



Exeter City Council

To the Chair and Members
of the Scrutiny Committee - Community

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AGENDA FOR EXETER CITY COUNCIL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - COMMUNITY

The Scrutiny Committee - Community will meet on **TUESDAY 10 MARCH 2009**, commencing at **5.30 pm**, in the Rennes Room, Civic Centre, Paris Street, Exeter to consider the following business. If you have an enquiry regarding any items on this agenda, please contact Howard Bassett, Member Services Officer on **Exeter 265107**.

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

Pages

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

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MINUTES

To sign the minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2009.

2

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillors are reminded of the need to declare personal and prejudicial interests, including the nature and extent of such interests, in relation to business on the agenda, before any discussion takes place on the item. Councillors requiring clarification should seek the advice of the Monitoring Officer prior to the day of the meeting.

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

To pass the following resolution:-

RESOLVED that, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of items 21 and 22 on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Act.

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

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

Details of questions should be notified to the Assistant Chief Executive at least three working days prior to the meeting. Further information and a copy of the procedure are available from Member Services (01392 265115) also on the Council web site.

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

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

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

<u>MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE EXECUTIVE</u>
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6 **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUSINESS PLAN 2009 - 2039**

To consider the report of the Head of Housing Services – *report circulated.* 1 - 8

7 **HOUSING ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2009 -2015**

To consider the report of the Head of Housing Services – *report circulated.* 9 - 14

8 **DRAFT EMPTY HOMES STRATEGY 2009 - 2014**

To consider the report of the Head of Housing Services – *report circulated* 15 - 16

9 **PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING RENEWAL POLICY - ANNUAL REVIEW**

To consider the report of the Head of Environmental Health Services – *report circulated* 17 - 22

10 **EXETER AIR QUALITY STRATEGY 2009-2014**

To consider the report of the Head of Environmental Health Services – *report circulated.* 23 - 24

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION BY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - COMMUNITY

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SPLASH HOLIDAY PLAY SCHEME

The following petition, of approximately 428 signatories, was submitted to Council on 24 February 2009 by Councillor Martin.

“We, the undersigned, do not believe that Exeter City Council should be considering closing the Splash Holiday Play Scheme.”

The petition was referred to this Committee.

Unfortunately the Splash scheme has now ended with the last scheme being run by the City Council during this February half term. We have been touched by the support and praise for Splash. Great efforts were made right up to the last minute to reinstate partnership funding for the scheme but with the exception of the offer of a modest contribution by Devon County Council, none was forthcoming. Notice was therefore given on 26 January to Devon County Council as Children’s Services Authority that the February scheme would be the last run by the City Council.

This was the minimum amount of notice we felt we could provide to allow the County Council to tell parents that the scheme was ending and to inform them about alternative provision for holiday childcare. We have offered to share our knowledge and experience of running Splash with any new provider that Devon County Council might commission. Our £10,000 contribution to the costs of the scheme has been retained in the budget to help support any sustainable replacement scheme that might be developed. The petition will be forwarded to Devon County Council so that they are aware of the strength of feeling from parents and families in Exeter.

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LEGION WAY HOUSING SCHEME

A petition of 39 signatures against the redevelopment of the grassed area on Legion Way, Alphington and the proposal to develop four units of social housing for rent was submitted to the Council meeting on 24 February 2009 by Councillor Newcombe. The petition was referred to this Committee. A response to this petition is as follows:

In July 2006 Members agreed a report setting out the Council’s proposal to identify and assess a number of Council owned land sites, mainly within existing housing estates, that could potentially be developed for new affordable rented housing. Sites would be developed in partnership with a Housing Association.

The reason for adopting this policy was to help increase the overall supply of affordable housing across the City in response to rising demand from households on the Exeter Home Choice register. The need for such developments has become even greater as the housing market has slowed over recent months and the supply of affordable housing through Section 106 agreements has dried up.

The project has progressed well over the intervening period with a number of sites now at an advanced stage. In some cases, scheme designs are well advanced and consultation meetings have been held with local residents.

The proposed development of four social rented units at Legion Way forms part of this project. The scheme that is currently under consideration includes the provision of two three-bedroom disabled units and two one-bedroom flats on a piece of land within the curtilage of the existing estate.

At a consultation meeting with local residents held on Wednesday 18 February 2009, local residents raised a number of concerns regarding this proposal. Officers listened carefully to their concerns and are now working with the architects, the housing association and Planning Services to review this scheme and address residents concerns.

- 13 **EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORT ON THE COUNCIL'S ARRANGEMENTS FOR MANAGING RISKS FROM WASTE MANAGEMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE**
To consider the report of the Head of Environmental Health Services – *report circulated.* 25 - 38
- 14 **RE-TENDERING OF THE HOUSING RESPONSIVE MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS**
To consider the report of the Head of Housing Services – *report circulated.* 39 - 42
- 15 **PORCH : PROLIFIC OFFENDERS RE-SETTLEMENT THROUGH CO-ORDINATED HOUSING**
To consider the report of the Head of Housing Services – *report circulated.* 43 - 44
- 16 **ALLOTMENT STRATEGY REVIEW**
To consider the report of the Head of Contracts and Direct Services – *report circulated.* 45 - 58
- 17 **SWIMMING POOL WORKING GROUP**
To receive feedback on progress from the Swimming Pool Working Group as requested at Council on 24 February 2009.

<u>PERFORMANCE MONITORING</u>

- 18 **STEWARDSHIP - COMMUNITY TO DECEMBER 2008**
To consider the joint report of the Director Community and Environment and the Head of Treasury Services – *report circulated.* 59 - 66
- 19 **STEWARDSHIP - HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT TO DECEMBER 2008**
To consider the joint report of the Director Community and Environment and the Head of Treasury Services – *report circulated.* 67 - 70

20 **NATIONAL PERFORMANCE INDICATOR RESULTS 2007/08 HOW EXETER'S RESULTS COMPARE**

To consider the report of the Director Community and Environment – *report circulated.* 71 - 74

(Please bring the copy of Performance Indicator Results previously sent to you by the Policy Unit)

Part II : Items suggested for discussion with the press and public excluded

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE EXECUTIVE

21 **EXTRALET SCHEME PROGRAMME REPORT AND RESTRUCTURE**

To consider the report of the Head of Housing Services – *report circulated to Members.* 75 - 82

22 **RAMM AND THE RENNAISSANCE PROGRAMME**

To consider the report of the Head of Leisure and Museums – *report circulated to Members.* 83 - 86

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next **Scrutiny Committee - Community** will be held on Tuesday 2 June 2009 at 5.30 pm

FUTURE BUSINESS

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

Membership -

Councillors D Baldwin (Chair), Shiel (Deputy Chair), Branston, Choules, Mrs Danks, A Hannaford, Hobden, Newcombe, Newton, R Smith, Taghdissian, Thompson and Wardle

Find out more about Exeter City Council services by looking at our web site <http://www.exeter.gov.uk>. This will give you the dates of all future Committee meetings and tell you how you can ask a question at a Scrutiny Committee meeting. Alternatively, contact the Member Services Officer on (01392) 265115 for further information.

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



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EXETER CITY COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – COMMUNITY 10 MARCH 2009

EXECUTIVE 24 MARCH 2009

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUSINESS PLAN 2009-2039

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Members of the outcome of the annual review of the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 All local authorities which have retained their housing stock have a statutory obligation to produce a 30 year Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan that is passed as 'fit for purpose' by their local Government Office. The plan sets out the financial position for the HRA and apportions funding to both revenue and capital spending. The plan also sets out the services priorities in terms of service improvements and capital investment.
- 2.2 The current HRA Business Plan has been reviewed to ensure financial models and funding predictions match current levels of subsidy and other income. The current review has been undertaken following receipt of the draft HRA subsidy determinations for 2009/10. The total finance available has been checked against our housing capital programme, including the Decent Homes Programme, to ensure sufficient resources are available to meet these commitments. The levels of capital resources available, and the investment plans for the housing stock are set out in detail in the Housing Asset Management Strategy (see separate agenda item).

3 2006-2036 HRA BUSINESS PLAN

- 3.1 Following the Options Appraisal exercise in 2004/05 the Council committed enough housing capital resources to ensure that we not only met the Decent Homes Standard by 2010, but also a higher 'Exeter Standard' by 2015. This was agreed with residents following extensive consultation and the Government Office for the South West (GOSW). The Options Appraisal was signed off by the GOSW in July 2005.
- 3.2 The 2006–2036 Business Plan predicted that the HRA will continue to make a surplus over the lifetime of the plan. This surplus would be used to maintain and, where possible, increase reserves and to make significant revenue contributions (almost £2 million per annum by 2015) to the housing capital programme. It also predicted that our HRA Subsidy contribution to central Government would remain at or around £3.3 million per annum.
- 3.3 Despite this, the plan also predicted that the amount of capital resources available would fall short of the expenditure required by 2008/09. At that time we planned that this shortfall would be made up by improved procurement of materials and the use of some reserves. This has proved to be the case. However, the plan also recognised that the level of shortfall would rise significantly by 2015 when any future capital programme would need to be severely reduced, unless other means of funding the programme could be found.

4 2009-2039 HRA BUSINESS PLAN

- 4.1 Since the publication of previous Business Plan the amount of finance available for the housing service has changed considerably and a full review of the situation has been undertaken by officers and residents on the Tenants and Leaseholders Committee (TALC). The result of this review is outlined in this report and the separate Housing Asset Management Strategy report elsewhere on the agenda.
- 4.2 The biggest impact on the amount of finance available has been the change to the Council's subsidy payment to central Government. The 2007/08 HRA Subsidy Determination produced a dramatic increase in our subsidy contributions from £3.3 million per annum to £4.4 million. In 2009/10 this will rise again to £4.7 million with further increases predicted, year on year, to approximately £5.6 million by 2015.
- 4.3 This change has affected the level of revenue contributions we are able to make to the capital programme (now reduced to approximately £800k in 2008/09) and meant a greater use of reserves to maintain the capital programme at sustainable levels. The Council's HRA reserves will reduce to approximately £1.8 million in 2009 and £1.5 million in 2010 to provide additional support to the capital programme. It is not recommended that these reserves are allowed to fall any further to ensure we have sufficient funds available to meet unexpected or emergency expenditure.
- 4.4 At the same time rents, although increasing above inflation, will not reach target rent therefore denying the HRA further resources. The level of capital receipts from Right to Buy sales has now reached an all time low and Government rules on the use of these receipts now mean we are only allowed to keep 25%, with the remainder being 'pooled' nationally. Historic receipts, accrued over many years, have been spent on decent homes investment in the housing stock. Finally, income from the interest on our investments has declined as interest rates have fallen and the size of our reserves has reduced. The full set of HRA estimates for the 30-year business plan period are attached as Appendix I.
- 4.5 At the time of writing this report the Council received information via a third party that ministers are considering a change to the way interest is charged to the HRA. This change would seek to treat negative subsidy authorities (as per Exeter) in the same way as positive subsidy authorities and is likely to have a positive effect on our HRA subsidy calculation. Any change in the Council's housing finances will be considered once their full effect is known and if significant will be reported back to members.
- 4.6 Following a comprehensive review of the Council's housing assets (both stock and land holdings), in particular the condition of the housing stock and its surrounding areas, the levels of cyclical work, planned maintenance and major improvements are forecast to increase. The current information from the stock condition survey database, other individual surveys such as those undertaken during the annual improvement programme and responsive maintenance data all show that the level of maintenance and improvement work required is far greater than originally predicted. In addition, in order to meet the Decent Homes and Exeter Standards the amount of external work to buildings and estates had been reduced to free up sufficient funding. Some of the external environment is now causing concern and has seen a rise in complaints from tenants. Many other components within our properties are nearing or are past their predicted natural life (eg boilers, electrical heating systems, water supply piping, windows etc) and budgets need to be created to meet the need to replace these. Additional expenditure is also required to ensure communal areas in blocks of flats meet new fire safety regulations.

- 4.7 At the same time it is expected that the Government will announce that the Decent Homes Standard will need to be maintained after the 2010 target has been met and possibly increased and expanded into other areas of work, for example, improving the energy efficiency of our stock.
- 4.8 Unfortunately, because of the changes in our financial position the revised HRA Business Plan is unable to allocate the amount of finance required to undertake the level of work identified. As a consequence the Exeter Standard, promised to tenants in 2005 cannot now be delivered within the timescales originally agreed. Other work such as re-roofing and re-wiring will now be done using an assessment based on condition rather than age, helping the Council to reduce levels of expenditure in these areas in order to maintain expenditure in others. The capital resources available annually over the full 30-year period of the business plan are set out in Appendix II.
- 4.9 The Housing Asset Management Strategy sets out in detail how expenditure of the available capital resources will be prioritised. It also sets out the work and levels of investment that is required to the stock that cannot be funded. These 'unfunded' works will continue to be monitored and included in future improvement programmes if and when resources become available.
- 4.10 The Business Plan will continue to seek improvements to the housing service overall. The latest tenant satisfaction survey showed that levels of satisfaction remain high (well above national averages) and that almost 50% of tenants have noticed real improvements to the service over the past two years. It is hoped these improvements will continue and that our overall value for money will increase. Such improvements may also generate further efficiency savings that can be recycled into improved services or an expanded capital programme. We will also ensure that our contracting arrangements continue to drive efficiencies in the service provided and improve the quality of the service over the lifetime of the contract.

5 HRA SUBSIDY REVIEW

- 5.1 There are currently 206 stock holding local authorities across the country. Of these 156 are in 'negative subsidy', including Exeter. This means that the Government believes the amount of money we need to spend on our services is less than the income we generate. Therefore, any notional 'surplus' is paid into the national Housing Revenue Account and re-distributed by Government to those Councils (typically large urban authorities) where expenditure is high.
- 5.2 Over recent years the amount of subsidy paid by authorities such as Exeter has risen dramatically as illustrated in paragraph 4.2. This has caused concern amongst those negative subsidy authorities and prompted ministers to call for a comprehensive review of the current system. The Head of Housing Services sits on the national review body and has provided evidence to demonstrate that our expenditure needs are greater than the current HRA formulas allow. It is expected that the outcome of this review will be reported to ministers in the spring/summer of 2009 with any firm recommendations being considered during the next comprehensive spending review, due in 2010. Any change to the system will then be implemented from April 2011.
- 5.3 Whilst this review is welcome, and it is hoped will result in a fairer settlement for authorities such as Exeter, this does not help plug the gap in funding for our housing capital programme from 2010 onwards. Therefore, a short term solution is required to enable the capital programme to be sustained pending the outcome of the national HRA subsidy review.

5.4 Therefore, the revised Business Plan recommends that in order to maintain a sustainable capital programme the Council will borrow against the Housing Revenue Account. The total amount required will not be known until the draft HRA Subsidy Determination is received in November this year. However, the amount required is unlikely to exceed £1 million. Current interest rates are such that the cost of this borrowing is likely to cost approximately £40,000 per annum.

6 S151 OFFICER COMMENTS

6.1 The Head of Treasury Services has confirmed the accuracy of the financial information used in this report and can also support the conclusions presented below.

7 CONCLUSION

7.1 The HRA Business Plan continues to demonstrate that the Housing Revenue Account will generate a surplus, year on year, as a result of the low cost of managing and maintaining our housing stock. This surplus will continue to be used as a contribution to the housing capital programme.

7.2 The plan also demonstrates that due to increasing subsidy payments, reduced income from the Right to Buy and investments and annually capped rent rises, the amount of finance available to invest in the housing stock falls short of the total amount required over the period of the business plan.

7.3 In managing the housing stock it is important that improvements to services continue to be made and that any efficiency savings generated as a result are recycled into improved services and/or additional stock investment

7.4 That whilst the Council waits for the outcome of the national HRA subsidy review it agrees to borrow against the HRA in order to maintain a sustainable capital programme in the medium term.

8 RECOMMENDED

That Scrutiny Committee – Community supports and Executive approves

- 1) the conclusions in this report;
- 2) that if necessary the Council borrows against the HRA in 2010/11 to maintain the capital programme pending the outcome of the national HRA subsidy review;
- 3) that a further review is undertaken of the HRA Business Plan in 2010 and the findings reported to Members.

HEAD OF HOUSING SERVICES

S:PA/LP/ Committee/309SCC4
24.2.09

COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE

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

Housing Revenue Account Estimates 2009-2039

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	Total
	£000s											
Rent Income	15,306	16,016	16,322	16,577	16,771	16,871	16,970	17,070	17,171	17,269	17,370	183,713
Non Dwelling Rents	589	618	639	662	682	703	724	746	769	787	812	7,731
SP Grant	170	170	170	170	170	170	170	170	170	170	170	1,870
Housing Subsidy	(4,744)	(5,092)	(5,374)	(5,528)	(5,603)	(5,654)	(5,680)	(5,707)	(5,732)	(5,758)	(5,781)	(60,653)
Total Income	11,321	11,712	11,757	11,881	12,020	12,090	12,184	12,279	12,378	12,468	12,571	132,661
General Management	3,318	3,375	3,434	3,494	3,502	3,511	3,520	3,529	3,538	3,547	3,556	38,324
Bad Debt Provision	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	220
Repair and Maintenance	3,909	3,948	3,987	4,027	4,067	4,108	4,149	4,190	4,232	4,274	4,317	45,208
Depreciation	3,273	3,381	3,443	3,505	3,533	3,561	3,591	3,620	3,651	3,681	3,712	38,951
Total Expenditure	10,520	10,724	10,884	11,046	11,122	11,200	11,280	11,359	11,441	11,522	11,605	122,703
Net Cost of Services	801	988	873	835	898	890	904	920	937	946	966	9,958
Interest	222	166	181	191	258	295	299	304	309	314	317	2,856
Operating Income/ Expenditure	1,023	1,154	1,054	1,026	1,156	1,185	1,203	1,224	1,246	1,260	1,283	12,814
Revenue Contribution to Capital	1,562	1,500	1,000	970	1,080	1,100	1,110	1,130	1,140	1,200	1,220	13,012
Surplus/ Deficit	(539)	(346)	54	56	76	85	93	94	106	60	63	(198)
Reserves Brought Forward	2,400	1,861	1,515	1,569	1,625	1,701	1,786	1,879	1,973	2,079	2,139	2,400
Surplus/ Deficit	(539)	(346)	54	56	76	85	(614)	94	106	60	63	(198)
Reserves Carried Forward	1,861	1,515	1,569	1,625	1,701	1,786	1,879	1,973	2,079	2,139	2,202	2,202

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Total	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	Total
	£000s												
Rent Income	17,475	17,572	17,688	17,819	17,921	18,039	106,514	18,175	18,313	18,443	18,581	18,721	198,747
Non Dwelling Rents	671	698	726	755	785	817	4,452	850	884	920	957	996	9,059
SP Grant	170	170	170	170	170	170	1,020	170	170	170	170	170	1,870
Housing Subsidy	(5,804)	(5,826)	(5,977)	(6,129)	(6,295)	(6,460)	(36,491)	(6,625)	(6,800)	(6,968)	(7,139)	(7,311)	(71,334)
Total Income	12,512	12,614	12,607	12,615	12,581	12,566	75,495	12,570	12,567	12,565	12,569	12,576	138,342
General Management	3,397	3,405	3,413	3,421	3,429	3,437	20,502	3,445	3,453	3,461	3,469	3,477	37,807
Bad Debt Provision	20	20	20	20	20	20	120	20	20	20	20	20	220
Repair and Maintenance	4,360	4,404	4,448	4,492	4,537	4,582	26,823	4,628	4,674	4,721	4,768	4,816	50,430
Depreciation	3,743	3,774	3,806	3,837	3,875	3,908	22,943	3,942	3,982	4,021	4,062	4,102	43,052
Total Expenditure	11,520	11,603	11,687	11,770	11,861	11,947	70,388	12,035	12,129	12,223	12,319	12,415	131,509
Net Cost of Services	992	1,011	920	845	720	619	5,107	535	438	342	250	161	6,833
Interest	321	325	329	333	337	342	1,987	346	351	355	359	364	3,762
Operating Income/ Expenditure	1,313	1,336	1,249	1,178	1,057	961	7,094	881	789	697	609	525	10,595
Revenue Contribution to Capital	1,240	1,260	1,170	1,100	970	870	6,610	790	700	600	510	420	9,630
Surplus/ Deficit	73	76	79	78	87	91	484	91	89	97	99	105	965
Reserves Brought Forward	1,516	1,589	1,665	1,744	1,822	1,909	1,516	2,000	2,091	2,180	2,277	2,376	1,516
Surplus/ Deficit	73	76	79	78	87	91	484	91	89	97	99	105	965
Reserves Carried Forward	1,589	1,665	1,744	1,822	1,909	2,000	2,000	2,091	2,180	2,277	2,376	2,481	2,481

	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34	2034-35	2035-36	2036-37	Total	2037-38	2038-39	Total
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s						
Rent Income	18,864	18,997	19,132	19,275	19,421	19,569	115,258	19,707	19,845	154,810
Non Dwelling Rents	1,036	1,078	1,121	1,166	1,213	1,262	6,876	1,313	1,366	9,555
SP Grant	170	170	170	170	170	170	1,020	170	170	1,360
Housing Subsidy	(7,492)	(7,665)	(7,842)	(8,018)	(8,206)	(8,396)	(47,619)	(8,579)	(8,762)	(64,960)
Total Income	12,578	12,580	12,581	12,593	12,598	12,605	75,535	12,611	12,619	100,765
General Management	3,485	3,493	3,501	3,509	3,517	3,526	21,031	3,535	3,541	28,107
Bad Debt Provision	20	20	20	20	20	20	120	20	20	160
Repair and Maintenance	4,864	4,913	4,962	5,013	5,064	5,116	29,932	5,168	5,221	40,321
Depreciation	4,143	4,185	4,226	4,269	4,311	4,354	25,488	4,398	4,442	34,328
Total Expenditure	12,512	12,611	12,709	12,811	12,912	13,016	76,571	13,121	13,224	102,916
Net Cost of Services	66	(31)	(128)	(218)	(314)	(411)	(1,036)	(510)	(605)	(2,151)
Interest	369	374	379	385	451	452	2,410	449	441	3,300
Operating Income/ Expenditure	435	343	251	167	137	41	1,374	(61)	(164)	1,149
Revenue Contribution to Capital	330	230	130	110	100	40	940	0	0	940
Surplus/ Deficit	105	113	121	57	37	1	434	(61)	(164)	209
Reserves Brought Forward	1,516	1,621	1,734	1,855	1,912	1,949	1,516	1,950	1,889	1,516
Notional Interest	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Surplus/ Deficit	105	113	121	57	37	1	434	(61)	(164)	209
Reserves Carried Forward	1,621	1,734	1,855	1,912	1,949	1,950	1,950	1,889	1,725	1,725

Housing Capital Resources 2009-2039

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Total	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	Total
Housing Stock Numbers	5,052	5,040	5,028	5,016	5,006	4,996		4,988	4,980	4,972	4,964	4,956	
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s						
Major Repairs allowance	3,273	3,367	3,429	3,491	3,519	3,547	20,626	3,577	3,606	3,637	3,667	3,698	38,811
Use of RTB receipts	145	181	181	181	145	145	978	145	145	145	145	145	1,703
Use of other receipts	175	100	100	100	100	100	675	100	100	100	100	100	1,175
Capital Resources	3,593	3,648	3,710	3,772	3,764	3,792	22,279	3,822	3,851	3,882	3,912	3,943	41,689
Projected RCO's available	880	1,200	1,000	970	1,080	1,100	6,230	1,110	1,130	1,140	1,200	1,220	12,030
Cont from Working Balance	682	300	0	0	0	0	982	0	0	0	0	0	982
Total Resources available	5,155	5,148	4,710	4,742	4,844	4,892	29,491	4,932	4,981	5,022	5,112	5,163	54,701

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Total	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	Total
Housing Stock Numbers	4,964	4,956	4,948	4,947	4,947	4,947		4,947	4,947	4,947	4,947	4,947	
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s						
Major Repairs allowance	3,729	3,760	3,792	3,823	3,861	3,899	22,864	3,938	3,978	4,017	4,058	4,098	42,953
Use of RTB receipts	145	145	18	0	0	0	308	0	0	0	0	0	308
Use of other receipts	175	100	100	100	100	100	675	100	100	100	100	100	1,175
Capital Resources	4,049	4,005	3,910	3,923	3,961	3,999	23,847	4,038	4,078	4,117	4,158	4,198	44,436
Projected RCO's available	1,240	1,260	1,170	1,100	970	870	6,610	790	700	600	510	420	9,630
Cont from Working Balance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Resources available	5,289	5,265	5,080	5,023	4,931	4,869	30,457	4,828	4,778	4,717	4,668	4,618	54,066

EXETER CITY COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – COMMUNITY 10 MARCH 2009

EXECUTIVE 24 MARCH 2009

HOUSING ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2009-2015

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Members of the new Housing Asset Management Strategy and the recommendations contained within it.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Following the outcome of the mock inspection of landlord services in October 2007 one key recommendation was the need to develop a comprehensive Asset Management Strategy for the Council's housing stock that links to the objectives set out in the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan. This is supported by the Audit Commission's Key Lines of Enquiry documents that also expect to see a strategic approach by landlords to the management of their assets.
- 2.2 The proposed Asset Management Strategy has been developed over the past twelve months by a working group of officers and residents from the Tenants and Leaseholder Committee (TALC) with input from the Portfolio Holder for Housing & Social Inclusion. A copy of the full strategy has been placed on the web-site with a copy also available in the Members' room for information.
- 2.3 The strategy sets out in detail how the Council intends to manage its housing assets over the next six years and how the available capital resources will be invested.

3 ASSET MANAGEMENT

- 3.1 Asset management is defined as the management of physical assets to meet service and financial objectives. Generally it is concerned with:
- The overall performance of the housing stock and the contribution it makes to the HRA business plan.
 - The whole life cycle of a property, from the proposal to build, through development and maintenance, to the decision and method of disposal.
 - The way management and investment can be directed to support community development and improve asset portfolio performance.
- 3.2 The Council's approach to asset management will ensure that our housing stock meets the current and future needs of client groups, while being sustainable and affordable. Our asset management priorities are therefore to:
- Ensure the long term viability and sustainability of our existing stock and to maximise its value.
 - Maintain and manage the stock to meet current standards defined by decent homes and our statutory obligations as a landlord.
 - Invest in the stock to address future needs and improve environmental sustainability.
 - Within the parameters set by the HRA Business Plan, fund investment in the existing stock to maintain its condition and meet tenant expectations.

- Reduce the long term costs of maintenance and housing management in line with the efficiency agenda.
- Improve customer satisfaction and meet agreed aspirations.

3.3 In developing the strategy the working group has undertaken the following:

- A comprehensive review of existing stock condition data
- A review of other survey and responsive repair information
- A review of existing maintenance and improvement programmes
- Re-prioritised capital investment in the housing stock to meet available resources
- Brought together recommendations from other review groups (e.g. older persons review of sheltered housing) to ensure their recommendations are taken into account
- Incorporated existing policy initiatives (e.g. development of in-fill sites, neighbourhood management etc)
- An assessment of recent tenants surveys and complaints
- Ensured the strategy links with the HRA Business Plan and its overall objectives
- Assessed best practice across the housing sector
- Considered current legislation and regulation

4 MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE PLAN

4.1 The Asset Management Strategy has identified the full range of maintenance and improvement work required to the Council's housing stock. It also puts an estimated cost against each item of work and, where possible, the number of properties affected. Unfortunately, the amount of capital resources available to undertake this work falls well short of the total required.

4.2 To create a capital investment programme that meets the projected financial profile the Asset Management Working Group looked at each item of work individually and assigned a level of priority against each one. The group then placed each programme of work into one of five main overarching categories. These categories were prioritised in the following way:

1. Health and Safety
2. Structure
3. Thermal Comfort
4. External Works, and
5. Improvement Works

4.3 The works placed within each category were also prioritised to reflect resident aspirations and requirements. Other issues were also considered and taken into account, including maintaining the Decent Homes Standard past the 2010 target and meeting our statutory and regulatory obligations.

4.4 As a result a new programme of work has been developed to ensure an acceptable and sustainable minimum standard is maintained across the Council's housing stock. However, this review and re-prioritisation has resulted in aspects of the previous Exeter Standard being dropped to ensure sufficient resources are available for other work. This primarily affects replacement of kitchens and bathrooms which will mainly be carried out on a reactive basis in future.

4.5 The re-prioritised programme places greater focus on the replacement of our existing and out-dated electrical heating systems to almost 500 properties across the housing stock. This will improve the overall efficiency of the heating in each property, help to reduce tenants' fuel bills and increase the stock's overall SAP rating (a national measure of energy efficiency and thermal comfort). It also includes essential fire prevention works in communal areas to meet new regulations.

- 4.6 The new programme also includes some essential structural work such as the replacement of concrete canopies and a budget for the improvement of communal areas within and surrounding the Council's 500 blocks of flats. A full copy of the proposed capital programme for the years 2010-2015 and 2015-2020 is attached to this report as Appendix I.
- 4.7 The strategy also sets out those works that currently cannot be funded. This work will be carefully monitored and included in any future programme as and when additional resources become available.
- 4.8 The strategy is required to consider all the Council's Housing Revenue Account assets. Other issues included are:
- An assessment of our current stock holdings and demand for it
 - The development of new housing on small 'in-fill' sites within existing housing estates
 - The potential for the development of new Council housing
 - The assessment of existing sheltered housing sites to help prioritise future investment to ensure their long-term sustainability
 - Implementing more effective neighbourhood management policies to improve the management of the housing stock
 - Policies for dealing with overcrowding and under-occupation
 - The continual updating of our stock condition database
 - The implementation of asbestos, legionella and fire safety regulations
 - Monitoring arrangements for delivering the strategy including a range of performance indicators and enhanced resident involvement

5 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 There is a need for a strategic approach to managing the Council's housing assets. It is also a requirement of our regulators that we demonstrate such an approach is being followed and that residents are involved in the development and delivery of the Asset Management Strategy.
- 5.2 It is essential that the management of housing assets is linked with the overall business plan for the service as a whole. The strategy must demonstrate that the resources available are being invested in such a way as to achieve best value for money.
- 5.3 Long term investment plans will give officers, Members and residents greater certainty of the work to be undertaken and assist in the delivery of the plan.

6 RECOMMENDED

That Scrutiny Committee – Community supports and Executive approves

- 1) the Housing Asset Management Strategy 2009-2015
- 2) that a further review of the strategy is undertaken in parallel with the HRA Business Plan in 2010 and the findings reported to Members

HEAD OF HOUSING SERVICES

S:PA/LP/ Committee/309SCC2
24.2.09

COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE

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

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PROPOSED PROGRAMME

Work Required	2010 to 2015	Nos of units	2015 to 2020	Nos of units	Total Value	Total units	Comments
Decent Homes Works							
Electrical testing	£405,000	3000	£405,000	3000	£810,000	6000	
Electrical rewires	£1,834,000	800	£5,500,000	2400	£7,334,000	3200	Criteria - Works based on condition rather than age
New roofs	£1,260,000		£1,260,000		£2,520,000		Criteria - Works based on condition rather than age
Repointing	£861,000	300	£800,000	275	£1,661,000	575	Criteria - Works based on condition rather than age
New windows	£932,000	196	£568,000		£1,500,000	196	Criteria - Works based on condition rather than age
Insulation	£150,000		£150,000		£300,000		
Improvement works							
Kitchens	£3,000,000	500	£4,000,000	666	£7,000,000	1166	Original list included estimate of £38,800,00 which would have done work on 5910 props. This amount will do 2000.
Bathrooms	£2,250,000	500	£3,000,000	750	£5,250,000	1250	
Health and safety							
Asbestos survey and removal	£990,000		£500,000		£1,490,000		
Fire prevention works	£1,008,000	1680	£672,000	1120	£1,680,000	2800	Works to inc 30min fire doors, ventilation to comm halls, smoke detectors to comm halls & emergency lights
Thermal Comfort							
Replacement old gas appliances	£2,261,000	804			£2,261,000	804	
Replacement of electrical heating appliances	£1,384,000	492			£1,384,000	492	
New heating at Rennes House	£200,000	61			£200,000	61	
Replacement of gas condensing boilers	£1,665,000	1665	£1,666,000	1666	£3,331,000	1665	Criteria - Works based on condition rather than age
Other							
Disabled adaptations	£2,800,000		£3,000,000		£5,800,000		
External render (contract)	£1,300,000	138	£1,400,000	138	£2,700,000	276	
External Attributes (paths, walls etc)			£400,000		£400,000		
Repairs to non traditional construction properties	£232,500	80	£292,500	80	£525,000		Full surveys required to Rennes House and Clifford Close which may affect estimate.
Replacement of concrete canopies over front doors	£255,000	300			£255,000	300	
Communal area improvement (flats)	£500,000		£500,000		£1,000,000		
Sub total	£23,287,500		£24,113,500		£46,146,000		
Contingency	£1,164,375		£1,205,675		£2,307,300		5% contingency on all programmes
Funded Programme total	£24,451,875		£25,319,175		£48,453,300		

S:LP/Committee/309SCC2 Appx I

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EXETER CITY COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – COMMUNITY 10 MARCH 2009

EXECUTIVE 24 MARCH 2009

DRAFT EMPTY HOMES STRATEGY 2009-2014

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Members of progress in the preparation of the Exeter Empty Homes Strategy 2009-2014 and advise about the proposed consultation. A draft of the Strategy has been placed in the Members' Room and is available on the internet.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Empty Homes Strategy outlines our approach to ensuring that the number of privately owned empty homes across the city is minimised. It also aims to reduce the time those properties are left empty. With over 6,000 households on the Housing Register, privately owned empty property is a valuable resource. The strategy builds on work done over the past 13 years when the Empty Homes Partnership was first formed.

- 2.2 The strategy recognises that unless there is continued intervention by the team:

- The downturn in the housing market and the credit crunch could mean some homes will remain vacant for longer than six months;
- Some homes will become more difficult to let and/or sell and hence remain empty; and
- Some renovation projects may have to stop or not begin at all due to lack of finance and the inaccessibility of loans;

- 2.3 As Exeter has a high demand for housing, there is also an increasing need to look at all sectors of empty property. This includes under-occupied homes, second and holiday homes and redundant commercial and public spaces such as flats over shops, warehouses, former-school buildings and deconsecrated churches. This approach mirrors work done in the last recession when empty office blocks were converted to social housing for rent.

- 2.4.1 The strategy explains the various tools the Council and its partners have at their disposal to bring empty properties and underused space back into use. This includes:

- Continue to staff and resource the Empty Homes Partnership (with contributions from Exeter City Council, Mid Devon District Council, East Devon District Council, Teignbridge District Council and seven housing associations);
- Using new legal powers e.g. Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMOs);
- Use of Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs);
- Private Sector Leasing (PSL);
- ExtraLet: management of private sector lettings;
- Financial Incentives for property owners (capital and revenue);

- Acquisition of empty property;
- Financial incentives to encourage social tenants to downsize;
- Use of intelligence - encouraging the public to report empty properties to the Council;
- Lodgings scheme
- Improved publicity

2.4 The strategy recognises the achievements of the Empty Homes Partnership over the past 13 years:

- The Partnership is close to bringing its 1000th dwelling back into use.
- Extralet currently manages 70 properties;
- Private sector leasing of over 100 homes;
- Larger successes include the reuse of Old School Court, Topsham; the renovation of the former Admiral Inn public house in Alphington; conversion of several prominent office blocks in the city centre and the renovation of the Buddle Lane 'Laings' properties;

3. PROPOSALS

3.1 It is proposed that the draft Empty Homes Strategy go out for public consultation over the next two months with the final strategy being submitted for consideration by Members in the June 2009 committee cycle.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no additional financial implications over and above the Council's current commitment.

5. **RECOMMEND** that Scrutiny – Community supports and Executive approves:

(1) The draft Empty Homes Strategy

(2) That the draft strategy goes out for public consultation and the results and amended strategy are reported to Members in June 2009.

HEAD OF HOUSING SERVICES

S:PA/LP/ Committee/309SCC5
24.2.09

COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE

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

Empty Homes Strategy 2009-2014

EXETER CITY COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - COMMUNITY 10 MARCH 2009

EXECUTIVE
24 MARCH 2009

PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING RENEWAL POLICY – ANNUAL REVIEW

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report proposes specific changes to the Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy in order to address local needs, as identified in the on-going private sector house condition survey. A copy of the Policy has been placed in the Members' Room and is available on the internet.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 One of the Council's priority objectives is to safeguard and improve the private sector housing stock in Exeter, which is made up of 39,600 dwellings in the owner-occupied and privately rented sectors. At nearly twice the national average, Exeter has a large private rented sector (22% of the private stock) and large number of houses in multiple occupation (HMOs), estimated at 2700 or 7% of the private stock. It is this sector, particularly HMOs, where the poorest housing conditions are found.
- 2.2 Under the Housing Act 2004, the Council also has a legal duty to remove or reduce Category 1 Hazards (e.g. excess cold, severe dampness, and overcrowding) from dwellings in its area, and a discretion to deal with Category 2 Hazards. It has a range of enforcement tools to deal with poor and dangerous conditions in homes.
- 2.3 In addition to enforcement, the Council currently offers financial assistance in the form of means-tested grants to assist and encourage home-owners to improve their properties and remove hazards. This financial assistance helps home-owners repair and adapt private sector houses, funds energy efficiency grants for low income households through Warm-up Exeter and PLEA (Private Landlord Energy Action) grants, and supports ExtraLet and private sector leasing by means of private sector renewal grants.

3. PERFORMANCE IN 2008-09

Financial assistance to improve or adapt homes

- 3.1 95 Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) with a total value of £518,000 were awarded ensuring that clients could remain living independently in their own homes. All adapted properties are brought up to the decent home standard as a condition of grant assistance. This is 10 fewer adaptations than were achieved during 2007-08 but demonstrates that there continues to be a strong need for adaptations in the home and reflects changes introduced in 2007-08 which enhanced the scope of the DFG.
- 3.2 A total of 64 Renovation Grants with a total value of £421,000 were awarded to address hazards in private sector houses and to undertake improvements to ensure that dwellings meet the decent home standard. This represents a decrease of 28 grants administered in 2007-08 but reflects the fact that the budget allocated by central government was over £200,000 less than that year.

- 3.3 Since Warm-up Exeter grants were started in July 2006 1463 householders have benefited from financial assistance with 1771 energy efficiency measures, such as loft and cavity wall insulation, being installed. 60% of these grants have gone to households in fuel poverty who would have been ineligible for other forms of assistance.

HMO Licensing

- 3.4 Since the introduction of licensing in 2006, 771 of the larger, higher-risk HMOs within the city have been issued with mandatory HMO licences (minute 85/05 refers). These properties have been prioritised on the risk they present to tenants, over a 5 year inspection programme, with 142 completed this year. To date 265 have been inspected and brought up to the Council's standard.

4. PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE RENEWAL POLICY

- 4.1 The Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy will continue to offer a range of financial assistance packages and from April 2009 this will include low interest loans.
- 4.2 As part of the new bidding arrangements for allocations from the Regional Housing Pot for 2009/10 the City Council was encouraged, by the Government Office South West, to bid for funding to join a consortium of local authorities which has been running a loan scheme throughout Somerset and North Devon for some years. The loan scheme was originally set up by the Government Office South West in an effort to break 'grant dependency' (where house owners become over reliant on grants to maintain their property). The grants are administered on the consortium's behalf by Wessex Reinvestment Trust, a not for profit social enterprise.
- 4.3 As a result of the bid £187,500 was allocated to the City Council to join the consortium. A further £736,500 was also allocated for the continuation of grant funding.
- 4.4 The allocation will not only be used to set up a 'revolving' loan fund, ringfenced to fund repairs and improvements and adaptations to properties in Exeter, but will also be used to pay the Wessex Reinvestment Trust's one-off set up fees of around £8000 and an ongoing annual subscription fee of around £13,000 and the subsidy that the Council must pay in respect of each loan. This will leave an initial loan fund of £166,600, subject to the set-up fees and subscription fee being agreed.
- 4.5 The Wessex Reinvestment Trust offer three types of loan:

i) Capital Repayment Loans

- Minimum loan £1,000, Maximum £15,000
- Fixed term up to 15 years
- Fixed monthly repayment
- Available to all ages

A typical £5,000 loan taken out over 15 years will require a one off subsidy payment to Wessex Reinvestment Trust, of £1,171 and will cost the householder £34.53 a month

ii) Interest Only

- Minimum loan £1,000, Maximum £15,000
- Fixed monthly interest payments

- The original loan capital will be re paid either when the house is sold (from the sale proceeds) or upon transfer of the property title
- Open to clients aged 66 and over
- The loan will continue as long as they remain living in the house

A typical £5,000 loan will require a one off subsidy payment to Wessex Reinvestment Trust, ranging from £1,833, for a 66 year old, to £706 for an 86 year old and will cost the householder £5 a month

iii) Interest Roll Up

- Minimum loan £1,000, Maximum £15,000
- No monthly payments
- Open to clients over 71
- The loan will continue as long as the client remains in the house
- Interest accumulates at 3% yearly compound interest is added to the initial loan capital
- The loan and outstanding interest are paid upon sale or transfer of the property title

A typical £5,000 loan will require a one off subsidy payment to Wessex Reinvestment Trust, ranging from £1,833, for a 71 year old, to £1,312 for an 81 year old

- 4.6 It is proposed that all householders approaching the Council for financial assistance, other than mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants which are funded separately, will be provisionally screened and householders considered eligible for a loan will be referred onto Wessex Reinvestment Trust for a thorough financial assessment. In most cases an offer of a loan will follow. It is proposed that in cases where the amount of the loan offered is insufficient to finance the full cost of necessary repairs or improvements to the applicant's property the loan will be topped up from the renovation grant budget, within prescribed limits.
- 4.7 In both cases the repairs and improvements for which the loan and/or grant is offered will be specified by the Council's Grants Section who will authorise payment on satisfactory completion of the works
- 4.8 In all cases, other than when Wessex Reinvestment Trust refuse to offer a loan, it is proposed that any offer of grant aid will be conditional upon the householder taking on the maximum level of loan offered.
- 4.9 In those cases where a loan is refused, the reasons for refusal will be examined and a decision whether to offer a grant will be determined on a case by case basis by the Head of Environmental Health Services.
- 4.10 Where applicants decline a loan, financial assistance will not be offered. If, as a result, a category 1 hazard remains present in the applicant's home, appropriate enforcement action will be taken as described in the Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy. This action is necessary to discharge the Council's mandatory duty to deal with such hazards.

Financial assistance maxima

- 4.11 It is proposed that the maximum level of renovation grant is reduced from £25,000 to £15,000. This reduction reflects the support that will be offered by the loan. In exceptional circumstance, any level of grant beyond £15,000 may be agreed by the

Head of Environmental Health Services. In the main, very few grants exceed £15,000, the average grant administered during 2008/09 being £7,000.

- 4.12 It is proposed that renovation grants are no longer made available for residential mobile homes due to the difficulty of enforcing the 25 year grant conditions. The sale and purchase of such dwellings rarely involves a solicitor or land registry searches with the result that the repayment conditions are virtually impossible to enforce. Wessex Reinvestment Trust are only prepared to offer Capital Repayment Loans for the repair of mobile homes but because the loan is effectively 'unsecured' they require the loan to be underwritten by the City Council in the event of default. It is proposed, therefore, that the loan maxima for mobile homes is limited to £3,500

Licensing fee

- 4.12 The fee for licensing licensable HMOs has been set at £400 for a five year licence since the outset of licensing in 2006. The fee has been reviewed and it is proposed that it is increased to £600 in order to fully cover the costs involved.

5. PROPOSALS FOR SPENDING THE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE ALLOCATION

- 5.1 It is proposed that the £187,500 allocation from the Regional Single Pot, specifically awarded to set up and run a low interest loan scheme in conjunction with Wessex Reinvestment Trust, is utilised for that purpose. Although the set up and subscription costs have yet to be finalised it is anticipated that there will be approximately £160,000 available to put into the loan fund.

£187 500

- 5.2 It is proposed that Home Repair Assistance and HMO Grants will continue and that Renovation Grants will be offered in conjunction with the Wessex Reinvestment Loans. It is proposed that £555,250 of the Regional Single Pot allocation is allocated, in the first instance, to renovation grant budget but that this is kept under review with the prospect of using a percentage of this budget to 'top up' the loan fund if necessary.

£555,250

- 5.3 It is proposed that the £181,250 allocation from the Regional Single Pot, specifically to provide financial assistance to improve the energy efficiency of the private sector housing stock is utilised to fund Warm-up Exeter and PLEA grants.

£181,250

- 5.4 It is proposed that the £270,000 DFG allocation is specifically used to fund mandatory DFGs. It is anticipated that this will fund 50 DFGs in 2009/10. In circumstances where a mandatory DFG is unable to proceed due to the inability of the applicant to fund their contribution, then the applicant will be permitted to apply for a Disabled Facilities Loan to fund that contribution or part (offered by Wessex Reinvestment Trust). In the cases where a loan is refused, the reasons for refusal will be examined, and a decision as to whether to offer a discretionary DFG will be determined on a case by case basis.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The amended policy will be funded from the 2009-10 budget allocation. The financial implications of the changes will be closely monitored and the information used to inform the next review of the policy.

7. RECOMMENDED that

- 1) Scrutiny Committee - Community supports and Executive agrees to adopt the changes to the Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy outlined in this report;
- 2) the expenditure of the single pot allocation is monitored and that the proposed financial allocation to each of the schemes amended or further schemes can be approved by the Head of Environmental Health Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing & Social Inclusion;
- 3) the Policy is reviewed annually, or sooner if needs be, in order to ensure that it addresses local needs and/or government policy.

HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

S:LP/Committee/309SCC6
24.2.09

COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE

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

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EXETER CITY COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE COMMUNITY 10 MARCH 2009

EXECUTIVE 24 MARCH 2009

EXETER AIR QUALITY STRATEGY 2009-2014

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report seeks approval of the Exeter Air Quality Strategy 2009-2014, and informs Members of the air quality monitoring and management undertaken by the Council. A copy of the strategy has been placed in the Members' Room and is available on the internet.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council's first five-year air quality strategy was approved by Members in June 2003. The strategy drew together the existing air quality work undertaken by Environmental Health Services. This work is primarily driven by statutory obligations and the strategy provides a means of organising and coordinating it to best effect. This strategy sits beneath and supplements the Council's Community Strategy – Exeter Vision, Environmental Strategy 2007-2012 and Climate Change Strategy 2008-2018.
- 2.2 Few things are as fundamental as the air we breathe. Modern medical statistics now allow us to begin to see the real impact that the air we breathe has on our health. People with pre-existing respiratory and cardio-vascular disease are particularly at risk from air pollution. Indeed the statistics can be shocking with the Government stating that up to 24,000 people die prematurely every year in the UK because of the effects of air pollution.
- 2.3 Clean air that is fit to breathe is one of the key factors required to deliver a safe environment for both current and future generations. The Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' (DEFRA) UK Sustainable Development Strategy "A Better Quality of Life" sets out a national vision for delivering a sustainable environment. A National Air Quality Strategy has also been produced, which sets out the Government's plans to improve and protect ambient air quality, as part of the creation of a sustainable environment.
- 2.4 The Government has challenged local authorities under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 to assess and manage their air quality. National health-based standards and objectives have been published to allow air quality to be assessed and to drive forward management policies.
- 2.5 The Council uses a comprehensive network of 61 air pollution monitors, along with computer models, to assess air quality in Exeter. These show that air quality is generally very good; there is, however, a need to tackle emissions of nitrogen dioxide associated with motor vehicles along the busiest roads into the city. This resulted in the legal designation of an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) for areas in very close proximity to some of the main routes into Exeter in April 2007.

- 2.6 The creation of this area enables the Council to develop and focus policies designed to protect and improve Exeter's air quality. These have been formalised within a detailed Air Quality Action Plan for Exeter, which aims to reduce pollution by cutting congestion on the main routes into the city. Exeter City Council has worked closely with Devon County Council (the Highways Authority) to produce the action plan.
- 2.7 In addition to local air quality management, the Council has numerous other statutory duties with regard to air quality such as the management of specified 'prescribed processes'. In Exeter there are 38 permitted processes and Council staff inspect these to ensure compliance with the conditions within their permit.
- 2.8 Other areas of work which are related to air quality issues include responding to air quality complaints and advice requests; there were more than 346 received in 2008. Officers also provide advice on air quality to Planning Services, in relation to forward planning and development control.
- 2.9 The Exeter Air Quality Strategy 2009-14 provides details of all of these activities. It also gives a number of specific air quality objectives and summarises the approaches to these and the suggested methods of monitoring and reviewing the Council's progress in meeting them.

3. PROPOSAL

- 3.1 The Exeter Air Quality Strategy 2009-14 provides details of all of the existing air quality work undertaken by Environmental Health Services. It is proposed to adopt the strategy which identifies a number of specific air quality objectives and summarises the approaches to be taken to meet these objectives and suggests methods of monitoring and reviewing progress.

4. RECOMMENDED

That Scrutiny Committee - Community supports and Executive approves that the Exeter Air Quality Strategy 2009-14 be adopted by the Council.

HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

S:PA/LP/ Committee/309SCC7 v2
24.2.09

COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE

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

Air Quality Strategy for England - DEFRA

EXETER CITY COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - COMMUNITY 10 MARCH 2009

EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORT ON THE COUNCIL'S ARRANGEMENTS FOR MANAGING RISKS FROM WASTE MANAGEMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report advises Members of the outcome of the recently completed Auditor's review of arrangements for managing the risks posed by waste management and climate change, and to the extent at which those risks are being managed, and seeks Members' support for the action plan contained in the review.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In the 2007-08 Audit Plan completed by the auditors Grant Thornton, a number of risks were identified to the Council, which included the challenges presented by changing Government requirements in relation to waste management and climate change.
- 2.2 These subject areas are of great importance; waste management is one of the most visible frontline services provided by local authorities, and, over a number of years, there has been a significant shift from merely removing waste from households towards better resource management, through recycling and re-use. Since 1990, National and European legislation has been introduced that requires waste collection authorities to implement a range of policies and practices for re-using, recycling, and recovering energy from a significant proportion of waste collected and sent for disposal.
- 2.3 The issue of climate change is also high on the agenda of many organisations, and the effects of climate change are and will be significant unless the factors which contribute to climate change, such as CO₂ emissions, are checked. As well as limiting its own impact on climate change in its operation, the Council should be seen as being at the forefront of local efforts, in its community leadership role, in tackling climate change issues.
- 2.4 The review sought to understand the Council's arrangements for identifying the key issues, for meeting the developing waste management and climate change targets and for identifying and managing the associated risks. It was conducted in the Autumn of 2008, and is attached as Appendix I.

3. CONCLUSIONS OF REVIEW

Waste Management

- 3.1 The Auditor concluded that the Council has in place an appropriate strategy and objectives/targets, which recognise the changing legislation and consequent changing demands on the Council, and its partners, in respect of recycling and waste reduction. It noted that the strategy and objectives/targets are revisited annually, with appropriate Member involvement.

- 3.2 However, the review also highlighted that there is an opportunity for the Council to be far more thorough in identifying all the strategic and operational risks relating to waste management, including reputational and financial, and to be clear about the arrangements in place to minimise these risks. It recommended that the corporate and departmental risk registers relating to waste management are expanded.

Climate Change

- 3.3 The Auditor was satisfied that the Council has made good progress in establishing sound arrangements for addressing the issues of climate change. It noted that the Council has clear strategies and monitoring arrangements, and has engaged officers and Members in the monitoring and review process. The report commented that the Council has recognised its role as a community leader and is therefore seeking to influence the habits of individuals and organisations within its boundaries; and that is also concerned to initiate measures to reduce its own carbon footprint.
- 3.4 As with waste management, the audit report considered that the issue of strengthening risk management, is also relevant to climate change. It recommended that the Council further enhance its risk management arrangements, by ensuring that all relevant strategic and operational risks are identified within the Corporate Risk Register, and then ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place to mitigate those risks.

Recommendation of Auditor's Review

- 3.5 The Auditor recommended that the Council should identify fully the risks associated with its waste management and climate change action plans, and ensure that mitigating controls are in place for each risk identified.

4. PROPOSED ACTION PLAN

- 4.1 In response to the Auditor's recommendation, the Head of Environmental Health Services will ensure that detailed risk registers will be formulated for each theme, with significant risks identified within the corporate risk register (the latter being subject to monitoring by Scrutiny Committees).
- 4.2 Stewardship of the Climate Change risk register will rest with Climate Change Steering Group, whereas the Head of Environmental Health Services will be responsible for the stewardship of the recycling/waste management risk register, which will also be incorporated into the annual report on the Council's Recycling Plan.
- 4.1 A target completion date of March 2009 has been set for these risk registers to be finalised.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no additional financial implications imposed by carrying out these recommendations.

7. RECOMMENDED that

- 1) Scrutiny Committee - Community notes the Auditor's report, and supports the action plan contained within it (Appendix A of the report).

HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

S:PA/LP/ Committee/309SCC8
24.2.09

COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE

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

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Grant Thornton

Exeter City Council

Arrangements for meeting Government requirements on Waste Management and Climate Change

28th December 2008

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Appendices

A ACTION PLAN

1 Introduction and background

In our 2007-08 Audit Plan, we identified a number of risks to the Council, including the challenges presented by changing Government requirements in relation to waste management and climate change.

We have reviewed the arrangements that the Council has in place to meet its changing obligations with regard to these issues, and the extent to which the risks identified are being managed.

Waste management is one of the most visible frontline services provided by local authorities, and, over a number of years, there has been a significant shift from merely removing waste towards better resource management, through recycling and re-use.

Since 1990, National and European legislation has been introduced that requires waste collection authorities to implement a range of policies and practices for re-using, recycling, and recovering energy from a significant proportion of waste collected and sent for disposal.

The issue of climate change is also high on the agenda of many organisations, and the practical effects of climate change are, many argue, already being felt. The Council is in an influential position and should be seen as being at the forefront of local efforts, in its community leadership role, in tackling climate change issues.

Our review has sought to understand the Council's arrangements for identifying the key issues, for meeting the developing waste management and climate change targets and for identifying and managing the associated risks.

2 Waste management

Strategy objectives and actions

The Council has a well-established track record in recycling, having published its first Recycling Plan in 1992, and this has been regularly updated to account for changes in legislation, and for changes in the locality. The Plan is to be reviewed and updated in 2008-09.

The current approach to recycling is encompassed in the Recycling Plan 2006-2011, and this sets out policies aimed at enabling the City to reach, what the Plan describes as, "challenging" recycling and waste reduction targets. We understand that the Council is not actually required to produce a recycling plan because the Council has been rated as "excellent" by the Audit Commission. However, the Council still does so in the interests of good quality service planning.

The Recycling Plan sets out a number of aims and objectives in respect of recycling, including reducing waste production, encouraging recycling and re-use, promotion of good policies and practices and increasing local markets for recyclable materials.

The Plan describes the wide variety of legislation and directives governing waste management, and the range of recycling services, either provided by the Council, or in which it participates. It also recognises the longer term importance of waste minimisation, including within the Council's own day-to-day operations. The Plan also notes the increasing impact of the Landfill directives, which, while directly affecting Devon County as the Waste Disposal Authority, also has implications for the Council and its partners across the County.

The Recycling Plan includes an action plan, in which management actions and target dates for completion are assigned to specific Council objectives. Responsibility for individual actions is assigned to officers. Key Performance Indicators for recycling and waste minimisation are included within the corporate performance monitoring process and is reported quarterly to Senior Management Team, the Executive Team and to Scrutiny Committee (Community). An annual report is also presented to Scrutiny Committee (Resources).

The Plan identifies the range of statutory and local waste management and recycling targets and reaffirms the Council commitment to meeting these. The national minimum target for statutory recycling and composting is 30%, and is expected to remain at this level for some years. However, the local target is 33%. We have identified that the Council is currently achieving a 35.5% recycling rate, compared to the 33% target. However, further development is required in respect of organic waste. Currently, the Council strategy is to encourage home composting and waste reduction. The proposed "Energy from Waste" plant (Devon County Council initiative) will be key to the diversion of organic waste from landfill, though it will be 3 years before the proposed processing unit is operating.

A provisional stretch target of 40% is highlighted for 2010-11, though the Devon-wide target within the Municipal Waste Management Strategy has been revised to 50%, the effect of which is to increase the Council's own recycling target to 41.5% by 2010-11.

Partnership arrangements

The Plan recognises that, as a Waste Collecting Authority, the Council is only a part of the whole waste management process, and therefore it has built, over a number of years, a strong working relationship with other partners, most particularly with Devon County Council, as the Waste Disposal Authority.

The Plan highlights the long history of joint working with other authorities in Devon which presently manifests itself in the Devon Authorities Waste Reduction and Recycling Committee (DAWRRC). This is attended by member and officer representatives from each participating authority. We understand that this Devon-wide model has been cited as a model of best practice and it is underpinned by cooperative frameworks across the participating organisations. However, it is not clear to us how much authority the DAWRRC has, and what would happen if individual authorities started to perform poorly on key waste/recycling targets. For example, as we highlight earlier in this report, a Devon-wide stretch target has been agreed, but it is not clear how that would be enforced through DAWRRC. That notwithstanding, the DAWRRC is seen to have great value to the participants.

A Devon-wide waste strategy is in place, underpinned by co-operative frameworks across the participating organisations. There is also a waste management strategy produced by the South West Regional Assembly.

The DAWRRC members authorities are all engaged in the national performance reporting process, in which data from the Waste Data Flow (WDF) system is used to report data to DEFRA. The DAWRRC considers the full set of WDF data as part of its work.

Monitoring and reporting arrangements

We have identified that there is currently quarterly reporting on key performance indicators. Reporting against the BVPI waste and recycling targets is managed through the corporate performance monitoring system (Performance Plus). Performance against specific recycling targets is reported quarterly to members, though more frequent monitoring by the Recycling Manager ensures that any significant fall in performance (excluding seasonal changes) is identified and addressed at an early stage.

The Scrutiny Committee (Community) is the focal point for member involvement in waste management issues. The Head of Environmental Health Services regularly reports on a range of issues relating to waste management. Support for service developments is also sought from the Committee. In particular, the Committee has reviewed progress with the corporate Recycling Plan, including consideration of the 2007-08 Improvement Plan.

During 2007-08, the Committee has considered progress with the Recycling Plan since its inception in 2006, as well as considering improvement issues for 2007-08.

Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme (LATS)

The Council's Recycling Plan recognises the fundamental importance of the EU directives on landfill.

The key driver for municipal waste management in Devon for the next few years is the LATS scheme. LATS places limits on how much biodegradable municipal waste can be land-filled in Devon, setting diminishing amounts for each year until 2020. By 2020 only 35% of the amount of biodegradable waste land-filled in 1995 will be allowed, and for each tonne land-filled over this amount a fine of up to £150 per tonne will be levied.

The LATS allowances and penalties are the responsibility of Devon County Council, as they apply to Devon as a whole. The implementation of the LATS scheme is one of the reasons that the partners across Devon are proposing three new "energy from waste" plants, one of which will be sited in Exeter by 2011, as material that has passed through such a plant will have its entire biodegradable component removed.

We understand that the "energy from waste" initiative is crucial to the Devon authorities in progressing the waste/recycling agenda. However, it is not clear to us that all the risks associated with the proposals have been identified and considered. We therefore re-emphasise the value there may be in ensuring that all the risks associated with LATS are identified, and appropriate arrangements are put in place to manage those risks.

Summary

Overall, we have concluded that the Council has in place an appropriate strategy and objectives/targets, which recognise the changing legislation and consequent changing demands on the Council, and its partners, in respect of recycling and waste reduction. The strategy and objectives/targets are revisited annually, with appropriate member involvement.

The Council could enhance these arrangements further by assessing all the risks associated with waste/recycling and the impact of failing to meet local and national targets. We understand that a risk has been identified in respect of the Materials Reclamation Facility, specifically the implications of it being destroyed, and how the Council would then manage the recyclable waste. We have also noted that, as part of the corporate risk management arrangements, the Council reviewed the risks associated with the recycling site, and, as a result of specific work on staff training and improved management of the site, was, in November 2007, able to reduced the risk from medium to low.

However, there is an opportunity for the Council to be far more thorough in identifying all the strategic and operational risks relating to waste management, including reputational and financial, and to be clear about the arrangements in place to minimise these risks. This will ensure that the corporate and departmental risk registers are more complete.

3. Climate Change

Background

The Council has a Climate Change Strategy 2008-2018, and this supersedes or overlaps with a number of previous strategic documents (Draft Climate Change Strategy 2007-17, Environmental Strategy 2007-2012, Corporate Environmental Strategy 2001-06 and Environmental Strategy for Exeter 2001-07).

The current strategy is built on a number of key policy themes (energy, transport, waste, community leadership and adapting to the effects of changes in climate) and takes account of input from research undertaken by Exeter University as well as some public consultation.

The Strategy recognises the role of the Local Strategic Partnership and also the dual role of the Council - its role as a community leader in identifying and addressing local climate change issues, and also, as a consumer of resources, its role in reducing its own environmental "footprint".

The Strategy contains detailed analysis of the impact of climate change on the local area. It indicates that 45% of carbon dioxide emissions in Exeter come from the non-domestic sector (compared to 49% nationally), while 34% are derived from domestic consumption (compared with 28% nationally) and 21% from transport (compared to 27% nationally). It also identifies the potential to reduce total emissions in Exeter by around a quarter in 2020, compared with 2004 levels, taking account of future growth.

An action plan, covering the period to Spring 2009, has also been produced. We understand that it is intended that a revised action plan will be produced in 2009, and then every three years. The current action plan has a range of actions over the key policy themes.

As a community leader, the Council sees that it has an influencing role and an enforcing role. It has a number of initiatives in place to support change. For example, it is currently focusing on ensuring that the housing stock, whether owned by the Council or otherwise, maximizes the use of roof and wall insulation, and is encouraging the take-up of grants to ensure this issue is addressed. It has also introduced a climate change levy on its car parking charges, and the additional funding derived is used to fund initiatives suggested by the public. Some of the funding (£50,000) is also being used as grant aid for those caught in the "trap" just above the level of income at which benefits can be claimed.

The current Strategy was considered and approved by Scrutiny Committee (Community) at its meeting of January 2008, at which it also agreed to monitor progress on an annual basis.

The Council has also developed, in conjunction with the Carbon Trust, a 2008 Carbon Management Strategy and Implementation Plan. This resulted from the Council being selected to participate in the 5th phase of the national Local Authority Carbon Management Programme. The Council has earmarked £100,000 over five years for this initiative, the objective being to achieve sustainable savings in energy consumption in the medium to long term.

The Council has established a Climate Changes Steering Group, which is director-led and which includes heads of services. The Group meets monthly and monitors progress of the action plan against all the policy themes. It also monitors progress against all the environmental performance indicators.

However, it is not clear to us that the Council has yet addressed the issue of risk management in regard to the climate change agenda and, as with the issue of waste management, we consider that the Council would benefit from considering this in more detail.

Summary

We are satisfied that the Council has made good progress in establishing sound arrangements for addressing the issues of climate change. It has clear strategies and monitoring arrangements, and has engaged officers and members in the monitoring and review process. It has recognised its role as a community leader and is therefore seeking to influence the habits of individuals and organisations within its boundaries. It is also concerned to initiate measures to reduce its own carbon "footprint".

We consider that the issue of risk management, which we raised in regard to waste, is also relevant here. There is an opportunity for the Council to strengthen its risk management arrangements, in respect of climate change issues, by ensuring that all relevant strategic and operational risks are identified within the Corporate Risk Register, and then ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place to mitigate those risks.

A ACTION PLAN

Recommendation	Priority	Management Comment	Date for Implementation	Lead Officer
<p>The Council should identify fully the risks associated with its waste/climate change action plans and ensure that mitigating controls are in place for each risk identified.</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Detailed risk registers will be formulated for each theme, with significant risks identified within the corporate risk register (the latter being subject to monitoring by Scrutiny Committees).</p> <p>Stewardship of the Climate Change risk register will rest with Climate Change Steering Group, whereas the Head of Environmental Health Services will be responsible for the stewardship of the recycling/waste management risk register, which will also be incorporated into the annual report on the Council's Recycling Plan.</p>	<p>March 31st 2009</p>	<p>Head of Environmental Health Services</p>



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EXETER CITY COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – COMMUNITY 10 MARCH 2009

RE-TENDERING OF THE HOUSING RESPONSIVE MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Members of the current timetable for the re-tendering the housing responsive maintenance contracts and seek Member nominations onto the project group.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The Council's Housing Services Unit undertakes approximately 14,000 responsive repair jobs to its 5000 properties each year. The responsive maintenance budget totals over £3.1 million. This includes general building works, void repairs, gas and electrical reactive repairs and gas servicing work.
- 2.2 The existing responsive maintenance contracts are due to expire in October 2010 therefore the Council is commencing a full options appraisal to establish a strategy for packaging and tendering this work. The process requires all options to be explored and fully appraised. It will also need to take account of current standards being achieved across the industry and the best practice employed to provide a first class responsive repairs services.
- 2.3 To assist in this process the Council is engaging specialist consultants with extensive knowledge and expertise in this field who will be able to advise and guide us through the process and provide a range of information from across the sector.
- 2.4 The timetable for this project is tight. The procurement strategy will need to be reported to Scrutiny-Community and the Executive in June of this year in order for the overall timetable to be achieved. The full project timetable is attached as Appendix I.
- 2.5 To assist in this process it is essential that our tenants and leaseholders are represented on the project team. However, it is also proposed that the project team should include Members. Therefore it is suggested that the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Social Inclusion will be part of this team together with two members from this committee. It is anticipated that the likely time commitment for the option appraisal part of the process will be two or three meetings (taking place at the Civic Centre during office hours) with more meetings to be arranged once the tender evaluation stage has been reached at the end of the year.

3. RECOMMENDED - that Scrutiny Committee – Community:

- 1) Notes the report and the project timetable
- 2) Nominates two members of the committee to sit on the project group

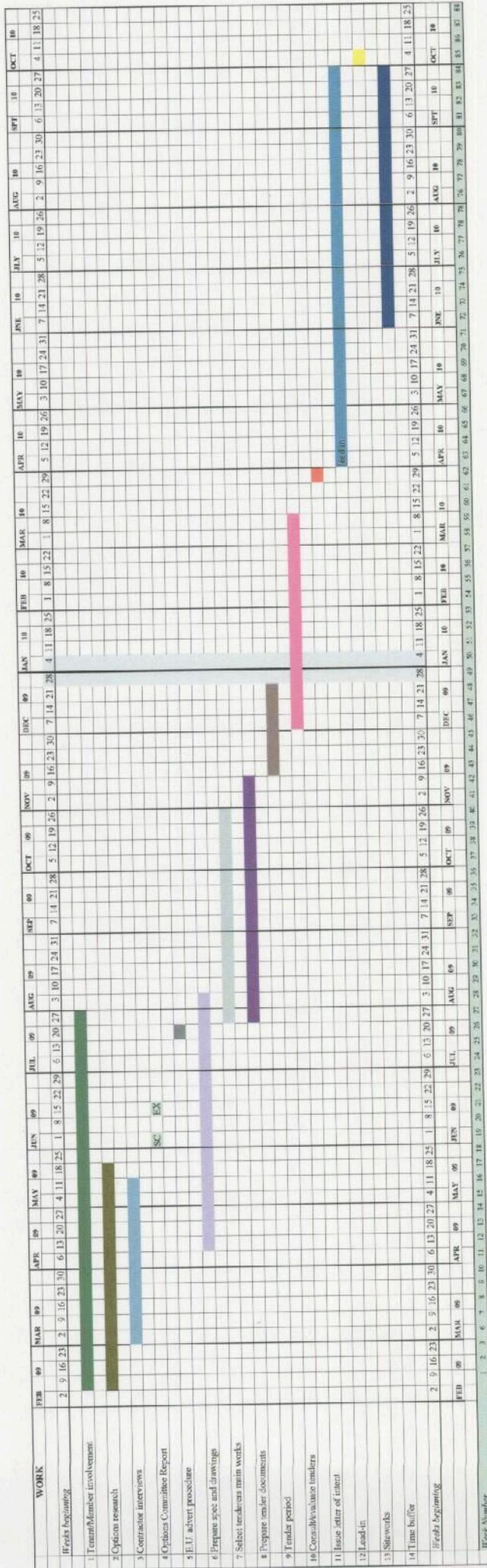
HEAD OF HOUSING SERVICES

S:PA/LP/Committee/309SCC15
24.2.09

COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE

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Background papers used in compiling this report:

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EXETER CITY COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – COMMUNITY 10 MARCH 2009

PORCH: PROLIFIC OFFENDERS RESETTLEMENT THROUGH CO'ORDINATED HOUSING

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Members of the progress of the PORCH Project that is run by Exeter Community Initiatives (ECI) and funded, in part, by the Council.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 PORCH was originally developed in 2006 from funding and support provided to ECI by the Government's Innovations' Forum and the Home Office (£80,000), the Safer Devon Partnership, Government Office South West (£20,000), the Devon and Cornwall Probation Service, various charities, East and Mid Devon Districts and Exeter City Council (£15,000). The project went live in September 2006.
- 2.2 The project was developed as a response to the challenge of breaking the cycle of offending amongst prolific offenders. With over 60 prolific offenders in the Exeter (42), East and Mid Devon (18) areas in 2006, it recognised the need to ensure that, on discharge from prison, prolific offenders received "effective housing resettlement to reduce re-offending".
- 2.3 The project aimed to:
- establish a specialist floating support service for prolific offenders through housing, criminal justice and treatment regimes;
 - build the capacity of existing housing providers (all tenures) to accept the risks presented by these offenders, co-ordinate assessment and referrals and get access to appropriate learning/training and resources etc;
 - empower offenders to take greater control of their lives by helping with their personal development: skills, knowledge and behaviour; and;
 - intervene at key points in the criminal justice system to ensure that housing needs were addressed.
- 2.4 By March 2007, cumulatively PORCH had supported 38 prolific offenders, of which 20 had been found accommodation. During the first 18 months of the project, the University Of Plymouth Social Research and Regeneration Unit monitored and evaluated the Project overall. In February 2008, their final report confirmed the positive effect that PORCH was having on the lives and behaviour of individuals. It concluded: *"a comprehensive referral and assessment process has been established for Prolific Offenders that is considered to be appropriate and effective by all staff and referral routes to the Project. Although 13 of the 66 clients assessed chose not to engage further with the project, by the end of November 2007 a cumulative total of 34 beneficiaries had been successfully housed in accommodation that is suitable within PORCH terms of reference."* On the basis of the final evaluation and other performance information, the Council provided further revenue funding of £16,000 in 2008/09.

- 2.5 PORCH also underwent some developmental changes. During 2007 it became clear that there was a good deal of overlap with the issues faced by clients in the Closing A Revolving Door (CARD) Project, which was also managed by ECI. CARD provided case management and mentoring support for mainly short-sentence prisoners. This led to a merger between the two projects with effect from 1st April 2008. The new CARD PORCH Project now provides a more integrated mentoring and housing support service.
- 2.6 By January 2009, since its inception in September 2006, the team has supported 108 prolific offenders, at least 83 of which could have become homeless on leaving prison if help had not been provided. The majority of these were accommodated in the private rented sector with the PORCH team supporting them through the process, for example, assisting them to deal with any tenancy sustainment, landlord or neighbour issues. Only 2 clients approached Exeter City Council to make homeless applications and neither had to be accommodated. Whilst not all of the 83 people would have been in priority need, PORCH has proved its value as a homelessness prevention project and undoubtedly saved money from the Council's housing advice/homelessness budgets.
- 2.7 Following the "credit crunch", the Project's future has become more uncertain. The Council had not budgeted to support the project beyond 2008/9 and given our current financial situation is unable to provide any funding for PORCH in 2009/10. However, given that the project does contribute to achieving the Council's homelessness targets, further funding maybe possible if savings can be found from within the Council's annual Homelessness Prevention Grant (currently £350,000 per annum)

3. RECOMMENDED that

- 1) the report and the achievements of PORCH be noted; and
- 2) officers support PORCH in its efforts to secure funding for 2009/10 to continue the Service.

HEAD OF HOUSING SERVICES

S:PA/LP/ Committee/309SCC3
24.2.09

COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE

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

CARDPORCH Outline Strategic Plan April 2009 – March 2012 and Quarterly Statistics 2007-2009

EXETER CITY COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – COMMUNITY 10 MARCH 2009

ALLOTMENT STRATEGY REVIEW

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To report to committee the progress made to date on the action plan outlined in the revised Allotment Strategy, adopted by the Council in 2007.
- 1.2 To set out further actions planned for 2009/10 (see Appendix I).

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The original Allotment Strategy adopted in 2002 was revised in 2007. The revision built on the achievements of the first strategy, and identified the significant improvements in occupation levels and success in meeting the needs of ploholders.
- 2.2 The continuing high demand for allotments has put considerable pressure on the Council officers to provide new plots to meet this. In addition 2008 saw the continuance of a number of existing projects and development of new ones.
- 2.3 Five target areas are identified within the strategy
 1. Ensuring sufficient allotments
 2. Promoting allotment gardening
 3. Encouraging sustainability
 4. Cultivating good administration
 5. Maintaining adequate resources

Using these headings an action plan has been produced, which identifies specific targets.

3. PROGRESS IN 2008

- 3.1 Larger plots continue to be divided into smaller ones wherever practicable. These smaller plots not only enable a higher number to have access to a plot, but suit the requirements of many younger working people. To this end a further 18 full size 10 rod (250m²) allotment plots were split into 5 rod plots as they became vacant on sites across the city. Overgrown areas of land at Mincinglake Road Allotments have been cleared and let, providing 8 additional plots.
- 3.2 There are 26 Council Allotment sites in Exeter, providing around 1365 Plots, an increase of 72 plots since 2007. Despite this, earlier in the year there were no available plots, and the decision was reluctantly taken to temporarily suspended waiting lists in May 2008, due to overwhelming demand. At that time, there were approximately 250 people waiting for plots, equating to over 18% of the total number of plots.
- 3.3 Waiting lists have now been re-opened to accept applicants at ten sites. It is intended to re-open other sites when their current waiting list decreases.

- 3.4 Equalities issues are being addressed by further provision of a new disabled accessible facility at the Ashwood Road site in Alphington with raised beds of varying heights and wheelchair accessible paths. Water for the plot is harvested from the existing shed roof. This site compliments our existing fully accessible site at Marypole Road Allotments.
- 3.5 Two new “self-composting” toilets have been provided at Hamlin Lane and Trews Weir Allotments. The new toilets use no chemicals at all and provide usable compost within 2 years.
- 3.6 Support was given for a new association at Stoke Hill (Marypole Road) by providing a shed from which trading can take place.
- 3.7 Further works have been carried out to ensure that tracks within the allotments enable users to safely access their plots.

4. ENSURING SUFFICIENT ALLOTMENTS

- 4.1 Unfortunately, part of the Trews Weir Allotment site has been put up for sale by the landowner. The Council leases 2.46 acres of land here for allotments. The 73 tenants have been served with Notices of Intended Re-entry, expiring on 20 September 2009. The allotment land is being marketed with fishing rights outside of the allotments. The Council has made an offer for the land on which the allotments are sited and the adjoining riverbank.

5. PLANNED WORK FOR 2009

- 5.1 Key actions planned for 2009 are to;
- Continue to maximise the current available allotment space.
 - Investigate starter plots to give an indication to new tenants the hard work that is entailed in looking after a plot. These would be for people on the waiting list as a taster, before being allocated a plot.
 - Endeavour to secure future additional provision within existing financial constraints, particularly further self-composting toilets.
 - Introduce greater sustainability awareness.
 - Investigate water harvesting and other measures to reduce the use of treated water for crops.
 - Provide further security to perimeter fencing of vulnerable sites
 - Take further measures to try to prevent flooding of plots, specifically at Clapperbrook Lane.
 - Investigate the use of raised beds on otherwise unusable areas of allotment land.
 - Investigate whether charges could be made for allotment clearance
 - Install self shut-off taps near toilets for washing of hands.

Further details are provided in the Appendix.

6. RECOMMENDED that

- 1) progress is noted and future proposals contained in the action plan are approved.

HEAD OF CONTRACTS AND DIRECT SERVICES

S:PA/LP/ Committee/309SCC9
24.2.09

COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE

**Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)
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APPENDIX 1

ACTION PLAN 2009/10

TARGET AREA 1

1 Ensuring Sufficient Allotments

The improvements arising from the strategy have coincided with a nationwide interest in local and personal food production. As a result there are substantial waiting lists at all sites. In order to address existing and planned demand the following proposals are made.

Ref	Proposal	Targets	Action taken 2008/9	Actions identified 2009/10
1A	<u>Safeguarding existing provision.</u> Retain the level of allotments provision for Exeter.	Provide an allotment site within 1 mile radius of any residential location in Exeter, with regard to likely changes in population density arising from the Local Development Framework. This will require the active management of Planning Applications at a strategic level.	Trews Weir Allotments are for sale by the current owner. It is a requirement of the Act that all tenants have been served notice of intended repossession on 20 th September 2009.	Investigate the status of temporary sites and seek change of status to permanent site where it is the wider interest to do so. Identify threats or proposals that would adversely affect allotment provision, e.g. causes of sudden decline in tenancy level
1B	<u>Meeting changes in demand</u> Investigate whether any local or social demand deficiencies that occur due to demographic change can be met from existing open space or via Planning proposals (LDF and Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) Aim to provide an allotment site within a one-mile radius of any residential location, with regard to likely changes in population density arising from the Local Development Framework. Where demand is demonstrated or could be calculated.	Potential additional sites are being investigated where Allotments are heavily over- subscribed or there is lack of current provision. Potential ploholders are prepared to travel across the city to secure a plot. It makes sense to reduce the need to travel by vehicle as far as possible.	Unfortunately potential land identified in 2008 at St Loyes College was not forthcoming.	A Public Open Space Audit was undertaken as part of the management of Section 106 agreements and to meet PPG17 needs in 2004. This work needs reviewing in the light of allotment use since this time Plot planned population density by postcodes to match to existing provision, so that localised areas of shortfall area known. This information can be used by Planners to assist in using Planning controls to secure new allotment provision. Identify other potential sites outside the normal scope of locations.
1C	<u>Maximise the use of existing allotments.</u> Improve existing locations	Reassess further car parking areas, for example existing car parks on areas of good soil are returned to	List all unused areas of allotment sites to assess potential for	Direct assistance to improve sites e.g. installing drainage systems, the control of pernicious weeds by such

Ref	Proposal	Targets	Action taken 2008/9	Actions identified 2009/10
	<p>Examine alternative uses for sites or parts of sites that cannot be let</p>	<p>cultivation, using only areas of poor ground for car parking. Habitats enhanced by hedge planting and infilling unused corners with planting to aid security. Improvements to plot condition and soil where these factors are preventing take up of plots. Ensure that tenants actively work their plots, and plots with large percentages of uncultivated land are reclaimed to be let to others. This approach requires careful management to ensure those who use their plots as "Leisure Gardens" (e.g. young mums) are not penalised</p>	<p>alternative uses. Overgrown areas of land at Mincinglake Road Allotments have been cleared and let, providing 8 additional plots. Plot audit undertaken west of the river and unintended plots investigated. This resulted in the reduction of waiting lists and new tenants able to take up plots</p>	<p>measures as the use of large scale membranes and re-soiling. Take further measures to try to prevent flooded plots, specifically Clapperbrook Lane.</p>
1D	<p><u>Keeping options open to improve the service.</u> Consider offering alternative locations where available if tenants are in favour of moving even where demand and supply are met.</p>	<p>Ensure the wider needs for allotment provision are recognised as far as is possible within the Planning process. Investigate Partnership working with others, e.g. adjacent Local Authorities, other public bodies, the University, to use land for allotments on a leasing basis.</p>		<p>Meetings have been held with Planning officers to identify potential land use. The option of alternative locations is constantly under review When examining alternative uses to consider in particular: The possibility of generating income The potential for temporary uses.</p>

TARGET AREA 2

2 Promoting Allotment Gardening

Since the first Allotment Strategy was written in 2002 a significant change has occurred locally and nationally in that the opportunity to grow your own food fruit and vegetables is perceived as an extremely desirable and achievable benefit by a large proportion of the population. The subject has received publicity and endorsement from a wide spectrum of the news media. However, whilst the subject is receiving positive publicity in general there remains the need to provide good quality relevant information as assistance and guidance at a local level, especially for new or aspiring plot holders. The Council should be seen as a facilitator for peer and support groups. Allotment Associations have been revitalised with support from the Council, at a time when the Exeter Allotment Federation has disbanded.

Ref	Proposal	Targets	Action taken 2007/8	Actions identified 2009/10
2A	<p><u>Communication</u> Continue to improve on and target weaknesses in communication The production of easy to follow useful information, including: Pamphlets Display boards/posters at key times/sites on a wider range of sites Website information Links with other promotions, e.g. healthy living, organic growing, traditional skills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to use web site as prime information tool. This is easy to provide regular update link to other promotions Update and reproduce the series of information posters for notice boards Ensure information on allotment issues is clearly and readily accessible to the widest range of users. There must also be a focus on the means of keeping information updated, pointing towards e-communication, and on-site notice boards, which can also be used by associations and individuals. 	<p>With some sites applications suspended to further applications, clear and concise information is available to view on the internet and the opening of waiting lists were also invited from newspaper "adverts"</p> <p>User survey produced for inclusion with the March 2009 rent letter (see also 4D) Parks web site revised, and Allotments are listed under the "Active People" section. Most sites are equipped with notice boards</p>	<p>Allotment information will require crosschecking and updating following the major review of the Council's website</p>
2B	<p><u>Equalities</u> To make a wider range of plots available to suit different needs and ethics. This will include, where appropriate standard plots, half and quarter plots and group plots:</p>	<p>All sites have had a percentage of smaller plots. Managers are now alert to the possibility of non-standard plots and have identified a number suited for possible splitting when they become vacant.</p>	<p>A new project, to be completed by April 2009 at Ashwood Allotments will provide access for both able and disabled persons with raised bed provision being funded from a successful Disability discrimination Act bid in 2007.</p>	<p>Earmark plots nearest to entrances and car parking areas as those more suited to people with mobility restrictions. Identify more segregated "No Chemical" options</p>

Ref	Proposal	Targets	Action taken 2007/8	Actions identified 2009/10
		<p>Cater for those who wish for organic methods of gardening. Recognise the social element of allotments, particularly the benefits to those minorities for whom the cultivation of specific fruit and vegetables has particular value.</p> <p>To support tenants who have temporary disabilities caused by ill health</p>	<p>Advertise on the website and elsewhere the availability of non-standard plots</p> <p>A number of ethnic and refugee groups have been encouraged to take up allotment plots. These are frequently grouped together</p>	<p>Continued support for groups with learning / physical disabilities.</p>
2C	<p><u>Accessibility</u></p> <p>To identify and designate plots suitable for those with mobility difficulties or for organic use, where demand is indicated. This could be as part of the revitalisation of an area of vacant plots, as part of site improvement scheme or on a new allotment site.</p>	<p>Identify the potential for disabled use or demand for organic gardening at all allotment sites. By definition those with mobility difficulties drive or are driven to sites, therefore the most sensible approach at this level is to provide facilities at specific sites. Need to identify "lower level" disabilities so that those who have some difficulty in getting to or working their plots have some assistance.</p>	<p>At Ashwood Road Allotments in Alphington a new project, similar to that at Marypole, consisting of varying heights of raised beds is to be completed by April 2009. This wheelchair accessible facility will provide access for both able and disabled persons with provision being funded from a successful Disability discrimination Act bid in 2007.</p>	<p>Earmark plots nearest to entrances and car parking areas / water tanks as those more suited to people with mobility restrictions.</p> <p>Identify areas of allotments that could be utilised for raised beds for those wishing only small areas because of disability or other reasons.</p> <p>See also 1C</p>
2D	<p><u>Newbies</u></p> <p>Improve customer care and on site help for new or inexperienced plot holders and to reduce early drop out rates by:</p> <p>use of notice boards</p> <p>investigating the introduction of site representatives</p> <p>encouraging better partnership</p> <p><u>Appearances are important</u></p> <p>Control weed growth and reduce the spread of seed from vacant</p>	<p>Site representatives are in place on most sites</p> <p>Noticeboards are on most sites</p> <p>Continue to manage vacated plots prior to re-letting.</p>	<p>Allotment Associations have been revitalised in St Thomas and Cowick. Associations and Marypole Allotment Association is newly formed and receiving support from ECC.</p>	<p>Investigate "starter plots" to give an indication to new tenants the hard work that is entailed in looking after a plot. These would be for people on the waiting list as a "taster", before being allocated a plot.</p>
2E		<p>Positive management of sites has led to an increase in the number</p>	<p>Investigate ban of use of carpets as weed control as unsightly and</p>	<p>Promote the use of mulching mats in preference to</p>

Ref	Proposal	Targets	Action taken 2007/8	Actions identified 2009/10
	<p>plots. This will improve the appearance of the site both for tenants and passers by. Initially this will be done by strimmer but other methods, in keeping with the Council's Environmental Strategy and sustainable practices will be considered.</p>	<p>of plots available for letting. See 1C</p> <p>Contractors will be used at peak periods (when parks staff are busiest) to control vegetation on vacant plots.</p>	<p>potentially hazardous to soil.</p>	<p>herbicides.</p> <p>Continue the practice of keeping plots tidy which has been very successful in achieving high occupancy levels, in turn reducing maintenance costs.</p>
2F	<p>Fair distribution of facilities</p> <p>Prioritise available resources, in a balanced way, between maintaining promotional activity and the maintenance and improvement of site facilities.</p>	<p>Increase recycling options to reduce use of skips and landfill.</p> <p>A database of all structures in allotments has been set up, including trading huts to plan maintenance and improvements. (Trading huts provide the focus for the Allotment Associations.)</p> <p>Toilets are seen as vital in encouraging women and those with young families onto the sites.</p> <p>Roads and tracks need to be maintained in good condition to encourage access by all.</p>	<p>Investigate use of self composting toilets at sites where exceptional use is identified. Two sites, Hamlin Lane and Trews Weir now have this provision and funding will be sought to provide further facilities for the other sites.</p>	<p>Undertake a quality assessment of all sites to ensure a balanced and equitable approach to site management. This will assist in making a value judgement on the infrastructure and facilities on allotments.</p> <p>Identify lifespan of structures.</p>

TARGET AREA 3

3 Encouraging Sustainability

Allotment sites provide an increasingly valuable and noticeable area of green space, as gardens continue to reduce in size. However, the security needs of allotments mean that they cannot fully be a substitute for public open space.

The range of plant species on an allotment site means they are a rich habit for wildlife. Opportunities remain to develop wildlife value in hedging areas and sections that have no realistic prospect of coming back into use, but care is needed to ensure this is not to the detriment of allotment provision.

Within the cultivated area of allotments, principles of sustainable gardening are relevant. Many plot holders are very skilled and knowledgeable on issues of sustainability (it is an inherent aspect of allotmenting.) The Council has a commitment to minimise the use of pesticides (this includes insecticides, fungicides and weed killers). However this commitment will be approached by persuasion not coercion through rules and regulations, except where an area of plots is designated for 'organic' use.

Ref	Proposal	Targets	Action taken 2007/8	Actions identified 2009/10
3A	To encourage, and where possible, support good environmental practice including organic alternatives to fertilizers and pesticides.	See 2A Provide information giving advice on good organic practice to all allotment holders. There needs to be a culture of encouraging organic use and good practice that reduces the need for pesticides. As amateur pesticide use becomes more restricted, with approval for chemical formulations being withdrawn, plot holders will have to turn to other methods. The use of pesticides by plot holders will need to be more actively managed, and information made available on a regular basis, especially regarding the withdrawal of pesticides.	Bonfires are now banned throughout summer months and timing changes made to winter permissible timings with good results in an overall reduction in need for or complaints about them.	Continue the promotion of composting, no-dig techniques and similar alternative methods. Investigate the use of raised beds on otherwise unused areas of Allotment land..
3B	Encourage associations to draw on the expertise already in the allotment movement both locally and nationally through links with NSALG.	The City Council should act as a mentor and conduit for relevant information and guidance from a range of sources e.g. RHS, Henry Doubleday Research Assoc, Soil Association		Continue to provide updates for the associations at AGMs etc. The Allotments officer attends AGMs of the various Associations when available.
3C	To consider opportunities that arise for improved wildlife habitats in partnership with the allotment holders and their associations i.e. wildlife groups. In particular using	Wherever practical e.g. at boundaries and car parks, plots with severe perennial weed problems or in odd corners, hedges, plantations or simply grass banks are managed to enhance biodiversity.		Continue to enhance hedgerows where the opportunity arises Consider Willow and hazel coppicing (for use by plot holders)

3D	<p>natural features within the site, for example: hedging.</p> <p>Continue to support the development of the allotment associations and appropriate trading to support cost effective gardening and encourage organic or sustainable gardening.</p> <p>Opportunities for associations to sell surplus fruit and vegetables produced on allotments should be investigated. These may include sale days in allotment huts or the possible use of the Farmers Market.</p>	<p>Reduce unnecessary maintenance e.g. high levels of strimming</p> <p>There is not yet the organisational ability or support for selling surplus vegetables and fruit on a regular basis or even at local level. (E.g. at the trading huts). Ad hoc selling or bartering does go on and could be actively encouraged.</p>		<p>Officers have begun to investigate the feasibility of sale at markets and to appropriate local organisations</p>
3E	<p>Supply and use of water</p>	<p>Be more pro active in promoting and encouraging better sustainable use of water</p>	<p>Timing of cropping to maximise soil water Use of drought resistant species and varieties promoted</p>	<p>The use of rain water capture and storage is being investigated Composted material is made available on a regular basis from the Green Waste tip Investigate and identify the possibilities to abstract water from underground sources. Install self shut-off taps near toilets for washing of hands.</p>
3F	<p>Recycling</p>	<p>Investigate opportunities to promote/reward recycling initiatives</p>		<p>Ongoing</p>

TARGET AREA 4

4 Cultivating Good Administration

The need for good records and administration is essential for the efficient running of this public service and the development of a partnership approach to management.

At present all accept one site; (Trews Weir) is managed directly by the Council. This self-management scheme has been a success due to the hard work and commitment of this group. It may never be suitable for all sites or desired by all allotment holders. However potential may exist if the commitment of a group is strong enough but support from the council would also be needed.

The recent development of the allotment associations could provide a platform to encourage the optimum participation for each group, at the level with which they are comfortable.

All records are maintained on a database subject to the Data Protection Act 1998. It would be beneficial if this could be transferred to the Asset Management system. If improved and meaningful participation is to be achieved and informed decisions made it is important that the way in which information is coded and held is progressively improved.

The improvements over the lifetime of the first Allotment Strategy has shown the benefits of better on-site customer care, forward planning, financial management, promotion of sites to a wider audience and supporting the development of the associations.

Ref	Proposal	Target	Action taken 2007/8	Actions identified 2009/10
4A	To encourage the Allotment Associations to be active in providing a useful forum for their plot holders, in particular to have healthy and appropriate trading services to reduce the costs of allotment gardening, to accurately represent the views of their members in resolving problems, prioritising any future spend and initiatives.	Associations and Allotment Groups are beneficial on a number of levels, and should be actively encouraged in areas where there are currently no Allotment Associations or similar groups. See 2D.	Continued to encourage and assist existing Associations to work well and in partnership with each other.	Continue association assistance
4B	To carry out basic essential maintenance to the infrastructure of the sites and to consult the associations in the prioritisation of available funds for improvements.	Build on successes Identify weaknesses	Track improvements carried out at several sites, inc. Cowick and Guys/Hylton.	See 2F Use the lessons learnt to inform other improvement programmes. Complete the assessment of water supply. Undertake "reality checks" to check quality of repairs and improvements
4C	Continue to improve clarity of accounting and	Make use of available IT, e.g. GIS,	Database amended to	Map sites onto GIS

Ref	Proposal	Target	Action taken 2007/8	Actions identified 2009/10
	decision-making and to investigate integrated computer system incorporating a Geographical Information System (GIS) for modern management of the service.	IPAQ etc	include all changes of tenancy for all sites	Work towards expanding the use of Asset Management software
4D	Continue to improve the on site customer care for all plot holders	Site representatives are in place on most sites (see 2D)	Undertake another user survey to complement and update the 1996 data. (see also 2A)	Use data from survey to identify trends and changes in comparison to earlier surveys
4E	To review the tenancy agreement periodically, at least every five years. The purpose of this will be to ensure that the service continues to develop and the tenancies/leases reflect the current vision for allotments.	The New Rules and Regulations were formally adopted in 2007.	Monitor effectiveness (e.g. through AAM liaison meetings)	
4F	To provide support and advice to groups who wish to move towards self-management either wholly or in part.	Maintain liaison with existing groups Consider self-management as part of any partnering arrangement with other bodies especially if this results in broader allotment provision.		Maintain liaison with existing groups
4G	Ensure all income is collected and banked, and all payments made within guideline timescales.	Continue assistance of Audit to ensure accuracy and probity in rent collection and banking		

TARGET AREA 5

5 Maintaining Adequate Resources

There has been substantial investment in making improvements to site facilities, information and promotional activity.

Appendix 7 gives a summary breakdown of the budget currently provided by the Council. As at 2008/9, this was £42,260 for the year, supplemented by the budgeted rental income of £21,750, giving a total of £64,010 available for the allotment service.

Of this £19,050 is for maintenance and improvements. This part of the budget needs careful prioritisation as it is needed for reactive and planned as well as cyclical grounds maintenance on the sites. (Direct comparison of rents is difficult as local authorities have different discount systems. The current charges and discounts were shown in Appendix 8 of the Strategy with some comparative data from other local authorities.)

From time to time there may be opportunities to obtain some external funding through Government, European Union or Lottery Grants. Other opportunities for income generation may emerge, for example the various Lottery funding initiatives for health related promotions and community schemes. Funding has been achieved through the Council's Equalities funding.

Neither of these options is likely to provide the core funding required to maintain the service. It may be possible to reduce the budgetary requirements of allotments by increasing rent, as demand currently exceeds supply. However, this could be seen as counter-productive in terms of community health, and would adversely affect the very people who most need allotments.

The proposals are:-

Ref	Proposal	Targets	Action taken 2007/8	Action identified 2009/10
5A	Prioritise improvement projects with an annually revised action plan, drawn up in consultation with the AAMs, Field representatives and allotment associations. The Council will consider the allotment priorities each year against other projects also requiring funding and the capital resources available	Allotment infrastructure improvements targeted those issues of greatest concern to plot holders. The improved communications between field representatives, AAMs and the APEO has resulted in an understanding of prioritisation and phasing of works.	New roof for Guys/Hylton trading shed with water harvesting.	Continue the long term planning and phasing of improvement schemes. See 2F
5B	Seek opportunities for external funding for improvement or promotional projects and apply as found appropriate	Continue to seek out additional funding streams, with a particular focus on equalities and sustainability.		Continue to seek out additional funding streams, with a particular focus on equalities and sustainability.
5C	Due consideration and consultation will be given to the possibility of generating some income from the sale of non-viable sites or parts of sites.	Consideration to be given to any proposals that would be of long term overall benefit to allotment provision, e.g. land swaps		Investigate whether charges could be made for allotment clearance
5D	The fees and charges will be reviewed from time to time, but with the value of low cost food production, healthy activity and social inclusion in mind.	Allotment rents are increased every two years in line with RPI. Continue to increase rents as appropriate. Consider the value of rent increases above inflation to fund more expensive capital improvements e.g. water management	Rent increases for 2010 are set above inflation in order to fund further allotment infrastructure improvements	

EXETER CITY COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - COMMUNITY 10 MARCH 2009

COMMUNITY SERVICES STEWARDSHIP TO 31 DECEMBER 2008

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report advises Members of any major differences by management unit to the revised budget.

2. STEWARDSHIP TO 31 DECEMBER 2008

- 2.1 The five-yearly revaluation of Council properties has led to revised notional depreciation charges, which are reflected as appropriate in the outturn variance for each management unit. The estimates for 2009/10 will reflect the revised valuations. The current forecast suggests after adjusting for AIM slippage and net movements from reserves that net expenditure for this committee will decrease from the revised budget by a total of £241,320, which represents a variation of 1.42% from the revised budget.

- 2.3 The main variations by management unit are detailed below:

	£
2008-2009 REVISED ESTIMATE	16,957,340
81A1 ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION	(50,130)
<p>A vacancy in the litter enforcement team has resulted in a net saving.</p> <p>A backdated adjustment to the Supporting People grant has been received.</p> <p>The depreciation charge in this unit has decreased (see note 2.1)</p>	
81A2 CLEANSING SERVICES	(61,380)
<p>A Local Public Service Agreement in respect of Street Cleansing will result in the receipt of a Performance Reward Grant.</p> <p>Efficiency savings are anticipated in the Street Cleansing and Refuse Collection services.</p> <p>Electricity costs in Public Conveniences are expected to be less than the estimate.</p> <p>The depreciation charge in this unit has increased (see note 2.1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action Point – the 2009/10 estimates will reflect the reduced costs in these services. 	
81A3 LICENSING, FOOD, HEALTH & SAFETY	(79,710)
<p>Savings have arisen in respect of vacant posts in the unit. Additional income has been generated from the Licensing activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action Point – the 2009/10 estimates will reflect the reduced staffing costs in this service. 	

81A4	TECHNICAL AND AGENDA 21	3,340
	Net income from an external contract is expected to be less than the estimated level.	
81A5	WATERWAYS & COUNTRYSIDE	34,510
	Agency staff costs have been incurred due to the need to cover long-term sickness.	
	Additional costs are expected to arise in respect of maintenance of the Canal and materials for buoys. A proportion of the additional costs relate to payment of £17,500 for pontoon equipment; the budget for this equipment was included in the previous financial year.	
	Boat maintenance costs and other fleet costs will exceed the estimate. These costs will be offset by an expected increase in income received from canal licences.	
	Further costs are expected to arise due to the ongoing work towards the new harbour authority; these additional costs will be funded from general reserves as approved by Executive in June 2003.	
	The cost of utilities is expected to exceed the estimate.	
	Staff costs in Countryside Services will exceed the estimate due to the extension of a post within the section; savings on a post within the Community Outreach service (81B5) will cover the additional costs. This overspend was approved by Executive in September 2008 as part of the Leisure and Museums restructure.	
	A saving is expected on the AIM recharge to this management unit	
81A6	GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	33,260
	Operational costs will exceed the estimate due to weather conditions and the impact of high levels of long term sickness.	
	There has been a restructure affecting this service and Cemeteries & Crematorium (81B2), which will result in additional costs in this unit and a corresponding saving in 81B2.	
	The post of Temporary Arboricultural Assistant has been vacant resulting in reduced staffing costs in the tree management service which will lead to a reduction in the amount required to be transferred from the earmarked reserve.	
	The depreciation charge in this unit has decreased (see note 2.1)	
81A7	MUSEUMS SERVICE	(29,760)
	Staff costs are expected to be less than the estimates as a result of vacancies in this service.	
	Utility costs at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum (Royal Albert Memorial Museum) are expected to exceed the estimate.	
	National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) in respect of the Royal Albert	

	<p>Memorial Museum and the new museum store are expected to be less than estimated. In addition a NNDR refund has been received in respect of the RAMM due to a rates revaluation for a period prior to the museum closing for redevelopment</p> <p>Expenditure on display expenses, marketing and event promotion are expected to be less than the estimate</p> <p>There has been a reduction in income from a non-operational property and from day admissions</p> <p>The depreciation charge in this unit has increased (see note 2.1).</p> <p>A saving is expected on the AIM recharge to this management unit</p>	
81A8	CONTRACTED SPORTS FACILITIES	142,370
	<p>Expenditure has been incurred in respect of backdated utility charges in for the contracted sports facilities as per the Leisure Management Contact, this additional expenditure will be funded from an earmarked reserve</p> <p>Additional costs have arisen in respect of NNDR.</p> <p>The depreciation charge in this unit has increased (see note 2.1)</p>	
81A9	OTHER SPORTS FACILITIES	(3,430)
	<p>Savings are expected on the maintenance and Non-Domestic Rates budgets at Clifton Hill Driving Range, this has been partially offset by a reduction in rental income from the site as per the new lease agreement.</p>	
81B2	CEMETERIES & CREMATORIUM	(27,580)
	<p>There has been a restructure affecting this service and Grounds Maintenance (81A6), which will result in a saving in this unit and corresponding additional costs in 81A6.</p> <p>Income from burials is expected to be less than estimated, but this will be substantially offset by increased income from headstone fees and from the Gardens of Remembrance</p> <p>The depreciation charge in this unit has decreased (see note 2.1)</p>	
81B3	PROPERTIES	(20,790)
	<p>Additional net income is expected to arise in this service.</p> <p>The depreciation charge in this unit has increased (see note 2.1).</p> <p>A saving is expected on the AIM recharge to this management unit</p>	
81B5	COMMUNITY OUTREACH	45,830
	<p>A saving is expected on staffing costs due to a vacant post; part of this saving will be used to cover additional staff costs in the Countryside Service (81A5).</p>	

Income from the scrapstore will exceed the estimate; this increased income is offset by an expected overspend on the marketing and events budgets within the management unit.

The additional costs in respect of the Leisure and Museums restructuring have been included.

Additional costs are expected in respect of the Splash Scheme, the additional costs will be partly funded from an earmarked reserve.

81B6 RECYCLING 155,020

A saving has arisen on staffing costs due to vacant posts.

Income from the sale of recycled materials is expected to exceed the estimates. It is however possible that the recent falls in prices for recycled materials may affect this service in the remainder of the financial year.

Additional income will arise from the Performance Reward Grant.

The depreciation charge in this unit has increased (see note 2.1)

81B9 ADMINISTRATION SERVICE 11,240

Savings in staffing costs were expected to arise as a result of the introduction of the new corporate financial system, and a target saving was incorporated into the estimate for this service. However, the staffing reductions anticipated have not yet been fully realised as a result of some initial problems with the system, and the saving is therefore expected to be less than originally expected.

81C1	HOME AID	(2,460)
	<p>Fee income in respect of disabled facility and renovation grant work undertaken by the DCHA Care and repair team is expected to exceed the budget. The fee income is due to ECC as part of the Devon wide Home Improvement Agency contract.</p>	
81C2	ADVISORY SERVICES	76,290
	<p>Income from benefits is expected to exceed the estimates, partially offset by increased costs of bed and breakfast accommodation. An additional contracted property will mean that the serviced temporary accommodation estimate will be exceeded; this additional property is expected to reduce the use of bed and breakfast accommodation in the long term.</p> <p>Expenditure on handing back private sector leased properties is expected to exceed the estimate; this additional expenditure has been offset by an anticipated saving on reactive repairs to the properties.</p> <p>Additional expenditure on agency staff has arisen, which is partly offset by savings from vacant posts.</p> <p>Expenditure will be incurred in respect of the Private Sector Housing Options scheme. This scheme offers incentives and grants to private sector landlords to encourage them to let homes to Council nominees; it also offers incentives to promote lodging schemes and the use of empty homes in the private sector. The additional expenditure in relation to this scheme is being funded by the transfer of a commuted sum from the capital programme.</p> <p>The depreciation charge in this unit has increased (see note 2.1)</p>	
81C3	HOUSING PARTNERSHIP	80,570
	<p>Additional expenditure will be incurred due to the implementation of the Registered Social Landlord downsizing scheme; this expenditure will be funded from the transfer of a commuted sum from the capital programme.</p> <p>Agency staffing costs in respect of the EXtralet scheme are expected to exceed the budget.</p> <p>A transfer from the Empty Homes Initiative earmarked reserve will be made to cover additional expenditure incurred on staffing costs for the initiative.</p> <p>Expenditure in respect of the Housing Market Assessment Survey has been incurred; this expenditure will be funded from an earmarked reserve.</p>	
81C4	PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING	(10,110)
	<p>Savings have arisen in respect of staffing and administrative costs. Additional income is expected to arise from the issue of licences.</p>	

81C6 CONTRACTS AND DIRECT SERVICES

3,410

The costs of this unit are fully recharged to its clients, and there is therefore no direct impact on this committee. A depreciation charge has been made to this unit for which there was no budget.

2008-2009 EXPECTED FINAL OUTTURN

17,225,570

**EXPECTED TRANSFERS TO / FROM RESERVES
AIM BUDGETS TO BE CARRIED FORWARD**

**(206,240)
110,000**

EXPECTED TOTAL NET EXPENDITURE

17,129,330

3. RECOMMENDED

That Scrutiny Committee – Community note this report.

DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY
AND ENVIRONMENT

HEAD OF TREASURY SERVICES

S:LP/Committee/309SCC12
24.2.09

**COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE
CORPORATE SERVICES DIRECTORATE**

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

None

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP

01 APRIL 2008 TO 31 DECEMBER 2008

ANNUAL BUDGET	SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET	REVISED BUDGET	CODE	CURRENT OUTTURN FORECAST	FORECAST VARIANCE
1,313,000	0	1,313,000	81A1 ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION	1,262,870	(50,130)
3,705,600	25,680	3,731,280	81A2 CLEANSING SERVICES	3,637,640	(93,640)
529,970	0	529,970	81A3 LICENSING, FOOD, HEALTH & SAFETY	450,260	(79,710)
294,450	0	294,450	81A4 TECHNICAL & AGENDA 21	297,790	3,340
770,050	21,000	791,050	81A5 WATERWAYS & COUNTRYSIDE	825,560	34,510
1,898,440	26,220	1,924,660	81A6 GROUND MAINTENANCE	1,957,920	33,260
1,526,150	60,700	1,586,850	81A7 MUSEUMS SERVICE	1,557,090	(29,760)
1,228,320	1,500	1,229,820	81A8 CONTRACTED SPORTS FACILITIES	1,372,190	142,370
103,750	1,500	105,250	81A9 NON-CONTRACTED SPORTS FACILITIES	101,820	(3,430)
348,770	124,300	473,070	81B2 CEMETERIES & CREMATORIUM	445,490	(27,580)
55,020	1,750	56,770	81B3 PROPERTIES	35,980	(20,790)
474,840	0	474,840	81B5 COMMUNITY OUTREACH	520,670	45,830
652,460	0	652,460	81B6 RECYCLING	807,480	155,020
0	3,000	3,000	81B9 ADMINISTRATION SERVICE	14,240	11,240
35,490	0	35,490	81C1 HOME AID	33,030	(2,460)
848,610	0	848,610	81C2 ADVISORY SERVICES	924,900	76,290
2,051,260	0	2,051,260	81C3 HOUSING PARTNERSHIP	2,131,830	80,570
767,770	13,900	781,670	81C4 PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING	771,560	(10,110)
73,840	0	73,840	81C5 SUNDRY LANDS MAINTENANCE	73,840	0
0	0	0	81C6 CONTRACT & BUILDING SERVICES	3,410	3,410
0	0	0	81C7 DIRECTOR COMMUNITY/ENVIRONMENT	0	0
16,677,790	279,550	16,957,340	NET EXPENDITURE	17,225,570	268,230
			CAPITAL VARIANCES		
			RESERVE MOVEMENT VARIANCES		
			AIM SLIPPAGE		
		(82,090)	TRANSFERS TO / (FROM) EARMARKED RESERVES - 81A9	(66,160)	(503,400)
			81A6	(75,090)	(116,150)
			81B5	(1,360)	110,000
		(8,000)	81A3	(7,980)	
			81C3	(45,650)	
			AIM BUDGETS CARRIED FORWARD TO 2009/10 - 81A5	69,000	
			81A7	14,000	
			81B3	10,000	
			81B6	17,000	
		16,867,250	OUTTURN AFTER ADJUSTING FOR MOVEMENTS ON RESERVES ETC	17,129,330	

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EXETER CITY COUNCIL
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - COMMUNITY
10 MARCH 2008

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT
STEWARDSHIP TO DECEMBER 2008

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Members of any major differences by management unit to the outturn forecast for the first nine months of the financial year up to 31 December 2008.

2. STEWARDSHIP TO 30 DECEMBER 2008

- 2.1 During this period the total of the variances indicate that there will be a net surplus of £25,290 and this will be used to increase the Revenue Contributions to Capital works. It is estimated that the working balance will remain at £2,848,591 at 31 March 2009.

- 2.2 The main variations by management unit are detailed below: £
- 2008-2009 ESTIMATED TRANSFER TO THE WORKING BALANCE 0

5A1 MANAGEMENT

There are saving on salaries due to various vacant posts between April and June, the Housing Operations Manager post was vacant until 1 July 2008. This has been partly offset by agency staff costs covering sickness and short term vacancies. (720)

The expected increase in utility costs has been reflected in the figures, and costs in respect of tenants' removal and legal expenses; tenant participation; and equipment tools and materials are expected to exceed the budget.

Transport costs are also expected to exceed the budget due to essential user lump sum now being assigned to various posts. There is a reduction in the costs that can be offset against the capital receipts pooling as a result of the reduction in Right To Buy sales.

There is additional Supporting People Grant income in respect of sheltered accommodation back dated to April 2003; this is due to previous changes of tenancies.

5A4 REPAIRS FUND CONTRIBUTION

The overall savings from HRA services has enabled an increase in the Revenue Contributions to Capital works associated with achieving the Decent Homes Standard and fire risk works required on sheltered accommodation 25,290

85A6 CAPITAL CHARGES	7.130
Additional costs have been incurred in respect of the redemption of a finance lease	
85B1 GOVERNMENT SUBSIDY	(9,700)
There has been a small reduction in the HRA Subsidy payment for 2008/09.	
85B2 INTEREST	(22,000)
There is an increase in investment interest as a result of the performance of the investment fund manager. It is estimated that there will be a reduction in the mortgage interest as a result of additional early redemptions in respect of mortgage debt.	
2008-2009 SECOND QUARTER FORECAST INCREASE IN WORKING BALANCE	0

3. ACTION PLAN

The budgets for recoverable staffing costs in respect of Right To Buy administration will be further reduced to reflect the estimated reduction in RTB sales in 2009/10.

4. RECOMMENDED

That the Scrutiny Committee – Community note this report.

DIRECTOR CORPORATE SERVICES
DIRECTOR COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT

S:PA/LP/ Committee/309SCC13
24.2.09

CORPORATE SERVICES DIRECTORATE
COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE

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

1. None

APRIL 08 TO DECEMBER 08

Code	Approved Annual Budget	Current Outturn Forecast	Movement
	£	£	£
85A1	Management	2,894,180	(720)
85A3	Sundry Lands Maintenance	279,160	0
85A4	Repairs Fund Contribution	7,761,130	25,290
85A6	Capital Charges	23,640	7,130
85A8	Rents	(14,905,670)	0
85B1	Government Subsidy	4,415,860	(9,700)
85B2	Interest	(468,300)	(22,000)
85B4	Variance in Working Balance	0	0
	Net Expenditure	0	0
	Working Balance	2,848,591	2,848,591

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EXETER CITY COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - COMMUNITY 10 MARCH 2009

NATIONAL PERFORMANCE INDICATOR RESULTS 2007/8 HOW EXETER'S RESULTS COMPARE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 A full analysis of Exeter's performance indicator results for 2007/08 has been sent to Members under a separate cover. This report provides an overview of the performance of those services covered by this committee. The other two Scrutiny Committees will receive a similar report covering services within their remit.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Exeter's performance indicator results for 2007/08 were published in the Corporate Plan. The Audit Commission subsequently published audited comparative data in December 2008.
- 2.2 The graphs contained within the detailed analysis compare Exeter's results against authorities in the Council's benchmarking group and therefore provide a comparison against other broadly similar councils. (Audit Commission family grouping)
- 2.3 The graphs have been arranged in ascending order. Exeter's results are highlighted on each.
- 2.4 Results for BVPI 78a (Average time to process new benefit claims) and BVPI 78b (Average time taken to process change in circumstances) are still being verified by the Audit Commission and as a result, have not yet been published.
- 2.5 The Audit Commission uses national upper and lower quartile figures as benchmarks against which to judge service performance. The detailed analysis also shows quartile figures for all English district councils against each graph. Services should generally be aiming to be in the top quartile (ie the best performing 25% of councils in the country).

3. RESULTS OVERVIEW

- 3.1 Exeter is in the top quartile for 19 indicators out of a total of 59 where comparisons are possible (32%), compared to 20 out of 65 (30%) last year. It is in the bottom quartile for 10 indicators, compared with 9 last year.
- 3.2 This year has seen improvement in 25 indicators with 6 of these achieving a higher quartile rating than last year. The 6 indicators which have achieved a higher quartile rating are within the Community and Environment Directorate. However, 25 indicators show a lower performance than last year, with 12 achieving a lower quartile rating than last year. With the exception of Community Safety, there is only one indicator reported to the Community Scrutiny Committee which falls in the bottom quartile.
- 3.3 Out of the 37 comparable indicators that fall within the remit of this Scrutiny Committee, 22 have improved since last year, 6 have stayed the same and 9 have poorer performance. These are BVPIs 64, 66b, 184b, 202, 212, 86, 218a, 170a and 170b. More detail is given below on each of these.

Empty Homes

- 3.4 The number of private sector vacant dwellings that are returned into occupation (BVPI 64) was 29 in 2007/08, compared with 31 in 2006/07. However, Exeter has remained in the second national quartile for this indicator and is fourth in its family group. This indicator will no longer be collected after 07/08.

Council Housing

- 3.5 4.20% of local authority tenants had more than seven weeks of gross rent arrears (BVPI 66b), compared with 4.06% in 2006/07. Exeter has remained in the second quartile, but the actual percentage figure reported has increased for the last three years. The percentage of tenants with more than seven weeks of gross rent arrears has marginally increased because Exeter is committed to sustaining tenancies and providing a supportive service. The actual arrears on housing rents are lower this year than last .
- 3.6 The percentage change in the proportion of non-decent homes (BVPI 184b) fell from 26.7% in 2006/07 to 18.2% in 2007/08, but still maintains Exeter's position in the second national quartile. The Council is still on track to achieve full Decent Homes compliance by the target of December 2010, and this has been verified by the Department of Communities and Local Government. This reflects the approach we are taking in moving towards achieving decent homes standard.
- 3.7 The average time taken to re-let local authority housing (BVPI 212) increased from 24 days to 25 days, resulting in Exeter dropping from the top to the second quartile. This is due to the extent of repairs that the Council undertakes between tenants.

Homelessness

- 3.8 The number of people sleeping rough on a single night (BVPI 202) in Exeter rose from 10 to 15 in 2007/08. Exeter is still in the bottom national quartile. Lancaster and Lincoln are top of the family group for this indicator, with zero figures. This is the only indicator from the Community & Environment Directorate to fall within the bottom quartile.

Environment and Environmental Health

- 3.9 Out of the 17 comparable indicators reported under the headings of 'Environment' and 'Environmental Health', 12 have improved since last year, 3 have stayed the same and 2 have performed worse than last year.
- 3.10 The cost of waste collection per household (BVPI 86) has increased slightly from £49.43 in 2006/07 to £50.44 in 2007/08. Exeter remains in the second quartile.
- 3.11 Exeter investigated 90% of new reports of abandoned vehicles within 24 hours (BVPI 218a), falling from 93.10% in 2006/07. As a result, Exeter has dropped from the second to the third quartile for this indicator. However, the percentage of abandoned vehicles removed within 24 hours from the point at which the authority is legally entitled to remove the vehicle rose from 97.65% in 2006/07 to 100% in 2007/08, moving Exeter from the second to the top quartile. Both of these indicators will no longer be collected after 2007/08.

Culture

- 3.12 With regard to museum visits (BVPI 170a), Exeter continues to remain in the top quartile. However, the actual number of visits to/usage of museums dropped from 2371 per 1000 population in 2006/07 to 1920 in 2007/08. The Council anticipated a drop in

performance due to the closure of the Royal Albert Memorial Museum (RAMM) and lower targets were set to account for this.

- 3.13 The number of pupils in organised school trips visiting museums & galleries (BVPI 170c) rose from 15617 in 2006/07 to 20400 in 2007/08 maintaining Exeter's position in the top quartile.

Community Safety

- 3.14 The City Council is a Responsible Authority agency within the Community Safety Partnership (Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership). The measurement of performance of CDRPs is by comparison with family groups, but the family group for Exeter CDRP is different from the family group for Exeter City Council BVPIs. The accompanying graph booklet therefore shows comparison with both family groups.
- 3.15 The number of domestic burglaries per 1,000 household (BVPI 126) dropped from 11.8 in 2006/07 to 10.5 in 2007/08. Exeter CDRP currently sits 4th in its family group (out of 14).
- 3.16 The number of violent crimes per 1000 population dropped from 21.7 in 2006/07 to 20.2 in 2007/08. Exeter CDRP reports the lowest number of violent crimes in its family group.
- 3.17 There were 0.6 robberies per 1000 population (BVPI 127b) in Exeter, a slight decrease from 0.7 in 2005/06.
- 3.18 Vehicle crime per 1000 population (BVPI 128) dropped from 13.3 in 2006/07 to 9.8 in 2007/08. Although Exeter remains in the bottom national quartile, it is a significant improvement on last year.
- 3.19 It is encouraging to note that all of the comparable community safety indicators have improved since last year.

4. RECOMMENDED

- (1) That Members consider the report and indicate whether they wish to receive any further information on any particular issue(s).

HAZEL BALL
DIRECTOR COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT

S:LP/Committee/309SCC14
24.2.09

COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)
Background Papers used in compiling the report:

- 1) National Performance Indicator Results - December 2008

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