services more widely available and accessible and making contacting the Council easier and more accessible to all customers.

The Policy Officer provided the Group with an overview as to the current position and key objectives were settled upon as follows:-

- (a) To review accessibility of the Council's website in relation to those with wide ranging disabilities;
- (b) To investigate whether the Council obtains feedback with regards to accessibility of services and whether that feedback is obtained in a uniform way across the Council;
- (c) To understand what the departmental offer is in terms of accessibility for those with a wide range of disabilities.

It was essential to focus the work of the Group, given the broad range of the topic and work already underway in relation to accessibility and safeguarding. As a result of this, the Group decided that it would be of benefit to focus on the four specific service areas of Housing Benefit, Housing Advice, Customer Access and Environmental Health. Initially, Service Leads from each were invited to join the Group to provide an overview of their particular service and answer specific questions so that there was a consistent structure from which to draw comparisons. It was clear that there is a lot of ongoing work in terms of services improving accessibility and that staff are going to great lengths to assist customers where they can. It is noticeable that there has been an increase in individuals presenting with mental health issues and low literacy skills.

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The second part of the Group's work was to concentrate upon engaging with service users to gain their views. A questionnaire survey was conducted with focussed questions as to how individuals choose to access Council services and information; how easy they thought this was together with any suggestions they might have for improvement. Assistance was provided by Living Options, the Learning Disability Partnership and a member of Exeter City Council's staff. The aim was to reach people with a wide range of disabilities, sending questionnaires not only via e-mail but also by post using specific formats. Generally the feedback suggests that the Council's overall accessibility rating is good in terms of communication and assistance. What was noticeable is the amount of people who choose to contact the Council by phone, either themselves or with the help of family or support workers, rather than on line.

The Task and Finish Group concluded that there are two prominent messages. Firstly, that the Council needs to better advertise its offer in respect of the support it can provide to access services and secondly, in a time of the ever increasing digital offer to customers, other forms of communication should not be overlooked or viewed as less important.

The Task and Finish Group's report, together with recommendations is due to be considered by the People Scrutiny Committee on the 1st November 2018.

4. **Outstanding Task and Finish Group Work**

Impacts upon the City

Considering what appears on other Local Authorities' Forward Plans and how that might impact the City. This will provide an opportunity to identify, isolate and prioritise various areas for further investigation, inviting engagement with other Authorities, stakeholders and external organisations, to ensure that the City Council is consulted on proposals which could affect the City. Topics such as Healthcare and Planning could be areas of particular interest.

The Evening Economy

Specifically concentrating upon the 5 pm to 7 pm period and use of City Council Parks (maximising use could help to reduce anti-social behaviour). Ideas such as later opening times for cafes, food markets and entertainers could maximise use and may help to reduce anti-social behaviour and should be relatively inexpensive and easy to deliver. It also presents an opportunity to understand if there is something that is preventing progress in certain areas and to identify what can realistically be achieved.

CCTV

To consider the service, cost, charges and merit in continuation.

Estimates, Fees and Charges

A general review to establish how the City Council deals with these and whether there are other aspects that should be considered.

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5. Profile of Scrutiny at Exeter City Council

The profile of Scrutiny at Exeter City Council has been raised at both local and national level as a result of:-

➤ Corporate Challenge Feedback Report (4-7 December 2017)

3.3 Organisational leadership and governance – “The council is making positive steps towards enhancing the scrutiny function. This includes significant success on pre-decision scrutiny – with all papers and decisions for cabinet going to scrutiny first. The People Scrutiny Committee, one of three scrutiny committees in the council conducted a review of Homelessness with Teignbridge District Council, which led to a joint Homeless Strategy and Action Plan”.

➤ The House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee Inquiry into the effectiveness of local authority overview and scrutiny committees

The Scrutiny Programme Officer provided a submission to the Inquiry outlining how the City Council view an effective scrutiny process as a vital component of good governance and a key component to the practical and successful delivery of Exeter’s vision. The Inquiry provided the City Council with an opportunity to contribute to the wider picture, sharing what is happening in Exeter and ensuring the continued, positive evolution of scrutiny at both local and national level. The first report of session was published on the 11th December 2017.

A copy of the submission has previously appeared in the Scrutiny Bulletin and a further copy is available upon request.

➤ The MJ Local Government Achievement Awards

The Scrutiny Programme Officer provided a submission to the MJ Awards category for “Excellence in Scrutiny and Governance” which concentrated upon the work and achievements of the Homelessness Strategy Task and Finish Group - a joint initiative between Exeter City Council and Teignbridge District Council. The Task and Finish Group involved Councillors and Officers from both Local Authorities. This work provided a prime example of how an effective Scrutiny process can support two politically opposing Councils in achieving a common goal for the benefit of all.

A copy of the submission has previously appeared in the Scrutiny Bulletin and a further copy is available upon request.

➤ Association of Democratic Service Officers (ADSO) Awards 2018 Team of the Year

Exeter City Council’s Democratic Services Team entered the Awards and have been shortlisted alongside Tower Hamlets Council, Brent Council and Sutton Council. The next stage in the process is a conference video interview with the Team which will take place on Thursday 1st November. This will involve a brief presentation to bring to life the submission, followed by questions from the judges before a final decision is made.

ADSO commented that, “The standard of the submissions was particularly high this year and it was a very difficult decision not to shortlist others. Congratulations to all of the authorities listed and many thanks to all of the authorities who participated, it

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is appreciated..... it is really important that the quality work our members undertake is recognised. The awards provides us with the ideal opportunity to do that”.

➤ Scrutiny Training

Scrutiny training continues to be provided as part of induction training for Councillors each year. This is currently delivered by the Scrutiny Programme Officer, in addition to which external courses are also available to Councillors who wish to attend.

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REPORT TO: PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Date of Meetings: 1st November 2018

Report of: Cllr Rachel Lyons
Chair of the Accessibility and Inclusion Task and Finish Group

Title: Accessibility and Inclusion Task and Finish Group Report

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Council

1. What is the report about?

To report the findings and recommendations of this Task and Finish Group to the People Scrutiny Committee.

2. Recommendations:

The People Scrutiny Committee support further investigations as to whether:-

- (a) An "Access to Support" page can be incorporated into a prominent place on the Council's website;
- (b) Council Services and accessibility support can be advertised on the internal screens in the Customer Service Centre;
- (c) Council Services and accessibility support can be advertised on screens at local doctors' surgeries and whether there is an associated cost;
- (d) An A-Z page of Council services with general departmental contact details can be provided on the website and in paper form in various formats;
- (e) Icons can be added to menu options on the website to provide better prompts and signposting to Council services;
- (f) Direct links for key services can be introduced under the area headings which appear on the initial front page of the website;
- (g) The website can be adapted to provide options to change the magnification, background colour and font size and colour;
- (h) The website in general is compatible with the screen reading software often used by partially sighted customers.

3. Reasons for the recommendation:

- To ensure that the Council continues to meet its legislative and policy requirements;
- To fulfil the aspiration of becoming a City where everyone can access Council services, facilities and information easily;
- To learn from the feedback of service users and officers;
- To provide a more interactive website which will enable better access for on line users and free up officer time;
- To provide information in an easier to read and accessible format;
- To highlight the types of support available to individuals to assist them in accessing Council services and information;
- To continually develop the Council's customer offer in terms of access to information and services.

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

Officer time.

5. Section 151 Officer Comments:

There are no financial implications contained in this report.

6. What are the legal aspects?

The Equality Act 2010 applies and this report demonstrates the Council's ongoing compliance with its legislative requirements.

7. Monitoring officer Comments

This report raises no issues of concern to the Monitoring Officer

8. Report Details:

The Context

This topic was raised as a high priority topic for Task and Finish Group investigation at the Interim Scrutiny Programme Meeting in November 2017. Inclusivity and accessibility remain high on the agenda both at national and local level and Exeter City Council is committed to providing a well run Council with effective, efficient, person centred services.

Access is not just about physical access but also about the way in which we choose to communicate as a Council. It is essential to consider what information the Council provides, how it provides it and what assistance is available to help all individuals fully access information and services.

The Equality Act 2010 provides the legislative framework with a statutory requirement for reasonable adjustments to be made to ensure that the provision of information is provided in an accessible format.

The Council's Equality Policy was recently revised and subsequently approved by the Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee on the 28th June 2018. The adoption of the revised Policy further cements the Council's commitment to making information about services more widely available and easily accessible to everyone. The Policy also strengthens links to the Council's commitment to the Devon Joint Declaration for Equality.

The Group

Membership of the Group consisted of:-

- Cllr Wardle

- Cllr Lyons
- Cllr Bialyk
- Cllr Foggin
- Cllr Natalie Vizard
- Cllr Robson
- Cllr Wright
- Cllr Mitchell
- Cllr Hannan
- Cllr Morse
- Cllr Musgrave

- Jo Yelland, Director
- Melinda Pogue-Jackson, Policy Officer

Objectives:-

The Group agreed that the priority would be communication with particular regard to:-

- reviewing accessibility of the Council's website in relation to those with wide ranging disabilities;
- investigating whether the Council obtains feedback with regards to accessibility of services and whether that feedback is obtained in a uniform way across the Council;
- understanding what the departmental customer offer is in terms of accessibility for those with a wide range of disabilities.

The Background

Given the broad range of the topic and work already underway in relation to accessibility and safeguarding it was essential to focus the work of the Group. As a result of this, the Group decided that it would be of benefit to focus on specific services, to understand the current position with regard to accessibility, what is working well and what challenges they face. The second part of the Group's work would focus on gaining and considering feedback from service users who have wide ranging disabilities.

Service areas selected were:-

- Housing Benefit
- Housing Advice
- Customer Access
- Environmental Health.

Service Leads from each were invited to join the Group to provide an overview of their particular service and answer specific questions so that there was a consistent structure from which to draw comparisons. It was clear that there is a lot of ongoing work in terms of services improving accessibility and that staff are going to great lengths to assist customers where they can.

Housing Benefits

The System Lead Finance, Customer Access reminded the Group that Housing Benefits is means tested and very complex with a lot of “jargon” which officers do try to explain to people and attempt to make the letters as easy to understand as possible. The way in which decisions are communicated and the form which they have to take is governed by statutory requirement and there are time limits for obtaining information both of which cause a challenge - information and decisions have to be provided in written format and contain reasons for the decision. The Council’s Benefits Department uses a computer software system known as Capita and officers can customise letters to a degree but the system is restricted in terms of formatting and it is not possible to manually change the way in which the calculations are presented within each letter. With that said, on particularly complex cases, officers do try to follow the letter with a phone call to make sure that the customer understands the information.

With current staff capacity and limited resources, increasing reliance will have to be placed on automated systems and the potential for major difficulty and barriers comes in the form of Universal Credit which is digital by default, whereas the current benefit system is not solely digital and much more focussed on face to face communication to help customers.

Housing Advice

The Interim System Lead, Housing Needs explained that officers are skilled and experienced in identifying difficulties and that a lot of “hidden” assessment takes place and this is part of the day to day customer service approach.

The introduction of the Housing Reduction Act has caused difficulty. The Housing Advice service has had to increase letter templates from 5 to 19 and the letters are now very technical, quoting legislation which is not very helpful in terms of customers’ understanding.

Community connectors are essential and there is some project work being undertaken over the next 6 months with community connectors and Housing First clients – this will support accessibility and the results of the Housing Options Survey will be available shortly.

Customer Access

The System Lead, Finance specified that Customer Access encompasses a wide range of services such as the Customer Support Centre, the Call Centre, Council Tax Support and Housing Benefits. It is a challenging area because on one hand, help is provided (for example, housing benefit) and on the other hand, the service is responsible for collecting taxes. Often Customer Access staff are in contact with the most vulnerable individuals on a daily basis and there seems to be an increase in those customers presenting with mental health issues and learning difficulties. It is essential that officers have very good listening and communication skills which enable them to uncover issues and identify those vulnerable individuals at an early stage to ensure that they are assisted in the best way for their needs.

A hearing loop is available in the Customer Service Centre and a mobile loop is available to be taken into interview rooms. Currently two Customer Service Officers are undertaking a sign language course and one member of staff is conversant already. An external specialist interpretation service is available and can assist with more complex cases and those requiring a detailed and accurate explanation.

The Lagan system can be accessed by different Council services and is used to record details of customers with particular issues or difficulties (only with the customers' permission).

Environmental Health

The Principal Environmental Health Officer informed the Group that the same sort of theme applied (as with the other services) in respect of legislative requirements as to what information has to be set out and how.

This service is very much based around the needs of the person with a lot of the people seen by Housing Advice also coming into contact with the Environmental Health Department. Most of the time it is the Environmental Health officers who initiate contact with individuals as a result of reported incidents. Most of the communication is carried out face to face through visits since some people do not have 'phones or the internet, so a tailored approach is taken as to the best form of communication to suit each person's requirements.

Environmental Health officers are spending much more time not only dealing with the issue to hand, but helping to signpost individuals to various agencies so that they can obtain the right assistance for other issues they may have. There is a great emphasis on building relationships with people.

Interpretation services are available, however officers find that individuals will usually communicate with the help of a friend, relative or support worker.

Current Website Accessibility

The Digital Services Officer confirmed that Strata provide all technical accessibility adaptations leaving three main areas as the responsibility of the Digital Services Officer which are:-

- Readability
- Content Design
- Document Accessibility

In terms of readability the Council subscribes to a tool called SiteImprove to provide insights into web usage, trends and error checking, together with a facility to score pages on their readability by giving each page a "reading age". Using these measures as a guide, 65% of the website requires a reading age of less than 16 years with the remaining percentage relating to such areas as Planning and Building Control which need to provide technical content or legal background.

Content design concentrates upon presenting sometimes quite complicated information in an easily readable and well set out fashion using plain English. For example, sensible use of headings and sub headings, short sentences and paragraphs, long pages split into multi-page guides and plenty of white space with clearly defined links and minimum use of tables.

Using documents on the website is avoided wherever possible although if essential the information can be converted onto an actual page. Forms, policies, legal documents and leaflets cannot be changed and currently there are over 700 Adobe pdf files and 130 Word documents on the website. All new pdf documents are checked to see if they have been “tagged” as this means that they are accessible and if not, this means that the document could be seen as a blank document to a visually impaired reader using screen reader technology.

Service Users’ Response

The second part of the Group’s work was to concentrate upon engaging with service users to gain their views. A questionnaire survey was conducted with focussed questions as to how individuals choose to access Council services and information; how easy they thought this was together with any suggestions they might have for improvement. Assistance was provided by Living Options, the Learning Disability Partnership and a member of Exeter City Council’s staff. The aim was to reach people with a wide range of disabilities, sending questionnaires not only via e-mail but also by post using specific formats. Generally the feedback suggests that the Council’s overall accessibility rating is good in terms of communication and assistance. What is noticeable is the amount of people who choose to contact the Council by phone, either themselves or with the help of family or support workers (rather than on line).

Positive comments were received and some are set out below:-

“I have contacted the Council by ‘phone and I found the staff to be very helpful and dealt with my enquiry swiftly and professionally. I believe that by ‘phoning the Council staff I could quickly find out what support is available to me”.

“As long as I can reach Council Services by ‘phone direct I am satisfied”.

“I have been in there (CSC) a couple of times and was very satisfied with the staff and they did give me the information I wanted”.

“The lady on the ‘phone was friendly and helpful”.

“I prefer to talk face to face with people. I have hearing loss so it’s not always easy on the ‘phone and I am not on the internet. The staff have always been very helpful whenever I’ve met with them”.

In relation to the website:-

“I can access any time, can search, magnify and print as required, I can e-mail or complete contact sheets and am able to review correspondence when I am able and in my chosen format”.

“Understanding is not an issue although the contrast on the “next page” and “previous page”, “start” and “submit” buttons could be increased and greater distinctions could be achieved around the sections where the customer has to input information”.

“Access to information on Housing Benefit, Housing Advice and Environmental Health was not easy to find”.

In conclusion

Taking into account the research, investigation and service users’ feedback received, the Group settled upon the recommendations contained within this report which demonstrate ways in which the current customer offer and profile of accessibility may be improved whilst complementing ongoing existing work.

There are two prominent messages resulting from the work of this Group. Firstly, that it is not easy or clear to find out what support there is for access to Council services generally and that the Council needs to better advertise its offer in respect of the support available. Secondly, in a time of an ever increasing digital offer to customers, other forms of communication should not be overlooked or viewed as less important.

Supporting those with hidden disabilities will always be an ever evolving process and there is great reliance on Council staff to identify individuals who may require specific assistance to best suit their needs. Although a pro-active approach is taken towards improving accessibility, the very nature of the subject can also be reactive in that the Council also relies upon service users to make it aware of areas which could be improved upon or altered.

There must be realistic expectations as to what can be achieved because of restrictions outside the Council’s control such as legislative requirements, limited resources and the increasing use of automated systems. However, the recommendations contained within this report suggest some relatively simple, but potentially very effective reasonable adjustments that the Council could make to improve accessibility to Council information and Services for all.

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

Any improvements to accessing Council services will have a positive impact upon equality, diversity and social inclusion for all.

Cllr Rachel Lyons: Chair of the Accessibility and Inclusion Task and Finish Group

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

Background papers used in compiling this report:

None

Contact for enquiries: Anne-Marie Hawley Tel No: (01392) 265105

REPORT TO: PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING: 1 November 2018
REPORT OF: Chief Finance Officer
TITLE: 2018/19 HRA Budget Monitoring Report – Quarter 2

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Is this an Executive or Council Function?

No

1. What is the report about?

To advise Members of any major differences, by management unit, between the approved budget and the outturn forecast at the second quarter stage of the financial year in respect of the Housing Revenue Account and the Council's new build schemes.

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

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

2. Recommendations:

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

3. Reasons for the recommendation:

The Housing Revenue Account is a statutory account and local housing authorities have a duty to keep an HRA in accordance with proper accounting practices and to review the account throughout the year. This is the second quarterly financial update in respect of the HRA for 2018-19.

4. What are the resource implications including non financial resources

The financial resources required to deliver both housing services to Council tenants and to invest in new and existing housing stock during 2018-19 are set out in the body of this report.

5. Section 151 Officer comments:

The HRA financial position remains relatively unchanged. There are no significant issues to highlight to Members at this time.

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:

8. Report Details:

HRA BUDGET MONITORING – QUARTER 2

8.1 Background to the HRA

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) records expenditure and income relating to council dwellings and the provision of services to tenants. Housing authorities have a statutory duty to maintain a HRA account, which is primarily a landlord account, in order to account to their tenants for income and expenditure on council housing separately from other functions and services of the Council.

8.2 Projected Surplus/Deficit

During this period the total budget variances indicate that there will be a net deficit of £3,868,032 in 2018-19. This represents a movement of £229,113 compared to the revised budgeted deficit of £4,097,145 for 2018-19. The key budget deviations are explained below. Please also refer to Appendix 2.

Budget Heading	Forecast Outturn Budget Variance at Quarter 1 (Under)/Overspend	Forecast Outturn Budget Variance at Quarter 2 (Under)/Overspend
Approved Budgeted Deficit	£4,097,145	
Forecast Budget Variances by Management Unit:		
Management Costs	£35,000	£39,000
Officer Responsible: Housing Lead – Tenancy Services, Service Lead – Housing Assets, Service Lead Performance, Strategy & Resources		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• £130K additional consultancy costs in respect of procurement, as part of a Council-wide action plan to strengthen procurement arrangements. A temporary HRA Procurement Manager has developed a procurement strategy focused on housing assets including full compliance of all contracts and contract management capacity building within existing teams.• (£24K) Forecast savings in employee costs, partly due to two 23 month fixed term IT System Officers starting in August, in order to help implement the new Housing Management system. Their contracts will now fall into 2020/21 and will be factored into the budget process for that financial year.• (£30k) Staff training on the new Housing Management System will be deferred until next financial year, ahead of its planned implementation in November '19 and will be factored into next year's budget setting process.• (£15k) A saving in the cost of updating a range of tenant and leaseholder handbooks is forecast as the work will be undertaken in-house, rather than by external consultants		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (£20k) Additional income from solar panel installations and letting of community rooms. 		
Housing Customers	(£7,000)	(£62,000)
<p>Officer Responsible: Housing Lead – Tenancy Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (£27k) Forecast savings in employee costs due to vacant posts and reduced working hours of a Neighbourhood Housing Assistant. • (£30k) A £40k supplementary budget was approved for decanting tenants from flats to enable asbestos removal works to be undertaken. A saving is reported, as two flats have been set up to enable a rolling decant to take place in-line with planned works, rather than decanting all tenants simultaneously. 		
Sundry Land Maintenance	(£65,000)	(£65,000)
<p>Officer Responsible: Housing Lead – Tenancy Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (£60k) Following the restructure of Public Realm, a new Tree Manager and Technical Officer (Trees) have been appointed and started in August. It is anticipated that slippage will occur in respect of works to HRA trees, whilst works are prioritised and access issues resolved. • (£5k) Savings are expected in respect of the Garden Assistance Scheme following lower inflationary rises in contract costs and a review of eligibility. 		
Repairs and Maintenance Programme	(£200,000)	(£200,000)
<p>Officer Responsible: Service Lead – Housing Assets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (£200k) A new contractor for external painting and low maintenance works in respect of flats was appointed from 1 October. Slippage in the programme is forecast to reflect a transition period between the main contractors. 		
Rents	£0	£100,000
<p>Officer Responsible Housing Lead – Tenancy Services and Service Lead - Finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A £70k reduction in rents relates to delays in letting the new units at Chester Long Court. It was anticipated that the units would be fully let during 2018/19, however lettings are now expected to commence at the end of the year. The final Building Control inspection highlighted additional fire safety works, which are planned to be completed in week commencing 5 November, reflecting the lead-in time for the required components. • A £30k reduction in rents relates to garages that have been cleared in Thornpark Rise, Bovemoors Lane and Anthony Road in readiness of the sites being sold to Exeter City Living Ltd, following Council approval of its formation and Year 1 business plan on 24 July 2018. 		
Capital Charges	£187,682	£173,887
<p>Officer Responsible: not applicable (statutory accounting charge)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depreciation charges are higher than budgeted due to a rise in the valuation of council dwellings. <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 future capital works or to repay debt.</p>		

Housing Assets	(£70,000)	(£145,000)
Officer Responsible: Service Lead – Housing Assets		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (£65k) savings in employee costs are expected due to various vacant posts within the Housing Assets team in the first few months of the year, including Service Lead – Housing Assets and two 18 month fixed term contract Fire Safety Implementation officers. • (£25k) Stock condition surveys will re-commence in November to supplement the extensive stock condition survey undertaken by consultants last year, in order to achieve 100% coverage. This work will continue into 2019/20, a saving is therefore reported this year reflecting the November start and will be factored into next year's estimates process. • (£48k) £8k per property was budgeted for the decant of tenants in ten LAINGS properties to facilitate a major demolish and re-build programme. Two properties have naturally become void since the budgets were approved resulting in a £16k saving. A further saving of £32k is reported reflecting the tenant decants planned to take place after April '19, which will be factored into next year's estimates process. Works are planned to start on site in November, starting on the empty properties and avoiding the need to decant tenants until early 2019. 		
Interest	(£0)	(£70,000)
Officer Responsible: Housing Lead – Tenancy Services, Service Lead – Housing Assets, Service Lead Performance, Strategy & Resources		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflects additional interest receivable on HRA balances (Working Balance, Major Repairs Reserve and capital receipts). Combined forecast revenue and capital underspends in 2018-19 will result in higher than anticipated HRA balances. 		
Total budget variances	(£119,318)	(£229,113)
Projected HRA deficit		£3,868,032

8.3 Impact on HRA Working Balance

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

The forecast balance, as at 31 March 2019, is set out below:

Movement	2018/19
Opening HRA Working Balance, as at 1/4/18	£10,212,244
Forecast deficit for 2018/19	(£3,868,032)
Balance resolved to be retained (HRA contingency)	(£4,000,000)
Balance Available, as at 31/3/19	£2,344,212

8.4 Higher Value Assets Levy

Since 2016-17 the HRA has been reporting a financial risk in respect of the High Value Assets Levy, as the Government introduced legislation within the Housing and Planning Act 2016 to allow for its introduction. The Act enabled the government to define 'higher value' homes and place a duty on local authorities to make a payment to the Government in respect of its 'high value' homes. In order to help mitigate against this risk the HRA contingency was increased from £3,000,000 to £4,000,000 over the medium term (as set out above).

In August 2018, the Government announced that it will not bring the Higher Value Assets Levy into effect and will be seeking to repeal the legislation. Officers will therefore review the HRA contingency, as part of the 2019/20 estimates process, in order to consider the optimum prudent provision.

8.5 Bid for Additional Borrowing

In June 2018 the Government invited local authorities to bid for additional borrowing headroom from 2019/20 to 2021/22 to enable them to build new homes. The opportunity was taken to submit bids, by the 30 September deadline, for 11 sites in order to increase the supply of council housing. An update will be provided to this committee once the outcomes of the bid process are known and if successful, Council approval will be sought for the required budgets and funding arrangements.

8.6 HRA Available Resources over the Medium Term

The forecast HRA available resources for delivering both housing services and capital investment are set out in Appendix 3 for the period to 2021/22.

Following Council approval for the establishment of Exeter City Living Limited, the Year 1 Business Plan provides for certain HRA sites in Heavitree to be disposed to the new development company at open market value. Capital receipts from the disposal of three sites are reflected in the available resources to the HRA, as formal offers have been accepted.

Financial appraisals are undertaken to ensure that such disposals do not have a detrimental financial impact on the HRA over a 30 year period. The proposed disposals to date, with the inclusion of Vaughan Road, do not have a detrimental financial impact. Future disposals will continue to be appraised on a site by site basis.

8.7 HRA Capital Programme

The 2018-19 HRA Capital Programme was last reported to Scrutiny Committee – People on 6 September 2018. Since that meeting the following changes have been made that have decreased the programme.

Description	2018/19	Approval / Funding
HRA Capital Programme	£19,168,652	
Budgets deferred to future financial years	(£1,538,076)	Executive 9 October 2018
Savings Declared	(£302,724)	Executive 9 October 2018
Revised HRA Capital Programme	£17,327,852	

8.8 Performance

The current HRA Capital Programme is detailed in Appendix 4. The appendix shows a total forecast spend of £14,871,217 compared to the £17,327,852 revised programme; a reduction of £2,456,635.

Deliverability of the planned investment in existing stock has been delayed pending the award of a substantial contract relating to windows, doors, painting and repair, fire doors, flat roofing and communal area upgrades. The contract for these works commenced on 1 October and negotiations will continue with the appointed contractor in relation to accelerated delivery for the remainder of 2018/19. The re-procurement of the kitchens and bathrooms contract will be completed by January 2019. The capital programme has been re-evaluated prior to the production of this Quarter 2 update and some slippage to 2019/20 has been identified.

8.9 Capital Budget Variances

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

Scheme	Forecast Overspend / (Underspend)
Officer Responsible – Reactive Repairs Lead Adaptations	(£50,000)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on current levels of referrals it is anticipated that an under-spend may occur. 	
Officer Responsible – Planned Works Lead Zebcat Project	(£30,000)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A saving is reported in-line with recent tender returns. The Council is undertaking a net zero energy whole building retrofit to six homes, as part of a project with five other delivery partners. 	
Officer Responsible – Service Lead Housing Assets COB Wave 2 – Rennes Car Park	£73,365
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An overspend is forecast in respect of additional fire safety works identified as part of the final building control inspection. 	
Scheme	Budget to be deferred to 2019/20
Officer Responsible – Planned Works Lead Programmed Re-roofing	£180,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A major programme of re-roofing is pending the outcomes of the additional stock condition surveys that are due to start in November, so that planned works can be based on 100% condition data. 	
Officer Responsible – Planned Works Lead Energy Conservation	£50,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further commitments against this budget are pending the outcomes of the net zero energy building retrofit demonstrations. 	
Officer Responsible – Planned Works Lead Balcony Walkway Improvements Communal Door and Screens	£100,000 £100,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These works form part of a wider low maintenance contract awarded from 1 	

October. The budgets have been re-profiled to reflect the mid-year start on site, following completion of the tender process.	
Officer Responsible – Planned Works Lead Rennes House Structural Works	£140,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A 10 month contract has been awarded in respect of the lift improvements at Rennes House, running from October '18 to July '19. The budget has been re-profiled accordingly. 	
Officer Responsible - Health, Safety & Compliance Lead Common Area Footpath/Wall Improvements	£100,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inspections of HRA footpaths and walls are being undertaken in order to inform a planned programme of improvement works with the budget re-profiled to allow for any identified health and safety works in the current financial year. 	
Officer Responsible – Health, Safety & Compliance Lead Fire Safety Storage Facilities	£90,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The two Fire Safety Implementation Officers were appointed in August '18. The provision of new storage facilities will be co-ordinated by the officers and the budget has been re-profiled to reflect their mid-year start. 	
Officer Responsible – Health, Safety & Compliance Lead Fire Risk Assessment Works	£150,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slippage of £150K to 2019/20 due to the appointment of a new Fire Risk Assessment Contractor not commencing until 1st November 2018. Additionally, industry guidance on the technical specification for composite fire doors was only released in September 2018 so the associated works to complete the installation programme has been delayed. 	
Officer Responsible – Service Lead Housing St Loyes Extra Care Scheme	£1,500,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The budget has been re-profiled in line with the latest cash-flow projections from external consultants. The projected spend for 2018/19 is less than their last assessment, due to an extended pre-construction phase to allow a value engineering process and some limited re-design work to be completed. 	

9. COUNCIL OWN BUILD BUDGET MONITORING – QUARTER 2

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

9.1 Projected Surplus/Deficit

There are no projected variances to report at the end of Quarter 2. The budgeted net surplus of £16,630 is still projected to be achieved during 2018-19.

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

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

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

Areas of budgetary risk are highlighted to committee as part of the quarterly budget monitoring updates. Appendix 1 sets out the risks identified, at Quarter 2.

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 budgeted revenue service costs for the year will help 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 2018/19 capital programme provides for enhancements to existing dwelling stock to be undertaken and help 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

DAVE HODGSON
Chief Finance Officer

Author:
Michelle White

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

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AREAS OF BUDGETARY RISK**APPENDIX 1**

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

Budget Title	Approved Budget	Risk
General Maintenance	£1,792,390 (revenue)	The volatility of the level of reported faults due to factors beyond the control of the Council, for example adverse weather conditions represent a budgetary risk. The impact of property inspections undertaken by the Housing Customer Team may also lead to the identification of additional repairs.
Repairs to Void Properties	£1,195,550 (revenue)	Property turnover and the varying condition of properties when returned to the Council represent a budgetary risk.
Rental Income from Dwellings	£18,600,000 (revenue)	Right to Buy sales, number of new tenancies set at convergence rent levels, number of days lost through major works, rent lost in respect of void properties and welfare reform changes (for which an increased bad debt provision has been made) all impact on the annual rental income. However, rental income after the first 6 months is slightly behind profile, but payments made during the rent-free fortnights may mitigate.

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HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNTS BUDGET MONITORING 2018-19

APPENDIX 2

QUARTER 2

ACTUAL TO DATE			YEAR END FORECAST				
PROFILED BUDGET	ACTUAL TO DATE	VARIANCE TO DATE	Code	APPROVED BUDGET	Qrt 1 FORECAST VARIANCE	Qrt 2 FORECAST VARIANCE	CURRENT OUTTURN FORECAST
£	£	£		£	£	£	£
423,303	371,214	(52,089)	85A1	1,270,275	35,000	39,000	1,309,275
594,622	539,951	(54,671)	85A2	1,393,120	(7,000)	(62,000)	1,331,120
235,038	145,513	(89,525)	85A3	561,710	(65,000)	(65,000)	496,710
3,094,954	2,486,926	(608,028)	85A4	6,312,360	(200,000)	(200,000)	6,112,360
0	0	0	85A5	7,196,550	0	0	7,196,550
3,006,450	3,180,337	173,887	85A6	3,006,450	187,682	173,887	3,180,337
679,122	552,885	(126,237)	85A7	1,653,960	(70,000)	(145,000)	1,508,960
(10,360,507)	(10,160,077)	200,430	85A8	(19,127,090)	0	100,000	(19,027,090)
989,780	989,782	2	85B2	1,829,810	0	(70,000)	1,759,810
			85B4	(4,097,145)	119,318	229,113	(3,868,032)
				0	0	0	0
			Net Expenditure				
			Working Balance	10,212,244		31 March 2019	6,344,212
			1 April 2018				

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COUNCIL OWN BUILD SITES

PROFILED BUDGET	ACTUAL TO DATE	VARIANCE TO DATE	Code	APPROVED BUDGET	Qrt 1 FORECAST VARIANCE	Qrt 2 FORECAST VARIANCE	CURRENT OUTTURN FORECAST
£	£	£		£	£	£	£
14,025	13,754	(271)	H005	32,670	0	800	33,470
(5,175)	(6,314)	(1,139)	H006	(10,350)	0	0	(10,350)
(29,444)	(35,420)	(5,976)	H007	(58,400)	0	(1,750)	(60,150)
0	0	0	H008	6,070	0	0	6,070
13,380	14,334	954	H009	13,380	0	950	14,330
			H010	16,630	0	0	16,630
				0	0	0	0
			Net Expenditure				
			Working Balance	256,943		31 March 2019	273,573
			1 April 2018				

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HRA AVAILABLE RESOURCES

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT	2018-19 £	2019-20 £	2020-21 £	2021-22 £	TOTAL £
CAPITAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE					
Usable Receipts Brought Forward					7,704,749
Major Repairs Reserve Brought Forward					11,169,004
Other HRA Sales	1,802,000	0	0	0	1,802,000
RTB sales	1,067,691	500,000	400,000	400,000	2,367,691
Surrender back to DCLG - pending investment in replacement affordable housing	0	(1,097,567)	0	0	(1,097,567)
Major Repairs Reserve	3,180,337	3,180,337	3,180,337	3,180,337	12,721,348
Revenue Contributions to Capital	7,196,555	2,500,000	3,000,000	4,500,000	17,196,555
External contributions	284,000	308,424	0	0	592,424
Grant funding - Estate Regeneration Funding	756,257	0	0	0	756,257
Grant funding - Zero Energy Buildings Project	216,000	0	0	0	216,000
Commuted sums	471,107	5,320,000	949,432	0	6,740,539
Total Resources available	14,973,947	10,711,194	7,529,769	8,080,337	60,169,000
CAPITAL PROGRAMME					
HRA Capital Programme	17,327,852	19,767,447	9,687,978	9,059,688	55,842,965
Quarter 2 - Overspends / (Savings)	(6,635)				(6,635)
Quarter 2 - Slippage / Re-profiling	(2,450,000)	1,050,000	1,400,000		0
Total Housing Revenue Account	14,871,217	20,817,447	11,087,978	9,059,688	55,836,330
UNCOMMITTED CAPITAL RESOURCES:					
Usable Receipts Brought Forward	7,704,749	8,419,440	4,791,873	2,851,869	7,704,749
Major Repairs Reserve Brought Forward	11,169,004	10,557,043	4,078,357	2,460,152	11,169,004
Resources in Year	14,973,947	10,711,194	7,529,769	8,080,337	41,295,247
Less Estimated Spend	(14,871,217)	(20,817,447)	(11,087,978)	(9,059,688)	(55,836,330)
Uncommitted Capital Resources	18,976,483	8,870,230	5,312,021	4,332,670	4,332,670
WORKING BALANCE RESOURCES:					
Balance Brought Forward	10,212,244	6,344,212	6,442,943	6,627,747	8,567,454
HRA Balance Transfer - Surplus/(Deficit)	(4,097,145)	472,618	398,191	(623,006)	(2,204,552)
Quarter 2 budget monitoring - forecast variances	229,113	(373,887)	(213,387)	(173,887)	(532,048)
Balance Carried Forward	6,344,212	6,442,943	6,627,747	5,830,854	5,830,854
Balance Resolved to be Retained	(4,000,000)	(4,000,000)	(4,000,000)	(4,000,000)	(4,000,000)
Uncommitted HRA Working Balance	2,344,212	2,442,943	2,627,747	1,830,854	1,830,854
TOTAL AVAILABLE CAPITAL RESOURCES	21,320,695	11,313,173	7,939,768	6,163,524	6,163,524

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APPENDIX 4

**2018-19
CAPITAL MONITORING - QUARTER 2**

	2018-19 Capital Programme	2018-19 Spend	2018-19 Forecast Spend	2018-19 Budget to be Carried Forward to Future Years	2018-19 Programme Variances Under ()
	£	£	£	£	£
HRA CAPITAL					
EVERYONE HAS A HOME					
Adaptations	420,975	131,176	370,975		(50,000)
Estate Improvements	68,395	5,231	68,395		0
Programmed Re-roofing	280,590	0	100,590	180,000	0
Energy Conservation	100,000	0	50,000	50,000	0
Garage Upgrades	74,000	0	74,000		0
LAINGS Refurbishments	1,936,000	16,179	1,936,000		0
Kitchen Replacement Programme	1,059,950	441,034	1,059,950		0
Balcony Walkway Improvements	210,000	0	110,000	100,000	0
Bathroom Replacements Programme	693,760	299,224	693,760		0
Door Replacements (including Outbuildings)	122,000	0	122,000		0
Fire Precautionary Works to Flats	28,530	11,384	28,530		0
Communal Area Improvements	97,893	0	97,893		0
Structural Repairs	294,280	1,364	294,280		0
Rennes House Structural Works	350,000	0	210,000	140,000	0
Common Area Footpath/Wall Improvements	350,000	0	250,000	100,000	0
Soil Vent Pipe Replacement	77,530	0	37,530	40,000	0
Electrical Central Heating	36,935	6,591	36,935		0
Fire Safety Storage Facilities	150,000	0	60,000	90,000	0
Electrical Re-wiring	550,250	134,946	550,250		0
Central Heating and Boiler Replacement Programme	560,000	112,300	560,000		0
Communal Door & Screens	331,000	0	231,000	100,000	0
Fire Risk Assessment Works	476,810	6,439	326,810	150,000	0
Loft and Cavity Insulation	50,000	0	50,000		0
Whipton Barton House Water Mains	50,000	0	50,000		0
Re-roofing Works Shilhay	164,800	147,109	164,800		0
Window Replacements	954,300	0	954,300		0
Replacement Housing Management System	175,096	175,096	175,096		0
Porch Canopies	102,000	0	102,000		0
Zebcat Project	480,000	1,800	450,000		(30,000)
HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT TOTAL	10,245,094	1,489,873	9,215,094	950,000	(80,000)
COUNCIL OWN BUILD CAPITAL					
COB Wave 2 - Rennes Car Park	271,500	209,099	344,865		73,365
St Loyes ExtraCare	5,100,000	2,004	3,600,000	1,500,000	0
Acquisition of Social Housing - Section 106	100,000	370	100,000		0
Acquisition of Social Housing - Open Market	855,000	328,937	855,000		0
Estate Regeneration - Heavitree (COB Wave III)	59,860	61,611	61,611		1,751
Estate Regeneration - Heavitree (Clifford Close)	141,956	305	141,956		0
Estate Regeneration - Heavitree (Vaughan Road)	321,320	14,715	321,320		0
Estate Regeneration - Heavitree (South Street)	233,122	153,053	231,371		(1,751)
COUNCIL OWN BUILD TOTAL	7,082,758	770,094	5,656,123	1,500,000	73,365
OVERALL HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT TOTAL	17,327,852	2,259,967	14,871,217	2,450,000	(6,635)

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REPORT TO: PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting: 1 November 2018
Report of: Chief Finance Officer
Title: 2018/19 Budget Monitoring Report – Quarter 2

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Executive

1. What is the report about?

This report advises Members of any material differences, by management unit, between the 2018/19 approved budget and the current outturn forecast in respect of the People Scrutiny Committee revenue and capital budgets.

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

2. Recommendations:

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

3. Reasons for the recommendation:

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

4. What are the resource implications including non financial resources

The financial resources required to deliver People Services during 2018/19 are set out in the body of this report.

5. Section 151 Officer comments:

The small underspend against the budget is noted and forms part of the wider efforts to ensure expenditure is balanced against the budget during this financial year. The results for the General Fund as a whole will be reported to the Executive and Full Council within the Revenue Overview report, which collates the financial performance of the three Scrutiny Committees alongside other income and expenditure of the Council.

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:

Budget Monitoring – Quarter 2

8.1 Key Variations from Budget

The current forecast suggests that net expenditure for this committee will decrease from the approved budget by a total of £92,740 after transfers from reserves and revenue contributions to capital, as detailed in Appendix 1. This represents a variation of 2.64% from the revised budget. This includes a supplementary budget of £580,000 already agreed by Council.

8.2 The significant variations by management unit are:

Budget Heading	Forecast Outturn Budget Variance at Quarter 1 (Under)/Overspend £	Forecast Outturn Budget Variance at Quarter 2 (Under)/Overspend £
Forecast Budget Variances by Management Unit:		
81C2 – Housing Needs	0	(72,240)
Responsible Officer: Interim System Lead, Housing Needs		
The underspend on pay reflects the lead-in time for fully recruiting to the new Housing Needs structure approved by Executive in February 2018. Recruitment has been a significant challenge primarily due to it being scheduled alongside the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act (which went live in April 2018). Not only did this bring a significant additional burden of priority work, it triggered a market demand for experienced housing needs staff which impacted on recruitment nationally as well as in the South West area. Nevertheless it is anticipated that the service will have full recruitment by the end of quarter three and therefore this current underspend is a one-off in-year saving to the General Fund.		

9. Capital Budget Monitoring – Quarter 2

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

9.1 Revisions to the People Capital Programme

The 2018/19 Capital Programme was last reported to Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee on 27 September 2018. Since that meeting no changes have been made to the programme.

9.2 Performance

The current People Capital Programme is detailed in Appendix 2. The appendix shows a total spend of £174,646 in 2018/19 during the first six months of the year.

9.3 Capital Variances from Budget

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

9.4 Capital Budgets Deferred to 2019/20

No significant amounts have been identified as being wholly or partly deferred to 2019/20 and beyond.

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

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

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

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

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

The revenue service costs reported to this Committee help support the provision of temporary accommodation, housing advice, licensing of houses of multiple occupation, new affordable housing within the City and the administration of housing benefits. All these services have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of residents, in particular those in housing need.

In terms of capital expenditure, the 2018/19 capital programme helps facilitate disabled adaptations 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
2018/19 BUDGET MONITORING

QUARTER 2

ACTUAL TO DATE			YEAR END FORECAST			
PROFILED BUDGET	ACTUAL TO DATE	VARIANCE TO DATE	CODE	APPROVED BUDGET	CURRENT OUTTURN FORECAST	FORECAST VARIANCE
£	£	£		£	£	£
275,376	203,136	(72,240)	81C2	975,340	903,100	(72,240)
200,086	170,237	(29,849)	81C3	196,270	196,270	0
(41,546)	(40,762)	784	81C4	116,030	95,530	(20,500)
89,980	89,980	0	81C5	89,980	89,980	0
122,971	134,283	11,312	81E1	235,530	235,530	0
1,213,129	1,222,550	9,421	86A1	1,901,290	1,901,290	0
1,859,996	1,779,424	(80,572)	NET EXPENDITURE	3,514,440	3,421,700	(92,740)

TRANSFERS TO / (FROM) EARMARKED RESERVES

0

OVERALL FORECAST EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR AFTER MOVEMENTS TO/FROM RESERVES	3,421,700
REVISED BUDGETS	3,514,440
ADJUSTED OUTTURN VARIANCE	(92,740)

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2018/19 CAPITAL MONITORING - QUARTER 2

	2018/19 Capital Programme	2018/19 Spend to Date	2018/19 Forecast Spend	2018/19 Budget to be Carried Forward to 2019/20 and Beyond	2018/19 Programme Variances (Under)/Over
	£	£	£	£	£
PEOPLE					
<i>HELP ME FIND SOMEWHERE TO LIVE</i>					
Disabled Facility Grants	701,180	99,754	701,180		
Warm Up Exeter/PLEA Scheme	100,000	36,565	100,000		
Wessex Loan Scheme	79,030	38,051	79,030		
WHIL Empty Properties	194,000	0	194,000		
Temporary Accommodation Purchase	108,670	276	108,670		
PEOPLE TOTAL	1,182,880	174,646	1,182,880	0	0

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AREAS OF BUDGETARY RISK

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

The revenue budget areas of risk are:

Budget Title	Approved Budget £	Risk
Revenue Collection/Benefits – Housing Benefit Subsidy	35,232,600	<p>The Council currently administers over £35 million of Housing Benefit payments for rent allowances and rent rebates. Not all expenditure can be claimed back as subsidy. Certain supported and temporary accommodation costs are not eligible for full subsidy; these claim types will remain in Housing Benefit and not move to Universal Credit. As more Housing Benefit claims move onto Universal Credit the amount of unsubsidised expenditure will be an increased proportion of total expenditure. Errors made by ECC officers are not subsidised in full if they go over a set percentage of total expenditure. As total expenditure reduces due to Universal Credit rollout, the margins within which error payments are subsidised will reduce, increasing the risk of a subsidy loss in this area.</p>

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REPORT TO PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 1st November 2018

Report of: DIRECTOR

Title: Rough Sleeping Initiative 2018-2020

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Is this an Executive or Council Function?

People Scrutiny Committee

1. What is the report about?

To provide members with an update on progress with the Exeter City Council Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) including the bidding process, income received and project work streams and timescales.

2. Recommendations:

The Committee note the contents of the Rough Sleeping Initiative report and the actions that will be used to inform future service delivery.

3. Reasons for the recommendation:

This report highlights the progress to date on all projects to be delivered under the Rough Sleeping Initiatives programme including how rough sleeping in the city is to be reduced.

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

This report has no resource implications

5. Section 151 Officer Comments:

The additional funding is noted and will be added to the budget via a supplementary budget request. The work is fully funded by ringfenced grant and there is no requirement for additional financial resources.

6. What are the legal aspects?

There are no legal issues of concern arising.

7. Monitoring Officer's comments:

There are no issues of governance to report.

8. Report details:

Rough Sleeping Initiatives

On the 30th March 2018, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) set out a bold cross-government plan of action to significantly reduce the number of people sleeping rough in England. A £30 million fund was also announced for 2018 to 2019 with further funding agreed for 2019 to 2020 targeted at local authorities with high numbers of people sleeping rough was also released. The main criteria for accessing the

fund was for those areas with Rough Sleeping figures 20 or above as of the 2017 autumn returns to the then DCLG. Due to having an estimate of 35 Rough Sleepers the previous autumn, Exeter City Council were one of the 83 Local Authorities in England who were able to bid for funds through Round 1 of RSI funding.

Exeter's RSI Bid

On the 6th April 2018 partners were invited to a meeting to discuss gaps in services and opportunities to include as part of a bid to MHCLG. Some of the main areas of need identified during the meeting included:-

- Shared accommodation for chaotic female rough sleepers
- Housing First Pilot
- Dual diagnosis accommodation
- Accommodation on release from prison
- Move on accommodation from Gabriel House
- Rapid access into treatment services
- Rapid access into Adult Social Care
- Meaningful occupation
- Basic Mental Health Interventions
- Psychological clinics

The meeting scoped out what was needed and achievable and ultimately what could be included in a bid to MHCLG.

A further meeting was arranged on the 24th April with partners and the MHCLG to continue the discussion and firm up proposals. Exeter's bid to the MHCLG was submitted on the 18th May 2018.

Exeter's RSI Bid comprised of eight work stream proposals as follows:-

1) Night shelter / Safesleep

Set up pop-up emergency winter shelter to house up to 20 people per night over a 6-month period. To be delivered through either a modular build on Council land or to bring an empty building back into use (sites identified but dependant on sign-off by ECC members and subject to planning permissions). Set up with double-cover overnight staffing to be complimented by full-time housing options worker undertaking assessments and referrals and linkage to relevant support agencies for health and welfare interventions.

2) Expanding Housing Led to Housing First

To expand the current STAR project (individual self-contained units of accommodation with contracted support) which is a housing-led intervention informed by the Housing First model. The project would be expanded with an additional 5 units of accommodation from ECC housing stock. This also incorporates costs for floating support and tenancy sustainment support for the hostel resettlement initiative (see below)

3) Shared Housing (Leases)

Set up costs and tenancy sustainment support for women's only project and HMP Exeter Resettlement Project - 5 units across two properties e.g. 3-bed and 2-bed. Provider to be supported to take direct lease on properties (unless alternative option to purchase). Ongoing future access and support through remodelled targeted support services.

4) Resettlement from principal rough sleeper hostel

Link worker for people accommodated at first stage homelessness hostel (Gabriel House), identifying and engaging with those who can move to Private Rented or alternative forms of accommodation and assisting them into tenancies and providing initial set-up support with referrals to community-based support services where appropriate. This service is separate to the Trailblazer funded Rapid Response service which is working to resettle households from Council operated temporary accommodation into PRS.

5) Dedicated RSL tenancies

Hostel / Housing Resettlement for clients with limited successful tenancy histories to be offered tenancies by Housing Associations / RSLs therefore freeing up frontline 1st stage hostel provision. Tenancies would have financial backing (e.g. rent in advance, personal budgets) and full support via additional floating support provision (included within the costs of intervention 2 as this assists with offering full-time employment options).

6) Discretionary placements into ECC Temporary Accommodation

To cover net loss from accommodating clients under a discretionary power i.e. utilising Council temporary accommodation when client / household not owed accommodation duty under HRA legislation.

7) Mental Health Training

Rolling out Homeless Link's Mental Health Toolkit to all frontline services including Housing Associations. To upskill and build capacity for navigating and accessing mental health services and also delivering key client engagement and relationship enhancing skillsets for workers. Training would be targeted at further building of knowledge and resourcefulness in the workforce in order to support current tenancy sustainment and also ensure individuals at future risk of rough sleeping are prevented by early identification and signposting to appropriate available mental health support services. Enhanced training for small cohort to include psychological coaching in managing needs and interventions in the community. To provide 3 psychological clinics each week to rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping taking place at CoLab and Gabriel House. To provide clinical supervision to staff and to provide ongoing training for mental health champions across the homeless sector.

8) Rough Sleeping Coordinator

Rough Sleeping Coordinator is the glue ensuring that all projects are developing and producing results, completing reports to the MHCLG and overseeing the Rough Sleeping Strategy. The coordinator will work alongside the Partnership Lead and Complex Lives Coordinator to ensure we are delivering on our outcomes.

The total of the bid we submitted to MHCLG, for all eight of the above work streams, was £518,000.

On the 29th June 2018 we were informed by the MHCLG that we had been successful with our bid and had been awarded £481,600. All eight of our work streams had been supported and whilst there was a slight reduction in funding in one area we still received the 12th highest amount across the 83 Local Authority areas. It should be noted that the reduction of £36,400 equates to salary for one fixed term support worker to assist in supporting clients on the housing first and RSL tenancies. Our prospective bid was for 3 workers but MHCLG awarded for two workers which we agreed was still a viable and adequate resource. Therefore there is no requirement to identify funds to bridge the resultant funding gap.

Progress to date

1) Night Shelter

The Night Shelter is the most important part of our RSI project, if we are to reduce the numbers of people rough sleeping on our streets then this would have the most immediate impact.

Finding a venue

Work on the night shelter started back in March this year. After the disappointment of 2017 and not being able to secure a building it was important to start locating empty properties at the earliest opportunity. A scoping exercise was carried out in March to identify any empty buildings within a one mile radius of the City Centre. The main criteria for finding a suitable building was that it had to be in close proximity to the City Centre, large enough to accommodate 25 rough sleepers, minimal impact on the surrounding community and inexpensive. In total 16 properties were identified as meeting the criteria, 13 of the properties were managed by McArthur and Wilson, acting on behalf of Crown Estates and despite initial discussions it was evident early on that they wouldn't be keen on working with us. 2 Properties were managed by Stratton and Creber Commercial, whilst they were up for working with us they already had offers in on the properties. The last property identified was the former Indian Restaurant on the Acorn Car Park, owned by Greendale investments Limited, and the property that we would later go onto lease.

The Venue

Spice Island

On first inspection the property was in quite a dilapidated state as it hadn't been used for some time and the upstairs bedrooms had received significant damage from previous owners. In November, 2017 Exeter CID executed a Misuse of Drugs Act warrant on the property and found an extensive Cannabis factory along with hydroponic equipment. For the use as a Night Shelter, the property was a perfect match benefiting from having four bedrooms above the main restaurant and significant room downstairs, located central enough to the City Centre to ensure that people would use it. It also had a minimal impact on the surrounding community, with Good Shepherd Drive to the South of the property and apartments to the North of the property being the only real residential properties in the vicinity, Acorn Car Park to the West of the Property and Hotel Du Vin to the East of the property.

Howell Road Car Park

Howell Road Car Park was identified as a backup option, with the proposal to place a modular build with toilet block on the site. This was always Plan B and would only really be explored further if we were unsuccessful with the initial proposal.

Planning and Member Consultation

A pre planning meeting was held on the 5th June with Cllr's Edwards, Morse and Denham to discuss potential sites. Both venues were discussed and it was agreed that we would continue to pursue two sites, initially the Car Park in Leighton Terrace was earmarked for use as the backup site. A site meeting soon confirmed that Leighton Terrace would have too much of an impact on the surrounding community so we quickly identified other options with the preferred option being Howell Road Car Park.

Further meetings were held in early July with ward councillors for St James and St David's to advise them of the plans and our proposal. Planning for the Site on the former Spice Island restaurant was submitted on the 4th July with the application published on the 9th July.

Planning for the site at Howell Road Car Park was submitted on the 17th July and Published on the 23rd July 2018. Deadlines for Planning were on the 2nd August and 16th August 2018 respectively.

Planning was granted on both sites at the Planning Committee on the 3rd September 2018. In total we received two objections for the site on the former restaurant and none on the site at Howell Road Carpark.

Neighbour Consultation

The following businesses were consulted on the 11th July:-

- Mercure Hotel
- Hotel Du Vin
- Cosy Club
- Whitton Liang (management company for Dean Clarke House)
- Burrington Estates
- Guinness Trust (Landlord for Good Shepherd Drive)
- Premier Inn

We also met with residents of Good Shepherd Drive at their Coffee morning on the 23rd July 2018. There was a good turnout at the meeting and whilst some of the residents were very much against the idea a number of residents could see what we were trying to achieve and supported our proposal. Their main concern was around their security and the gate to the scheme, which is situated along from Hotel Du Vin and across the road from the shelter. We have taken on board their concerns and liaised with both planning and Guinness Trust to ensure that a key lock can be situated in the gate – providing additional security. An additional meeting is to be held on the 23rd October with the service providers to discuss how the project will be run and answer any residents questions prior to the opening of the night shelter.

Procurement of Support Service

The tender for the support service was advertised on contracts finder on the 12th July 2018. The tender was to find a provider who could:

Leading on from last year's successful campaign we are looking for an experienced provider or providers to lead on this year's SafeSleep 2018-2019. SafeSleep will provide emergency accommodation for Rough Sleepers and people at risk of rough sleeping in Exeter.

You will:

- *Need to provide an inclusive service that accommodates up to 26 rough sleepers each night.*
 - *To manage ECCs Night Shelter and work closely with community and local businesses. Planning application has been submitted on two sites with a decision due in early September.*
 - *To work with ECC, Outreach Services and Voluntary agencies to ensure that people move on to sustainable accommodation at the end and during SafeSleep.*
- Expressions of interest are invited from any suitably qualified and experienced provider/providers. Providers must have a previous experience of providing accommodation services for rough sleepers*

The closing date for the tender was on the 9th August 2018 and we received one tender submission. The submission was a joint bid between Julian House and BCHA, this was the first time the two organisations have actively worked together to co-produce a bid. Whilst on the one hand there is now a lack of direct competition in the city, the upside is there is a

real growing sense of a partnership forming between the voluntary sector and to have two of the most prominent services working together in the city can only be a positive.

Management Plan

As part of the Planning decision we were required to write a management plan for the Shelter covering:

The Management Scheme shall include the following: A) details of the management arrangements for the property, including procedures for dealing with (i) management problems, (ii) anti-social behaviour, (iii) noise and (iv) fires or other emergencies; and, B) the maximum number of bed spaces to be occupied at any one time. Occupation shall be managed in accordance with the approved scheme

(See member's portal for copy of Management Plan)

Update as of 26th September 2018

- Lease on the property to be signed with Greendale Investments Ltd. before 16th October 2018
- The Complex Lives Coordinator is taking the lead on the operation of the service and is working extremely hard to ensure that the project is set up and has everything in place before we open on the 1st November 2018
- Julian House and BCHA Open evening held on the 11th September 2018, over 40 people attended the event
- Interviews for SafeSleep staff inc Night Staff, Casework Coordinator and SafeSleep coordinator took place over the 25th and 26th September.
- 20 volunteers in process of recruitment
- Week commencing 8th October will see Training provided for all new staff and volunteers. Training to include Trauma Informed Care, Difficult Behaviour and Universal Credit Training.
- Mid October – fit out of the project
- Soup Kitchens are on board to serve food out of the shelter
- 1st November 2018 – project opens to occupants

2) Expanding Housing Led services into Housing First Project

We have been monitoring the progress of Housing First, as an accommodation solution for people with complex lives, for several years now. It has grown rapidly over the last two years with the government recognising this in 2017 Autumn Budget and announcing £28 million investment in Housing First in 3 Pilot Areas – Liverpool, Manchester and West Midlands. The challenge for Exeter has always been in meeting the support costs especially as we have minimal influence at present on how current services are commissioned under Devon County Council's contribution to Homelessness Prevention Support (formally known as Supporting People). The RSI Fund presented the perfect opportunity to put this forward as part of the bid. Exeter Housing First Project (although small at only 5 units to begin with, increasing to 15 with Year 2 Funding) will be the first Housing First project in Devon and Cornwall fully following the 7 core principles set out by Homeless Link and [FEANTSA](#).

What is Housing First?

Housing First is designed for people who need significant levels of support to enable them to break the cycle of homelessness. Among the groups who Housing First services can help are:

- People who are homeless with severe mental illnesses or mental health problems
- Homeless people with problematic drug and alcohol use,

- Offending histories
- Homeless people with poor physical health, limiting illness and disabilities.
- Housing First services have also proven effective with people who are experiencing long-term or repeated homelessness who, in addition to other support needs, often lack social supports i.e. help from friends or families and are not part of a community.

Housing First uses housing as a starting point rather than an end goal. Providing housing is what a Housing First Service does before it does anything else. The service is able to focus immediately on enabling someone to successfully live in their own home as part of a community.

Once someone is settled in their home, Housing First support teams also aim to support an individual to improving their health, well-being and social support networks of the homeless people it works with. This is very different to the homelessness services that try make homeless people with high support needs 'housing ready' before they are rehoused by placing conditions on them to address other needs they may not be ready to address. Some existing models of homelessness services require someone to show sobriety and engagement with treatment and to be trained in living independently before housing is provided for them.

Housing First is designed to ensure homeless people have a high degree of choice and control. Housing First Service users are actively encouraged to minimise harm from drugs and alcohol and to use treatment services: They are not required to do so. The current system requires homeless people to use treatment services and to abstain from drugs and alcohol, before they are allowed access to permanent housing and may exclude someone from re housing if they do not comply with treatment or do not show abstinence from drugs and alcohol.

Housing First is designed to provide open-ended support to long-term and recurrently homeless people who have high support needs, although this will be different for each individual. Unlike many homelessness services, Housing First provides long-term or permanent support to people with on-going needs; the service will need to be flexible to provide different levels of support depending on the level needed and to be able to react to dormant cases. <http://www.homeless.org.uk/facts/our-research/housing-first-in-england-evaluation-of-nine-services#sthash.z9ZugZ2V.dpuf>

There are seven core principles of Housing First:-

- People have a right to a home
- Flexible support is provided for as long as it is needed
- Housing and Support are separated
- Individuals have choice and control
- An active engagement approach is used
- The service is based on people's strengths, goals and aspirations
- A harm reduction approach is used

Procurement of Support Service

The tender for the support service was advertised on contracts finder on the 23rd July 2018. The tender was to find a provider who could:-

*Provide an **inclusive** and flexible service that is innovative and works to meet our vision as documented in **Appendix B Developing a Housing First Model in Exeter**. Provide a Trauma Informed Support Service to 5 Housing First tenants in Year One plus transitional support for 10 clients moving on through the Hostel Move-on Scheme. (Subject to funding)*

Year two would add an additional 10 tenants under Housing First plus a further 10 clients through the Hostel Move-on Scheme, meaning up to 35 tenants would be eligible for support depending on ongoing need.

The closing date was on the 20th August 2018, once again we received one tender submission which was a joint submission between BCHA and Julian House.

Update as of 26th September 2018

- Support service procured
- Closing date for jobs is on the 28th September 2018 with shortlisting and interviews week commencing 8th October 2018.
- Working with Outreach services, 3 people have already been identified and discussions have taken place about Housing First as an opportunity for them.
- Hope that the first Housing First tenants will be in accommodation before December.

3) Shared Housing Projects

Prison Release Project and Female Only Project

In the summer of 2017 we held a number of workshops to look at unmet need across the city. A specific women only project, housing first and prison release project were identified as the most needed in the city.

Women's Only Project

Since the change of remit at the Esther Community in 2014 to a young person's service Exeter has not had a supported women's only project. During this time we have seen an increase in females rough sleeping in the city and those who are being assisted in our temporary accommodation and being accommodated at Gabriel House. The RSI fund has given us an opportunity to bring on line a crucial resource that has been much needed for the past 4 years.

Prison Release Project

The last 4 years has seen major changes to the way support for ex-offenders is delivered. A 2013 White Paper, "*Transforming Rehabilitation: A Strategy for Reform*" set out the government's intention to outsource the supervision and rehabilitation of low and medium risk of serious harm offenders to Community Rehabilitation Companies to be established by the private and charitable sector. The intention was that their work would replace that done by existing Probation Trusts in England and Wales; and that in addition CRCs would have responsibility for the supervision of the rehabilitation of offenders serving short-term prison sentences. A separate public-sector National Probation Service was to be established to manage the supervision and rehabilitation of medium and high risk of serious harm offenders. Legislation was passed in the form of the [Offender Rehabilitation Act 2014](#) to enable changes to the statutory basis for offender supervision to support the proposed reforms. Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) is the term given to private-sector supplier of Probation and Prison-based rehabilitate services for offenders in England and Wales.

Over the past year we have been working very closely with Working Links (Community Rehabilitation Company), National Probation Service (NPS) and Office of the Police Crime Commissioner (OPCC) and other District LA's to improve relationships but also to improve the way in which services are provided to ex-offenders. Since the introduction of CRC we

had seen a steady increase in ex-offenders leaving prison without accommodation and rough sleeping on the streets of Exeter and other cities. This was a particular problem for HMP Exeter so part of our previous Rough Sleeping Grant was to request funding for a Prison Resettlement Worker as part of the bid. This role was pivotal in reducing rough sleeping on release and works with any prisoner who would likely have no accommodation when they left prison. The biggest challenge that we have experienced was accessing accommodation for those clients who were 'constantly in and out of prison' and didn't meet the threshold for accommodating by local authorities 'often deemed non-priority'. Supported accommodation is often full and not always the best solution for someone leaving prison and no longer using substances. Because of this we were keen to include a Prison Release Property as one of the projects on our RSI bid.

Update as of 26th September 2018

- Julian House was selected as the preferred provider bringing on the two properties
- Women's project is on line and full – all three occupants have a recent history of rough sleeping
- Project worker is in post and delivering support
- Linking the project with the Women's Resilience Project at the CoLab
- Prison Resettlement Project proving to be more difficult to bring on line, important to ensure that the property is situated in the right place. Numerous viewings held in September but unfortunately yet to find suitable property.

4) Resettlement from Gabriel House hostel

The role will focus on identifying and engaging with individuals and couples who can move to alternative forms of accommodation (including private rented). The resettlement worker will be expected to refer, enable and assist individuals into move-on tenancies and provide initial set-up support plus ensure referral and connections have been made to community-based support services and networks in order to enable and maximise tenancy sustainability.

The resettlement worker will work closely with Housing Needs Caseworkers to ensure that there is a joined up process in the resettlement of clients moving on from the projects. All vacancies freed up from someone moving on from one of the projects **must** go to a client who is currently rough sleeping in the city or in some circumstances at immediate risk of doing so. Clients moving on from projects must be tenancy ready and be able to show that they can budget appropriately and be willing to engage with supporting services where appropriate.

Update as of 26th September 2018

- Bournemouth Churches Housing Association (BCHA) were selected as the preferred provider to lead on the hostel resettlement worker
- Hostel Resettlement Worker is now in post
- 15 clients have been identified as being ready for move-on and work is now commencing in bringing together a Move-on Plan for each of the clients.

5) Dedicated RSL Tenancies

We are looking to work with Registered Social Landlords to accept 10 clients who are ready for independent living and moving on from Hostels in the city. Referrals to come from The Haven, Gabriel House and BCHA Move-on Projects. Any spaces that are freed up from

clients moving through this project must go to someone who is currently rough sleeping in Exeter.

Individual Budgets

£10,000 will be available with a maximum of £1,000 per client. This funding is available to help with the purchase of furniture, white goods, and other items needed to occupy unfurnished premises. Funding can also be used to fund meaningful activities for example Education courses, training opportunities, gym membership.

Rent in Advance

Council to provide guarantee for rent for first two months of tenancy up to value of £1,000 if Housing Benefit isn't in payment.

Potential Claims on Property in event of eviction

If there are problems with the tenancy within the first 12 months and ECC are not able to assist with preventing homelessness or assisting to address the problems and the provider has to take further action against the tenancy, then the provider can make claim of up to £1,000 to cover, loss of rent, Court Costs, damage, repairs.

Support

All clients moving on through the Hostel Move on Scheme will be provided with up to 3 Hours support per week per person, the support will be provided by BCHA as part of the Housing First Project.

Update as of 26th September 2018

- Support service has been tendered with BCHA and Julian House submitting the successful bid
- Currently out to advert, with the closing date for jobs on the 28th September 2018 with shortlisting and interviews week commencing 1st October 2018.
- RSLs will be contacted when the RSI Coordinator is in post towards the end of October

6) Discretionary placements into emergency accommodation

At Exeter we have always gone the extra mile to help those in need and take pride in helping 'the many and not the few'. Unlike a lot of LA's, if someone is verified as being homeless and not in priority need then if we have a vacancy in our temporary accommodation and there is a move on plan in place for that individual, we will offer interim accommodation rather than see them on the street. Whilst this isn't always possible we often have a number of individuals in emergency accommodation who are either 'Intentionally Homeless' or 'non priority'. In contracted accommodation there is a net deficit between what we pay the owner and what we are able to claim back through housing benefit revenue. As part of the RSI bid we proposed to accommodate up to 10 people at any one time who are non-statutory homeless and rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping in Exeter. Part of our RSI bid was to cover the net deficit in what we are not able to claim through Housing Benefit.

Update as of 26th September 2018

- Due to the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act all relevant accommodation paperwork has had to be updated.
- There was a slight delay in accommodating under the RSI initiative but this has now been resolved and we currently have 8 people in under a power who would otherwise have been rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping.

7) Mental Health Training

Current Problems

There are a number of challenges that the homelessness sector faces on account of limitations of the current supply and set up of clinical mental health services. Some of the current challenges include:-

- Level of complexity that clients present with is far greater than previously experienced
- Limited preventative and early intervention services working with clients who experience complex lives
- Increased knowledge of Trauma and the effects this has going forward on client lives
- Clients find it extremely difficult to access mainstream services and are often discharged due to lack of engagement or substance-related diagnoses
- There is a prevailing expectation for clients to both fit with and navigate into established statutory access and assessment pathways
- Lack of clinical supervision opportunities for frontline services
- Lack of support for providers who find it increasingly more difficult to work with clients who present with Personality Disorders, dual diagnoses etc
- Lack of time and resource to produce evidence base for potential system change.
- Lack of clear pathways for clients with complex lives

Our Vision

Over the next 18 months we would like to fully evaluate what is needed moving forward to better assist in meeting the mental health needs of rough sleepers and people residing in emergency and first stage housing and hostels in the city. We plan to do this in five main ways.

Provide training to frontline staff in using Homeless Link's Mental Health Toolkit and Brief Interventions

In Year one we plan to provide training to frontline services including working with our Tenants Services Team and RSL'S who oversee a combined total of 7,500 properties. The training will be to deliver a mental health awareness course using the Homeless Link Wellbeing toolkit. All frontline services will be trained to understand the Toolkit and to be equipped to put the toolkit into practice.

Training Programme

- What is Mental illness? A brief look at models and perspectives
- Overview of the major mental health problems and issues of dual diagnosis affecting young people and adults - signs and symptoms
- Services and treatments available
- Who to contact and work with
- How services are configured and funded
- Referral routes and criteria
- Building relationships with local services
- What can staff do to help service users in distress
- How staff and services can contribute to positive mental health, including the Psychologically Informed Environment
- Overview of the main features of mental health law and up and coming reform

Psychological Therapy Clinics

We will provide a series of therapeutic clinics working with Drs Adam Morgan or Dr Ståle Rygh. Clinics will be held 3 times per week over a 30 week period. These clinics will be provided out of Gabriel House (Homeless Hostel) and two clinics at Clock Tower Surgery (CoLab). The clinics will be inclusive and work where clients use services and meet their needs.

Each clinic will offer three (60 min) slots for individual psychological therapy, i.e. three clients can be seen per clinic. These sessions will offer a formulation based and trauma informed approach to supporting and helping clients to better cope with and overcome mental health and other psychological issues they are facing. Formulation is a well-established process used by clinical, and other applied psychologists and involves developing a client specific, bio-psycho-social explanation of the issues the person is struggling with. For the homeless population a trauma informed approach is essential given the very high prevalence of life trauma experienced by this client group (the evidence around the significance of trauma in the aetiology of mental health and addiction issues is well established in research literature. See for example the many 'ACE' (adverse childhood events) studies).

This approach has already been successfully implemented at St Petrock's in recent years. It has proved essential to take the service to the clients. Despite the chaos of many such clients' lives, having the service co-located with other essential services has meant that it has been possible to engage such clients successfully in psychological therapy.

Clinical Supervision

We will provide consistent clinical group supervision across the sector with three 4 weekly clinical supervision sessions with Staff at Gabriel House; the ICE team and their partners and another to be confirmed.

As mentioned above complex trauma is a common precursor to serious mental health difficulties and addictions (and typically refers to repeated abuse in childhood). Often people with this history present with an ongoing vulnerability to further abuse in relationships and often experience domestic (or other) abuse as adults (as well as a host of other poor 'outcomes'). Working with such people is therefore both highly demanding and potentially stressful, and workers can be prone to vicarious trauma and burnout. (It is important to add here that the work can also be highly rewarding!)

Clinical supervision is therefore an essential tool to support front line staff in working with such a challenging client group. It is designed to help both with improving the quality of the help that is offered, as well as to protect staff against burn out.

Clinical supervision aims to do this by offering the opportunity to stand back and think through specific clients or situations in a safe and unpressured environment. It also offers the chance to share the burden of the work and draw on the experience and expertise of peers and others. Front line work is often busy with limited opportunities to take stock in this way.

These supervision sessions will also help support staff to develop and use clinical formulations in their work with clients. These sessions will also support the mental health champions (see below) to apply the knowledge and skills learned via training.

Homelessness Mental Health Champions

We will look to create Mental Health Champions across the main Homelessness Services including Assertive Homelessness Outreach Service; Gabriel House; St Petrocks; Housing Options Service; ICE team and their partners.

Ongoing Training for Mental Health Champions

We will provide ongoing training and peer group supervision for our Homelessness Mental Health Champions, training them in brief interventions and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). Training will include low-level talking therapies based on both cognitive behavioural therapy and dialectic interventions (teaching coping methods and self- de-escalation and calming techniques) and introductory counselling skills (active listening and feedback, self-ownership and self-empowerment). Implementation of this knowledge and newly acquired skills will enable staff to support service users and therefore extend and enhance current mental health support to the client group.

This training will aim to do two things. Firstly, to offer a good basic grounding in the theory and application of CBT and allied therapies, and secondly training in integrating a trauma informed approach to this work given the population being worked with. Again the on-going application of this training will be supported via the monthly clinical supervision sessions. We will also introduce people to Compassion Focused Therapy, which builds on the core tenets of CBT. CFT was developed in response to clients with severe mental health problems who didn't benefit from CBT and other conventional therapy models. CFT help clients work through common obstacles to therapeutic progress, including excessive self-blame, shame and self-criticism, and focus on developing compassionate qualities to negotiate past and current difficulties more effectively. CFT was originally developed for people who presented with emotionally unstable personality presentations, but now has an increasing evidence base for the treatment of Depression, Anxiety, Eating Disorders and PTSD.

We will incorporate self-compassion training to enable staff to acknowledge the emotional impact of their work and develop self-compassion strategies and practices to look after their own wellbeing and develop psychological resilience.

By upskilling and supporting frontline staff we hope to be able to better support clients providing brief interventions, promoting wellbeing and provide CBT informed intervention.

Update as of 26th September 2018

- Psychology Clinics are now up and running
- Dr Adam Morgan is leading on the weekly Clinic at Gabriel House and has been providing this since the start of August
- Dr Stale Rygh is leading on the twice weekly clinic at the CoLab and this has been delivered since the start of September.
- Adam has also introduced a weekly Breakfast Club at the CoLab with the Community Mental Health Team attached to the ClockTower Surgery, this has been well received by the residents at Gabriel house.
- Dates have been booked for the Homeless Link Training and invites sent out
- Reflective Practice for staff at Gabriel house and CoLab has now taken place and this will continue to be delivered every 4 weeks.
- Stale and Adam will shortly be preparing additional training for our Mental Health Champions

8) Rough Sleeping Coordinator

One thing that we have learnt from previous bids was the need to factor in a coordinator as part of our bid. Our RSI bid is very ambitious and there is a lot to achieve in a short space of time and therefore the Coordinator is key to Exeter delivering positive outcomes and meeting

the MHCLG targets. Working alongside the Housing Needs Partnership Lead and the Complex Lives Coordinator, the Rough Sleeping Coordinator is key to overseeing a number of the work-streams completing the monthly returns to the MHCLG and to co-produce, with rough sleepers and people with a lived experience, a [Rough Sleeping Strategy](#) for Exeter.

Update as of 26th September 2018

- We are pleased to confirm that Chris Keppie is joining us and will be taking up the role of the Rough Sleeping Coordinator for Exeter. Chris is a highly experienced housing professional and is currently working in a Homelessness Coordinator role. He has strong research skills and is used to commissioning services and overseeing the delivery of the DCLG Social Impact Bond in Gloucestershire. Chris will be joining us towards the end of October.

Year Two Funding

On the 4th September 2018, it was announced by the MHCLG that Exeter had been awarded a provisional allocation of £444,260 for the 2019-20 period. The grant is ring-fenced and is provisional and to be confirmed in February 2019 subject to:

- a. Exeter achieving a RAG rating of green or amber/green from MHCLG. This RAG rating will be based on:
 - i. Delivery of all the RSI funded interventions for 2018-19 funding that were agreed with you (as set out in your proposal form) fully and on time. If your agreed interventions were not delivered fully and/or on time then MHCLG reserve the right not to pay the provisional allocation for 2019-20 or to only pay this partially.
 - ii. The approval of your RSI adviser that the purpose of the original proposals is being met. This assessment will take account of local environment and mitigating circumstances.
 - iii. The approval of your RSI adviser that you are demonstrating sufficient leadership and positive behaviours on the RSI agenda i.e. are senior leaders engaged in their plans to reduce rough sleeping, local authorities are responsive to MHCLG requests.
- b. A rough sleeping strategy being in place and agreed with your RSI Adviser.

If your 2018 rough sleeping snapshot figure does not reduce against your 2017 snapshot figure:

- a. MHCLG would reserve the right to work with you to revise and refocus your proposed interventions for 2019-20 where appropriate.

Projects that could be funded in Year 2

Our Year 2 bid had proposed funding of £547,340 and whilst the majority of our work streams received backing the overall award of £444,260 was less than the requested amount.

The night shelter and dedicated RSL tenancies received reduced funding of £26,000 and £32,000 respectively. The funding gap of £26k equates to MHCLG not agreeing to repeat fund a dedicated housing caseworker at the night shelter on the basis that capacity should be provided by the housing advice caseworker team. This is acceptable given that subject to current recruitment the housing advice caseworker team will be at full capacity going into 2019. The £32k reduction represents MHCLG maintaining this year's funding for the

housing-related support to clients in RSL tenancies. ECC bid for an extra worker in order to keep caseloads low. However the scheme is still tenable with the 2 full time support workers that MHCLG have agreed to continue to fund.

The Hostel Resettlement Worker and associated client budget fund (£45k total bid) was the only project not to receive funding as the MHCLG felt this was duplicated in another work stream. Under this year's RSI work stream the Housing Needs team is working closely to support BCHA with positive client move-on from Gabriel House. It is anticipated that this improved partnership working will build stronger resettlement practices which will incorporate the work of this year's dedicated Hostel Resettlement post.

None of these differences between the bid amounts and the actual awards are considered critical to the overall viability of year 2 service delivery and the Council is not expected to bridge the funding gaps. However, notwithstanding this it should be noted that a proportion of the £61,800 funding for the provision of temporary accommodation for clients under discretionary powers could potentially be utilised as contingency to assist with the above funding gaps if necessary and subject to MHCLG approval.

Intervention Proposed	Description of Intervention	Our proposed funding	MHCLG provisional funding
Expanding Housing Led Services	To further expand the current STAR project into Housing First Pilot. The project is expanded by an additional 10 units of accommodation	£64,000	£64,000
Other	Set up Night Shelter to house up to 20 people per night over a 6 month period	£139,000	£113,000
Expanding Housing First or housing led services	Continued support for Women only project and Prison Resettlement Project	£64,000	£64,000
Increased Move-on Support for clients in Supported/Temp	Link worker and individual budget fund to support move on from Gabriel House	£45,000	£0
Rough sleeper coordinator	Project management role	£45,000	£45,000
Identify and funding temporary accommodation	To cover on-going net loss from accommodating clients under a discretionary power	£61,800	£61,800
Increased Move-on Support for clients in Supported/Temp	Dedicated RSL Tenancies with support	£98,000	£66,000
Fund or facilitate additional specialist partnership support	To provide 3 weekly bespoke psychological clinics for rough sleepers , clinical supervision and ongoing training for MH champions	£30,460	£30,460

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

Rough Sleeping Strategy contributes towards the Corporate plan by meeting the following objectives:-

- Promoting active and healthy lifestyles
- Building great neighbourhoods
- Providing value-for-money services through partnership working

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

The biggest risk is that Rough Sleeping in the city continues to increase despite all the interventions through the RSI bid. People decide not to use the night shelter and continue to sleep on the streets and / or there is significant influx of people rough sleeping in the city due to unforeseen circumstances. This can be reduced by working together as a partnership and ensuring that the resources are efficiently deployed. The bid was co-produced with partners and we were only permitted to include projects which would improve services and meet the current gaps in accommodation services.

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

Our RSI project main aim is to reduce Rough Sleeping in the City ensuring that everyone has a safe and secure place that they can call home.

12. Are there any other options?

No

Bindu Arjoon, Director

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)
Background papers used in compiling this report:-

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

Agenda Item 12



Meeting Title:	PSP Minutes
Date:	13/08/2018
Time:	5:30pm
Location:	Empty Homes meeting room

Present:	Cindy, Debbie and Donna
In attendance:	Lawrence Blake and Vicky Labbett
Apologies:	/

	Minutes	Owner
1.	<p>Welcome and matters arising</p> <p>The group were informed that Jan had resigned from the PSP and that Cindy and Vicky had both thanked her for her contribution.</p> <p>The group welcomed Vivienne to the meeting who was attending as a taster session.</p> <p>The group were updated that Adrian (Planned Repairs Lead) has been promoted to the role of Assets Lead and ECC would be back recruiting to his old post. The group requested that Adrian and the new potholder be invited to a meeting in a few months' time.</p>	VL
2.	<p>Q4 performance Summary Review</p> <p>The group reviewed the Performance Summary for Q4.</p> <p>The group were pleased to hear from Lawrence that at the time of the meeting, the number of empty garages had significantly reduced from the reported 95 in Q4. This was largely due to a designated member of staff working on garage management, the results of which, will be reflected in Q1 18/19.</p> <p>Lawrence reported that there is currently a task and finish group working to review and reduced the void times. The group have visited Mid Devon Council in order to identify possible service improvements and plan to visit other organisations in due course.</p> <p>The group discussed the response repairs contract between ECC and Mears. The contract is up for renewal in 2020 and planning for this will be a big project which Adrian will lead on. The group were happy to be part of this procurement process if required.</p>	

	Minutes	Owner
	<p>The group were pleased to see that rent arrears had reduced from 2.04% in Q3 to 1.55% in Q4, although the group anticipated that this figure would rise in Q1 18/19 as the impact of Universal credit takes effect. In preparation to limit this impact, ECC are engaging with recipients of Universal Credit in order to help prepare them for the changes.</p> <p>Lawrence noted that with Adrian and Mark in post, they are both making changes which will lead to improvements which will be reflected in the KPIs but that this will take a few quarters before we see the effects.</p>	
3.	<p>Recruitment and Resident Involvement</p> <p>The PSP were updated that the Housing Officers are now signposting tenants to the PSP during their inspections and visits. It is hoped that this will increase recruitment to the PSP.</p> <p>ECC are also looking into new involvement activities and Lawrence is planning a 'coffee and cake' initiative.</p>	LB
4.	<p>Sports England initiative</p> <p>The group were informed about this important Council initiative, the PSP were keen to be kept updated about its progress.</p>	
5.	<p>Clear and Safe Policy</p> <p>Lawrence provided an overview of the policy and its planned gradual implementation.</p> <p>Neil Shire (previously an OPPSO) had been appointed to the post of Implementation Officer (Installations) who is initially identifying additional storage opportunities. Neil will be joined by an additional Implementation Officer, the recruitment process is underway.</p> <p>In the meantime, monthly inspections are being carried out and higher risk items are being removed.</p>	
6.	<p>ECC building proposals</p> <p>Lawrence provided the PSP with an update on the ECC building proposals. After gaining member approval, a company has been registered with the objective to build a wide range of properties including private and social rented properties. Any council housing stock lost through demolition will be replaced.</p>	

	Minutes	Owner
7.	<p>AOB</p> <p>The date of next meeting was set for 17th September.</p> <p>It was agreed that Becky (ICT facilities Implementation Support Manager) would be invited to the next meeting to discuss the ICT services to customers.</p> <p>Ian Miles (Health and Safety Compliance Lead) to be invited to the October/November meeting.</p> <p>The group reviewed the upcoming ARCH conference which is due to be held in September. They agreed to consider attending.</p> <p>The PSP thanked Lawrence for attending the meeting.</p>	

Signed by Chair:	
Print name:	
Date:	

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