

CUSTOMER FOCUS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date: Thursday 8 October 2020

Time: 5.30 pm

Venue: Legislation has been passed that allows Council's to conduct Committee meetings remotely.

Members are invited to attend the above meeting.

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

Membership -

Vizard (Chair), Mitchell, M (Deputy Chair), Begley, Foggin, Mrs Henson, Mitchell, K, Oliver, Pattison, Martin, A, Quance, Sparkes, Wardle and Warwick

Agenda

- 6 **Presentation on Covid-19 Recovery by Portfolio Holders and Questions from Members and Answers** (Pages 3 - 4)

Portfolio Holder briefing notes attached.

Portfolio Holder for Supporting People – Councillor Williams
Portfolio Holder for Council Housing Development and Services – Councillor Wright

Details of questions from Members relating to the two Portfolios above on Covid-19 recovery issues only should be notified to the Corporate Manager Democratic and Civic Support by 10.00am the Monday before the meeting – Monday 5 October 2020.

Date of Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee will be held on **Thursday 3 December 2020** at 5.30 pm.

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CUSTOMER FOCUS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

8 OCTOBER 2020

ITEM 6: QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS ON COVID-19 RECOVERY

Questions to the Portfolio Holder for Supporting People – Councillor Williams

Questions from Committee Members

- 1 **Councillor Wardle** - Can the Portfolio Holder update us on the new test and trace Support payments?
- 2a **Councillor Foggin** – As you are providing accommodation for rough sleeping what plans are there to remove tents and other items from, in and around the high street
- 2b **Councillor M. Mitchell** - Rough Sleepers. In recent weeks there appears to have been an increase in the number of individuals and groups rough sleeping in and around the city centre. What actions are the council taking to ensure that these individuals are supported and helped as winter approaches?
- 3 **Councillor M. Mitchell** – Recovery Plans. Could the Portfolio Holder provide more detail regarding the use of the allocated government grant of £440K from the Next Steps Accommodation Programme and elaborate on the availability of other 'temporary placements'?
- 4 **Councillor M. Mitchell** – Winter Emergency provision. In the current crisis many tenants in all sectors are experiencing financial hardship not of their own making. What actions can the Council take to ensure that if the number of eviction orders rise due to non-payment of private rentals, tenants and their families are able to remain in their homes to provide the social and other stability they need at this time?

Questions from Non-Committee Members

- 1 **Councillor J. Moore** – What level of delays before receiving their first payment are new applicants for Universal Credit typically experiencing in Exeter?
- 2 **Councillor D. Moore** - Benefits and Welfare: Since April how many new benefit and welfare claimants are there in Exeter, how many are predicted to the end of the year, and does the Council have the capacity to process the current and expected workload to ensure no delays to claimants?
- 3 **Councillor D. Moore** – Payments and Collection: Will the Council be implementing or give consideration to its own voluntary extended ban on evictions of council tenants who have fallen behind on rents due to the impact of COVID pandemic?
- 4 **Councillor D. Moore** - Rough Sleeping. What specialist support is the Council providing for those rough sleepers who have been evicted or abandoned emergency accommodation?

**Questions to the Portfolio Holder for Council Housing Development and Services –
Councillor Wright**

Questions from Committee Members

- 1 **Councillor M. Mitchell** – Fire. Can the Portfolio Holder in the light of the concerns within the private sectors of the implication of EWS1 certification for the safety of tenants and home owners state whether local authority housing in Exeter has or will be inspected to the same standard as that required by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors?
- 2 **Councillor K. Mitchell** – Can the Portfolio Holder please confirm what specific COVID 19 Public Health advice has been communicated to private landlords by Exeter City Council or its partner agencies?

Questions from Non-Committee Members

- 1 **Councillor D. Moore** – After the national ban on evictions ends at the end of this month, will the Council be implementing or give consideration to its own voluntary extended ban on evictions of Council tenants who have fallen behind on rents due to the impact of COVID pandemic?
- 2 **Councillor D. Moore** - How will meaningful tenant participation be enabled as part of the recovery process and how can the Council support the formation and operation of tenants' associations?