

CUSTOMER FOCUS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date: Thursday 30 November 2023

Time: 5.30 pm

Venue: Civic Centre

Members are invited to attend the above meeting.

If you have an enquiry regarding any items on this agenda, please contact Sharon Sissons, Democratic Services Officer (Committees) on 01392 265115.

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

Membership -

Vizard (Chair), Rees (Deputy Chair), Atkinson, Begley, Fullam, Hannaford, Harvey, Holland, Knott, Miller, Patrick, Sparling, Wardle and Warwick

Agenda

1 Minutes

(Pages 5 -
26)

To approve and sign the minutes of the Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee held on 5 October 2023.

2 Apologies

3 Declarations of Interest

Councillors are reminded of the need to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests that relate to business on the agenda and which have not already been included in the register of interests, before any discussion takes place on the item. Unless the interest is sensitive, you must also disclose the nature of the interest. In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, you must then leave the room and must not participate in any further discussion of the item. Councillors requiring clarification should seek the advice of the Monitoring Officer prior to the day of the meeting.

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

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

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

5 Questions from the Public under Standing Order No. 19

Details of questions should be notified to the Corporate Manager Democratic and Civic Support via the committee.services@exeter.gov.uk email by 10.00am at least three working days prior to the meeting. For this meeting any questions must be submitted by 10.00am on Monday 27 November 2023.

For details about how to speak at Committee, please click the following link - <https://exeter.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/councillors-and-meetings/public-speaking-at-meetings/overview/>

6 Questions from Members of the Council under Standing Order No. 20

To receive questions from Members of the Council to the relevant Portfolio Holders for this Scrutiny Committee. The Portfolio Holders are:-

Councillor Denning - Portfolio Holder for Council Housing Development and Support Services

Councillor Foale - Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Democratic Services and Environmental Health

Councillor Pearce - Portfolio Holder for Communities and Homelessness Prevention

Councillor Williams - Portfolio Holder for Place and City Management

Advance questions from Members relating to the Portfolio Holders should be notified to the Democratic Services Manager via the committee.services@exeter.gov.uk email.

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|---|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 7 | Update from the Portfolio Holder for Council Housing Development and Support Services | (Pages 27
- 28) |
| 8 | Council Housing Strategy

Report of the Director City Development | (Pages 29
- 60) |
| 9 | Tenancy Policy

Report of the Director City Development | (Pages 61
- 82) |

Please see for noting a link to the schedule of future business proposed for the Council which can be viewed on the Council's web site. This on-line document is a source for Members to raise issues at Scrutiny on forthcoming Executive agenda items:-

<https://exeter.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/councillors-and-meetings/forward-plan-of-executive-decisions/>

Also attached is a draft work plan of future scrutiny items.

Should Members wish to raise issues in respect of future business please notify Sharon Sissons in advance of the meeting.

Date of Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee will be held on **Thursday 1 February 2024** at 5.30 pm in the Civic Centre.

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CUSTOMER FOCUS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

5 October 2023

Present:

Councillor Matthew Vizard (Chair)

Councillors Rees, Begley, Fullam, Hannaford, Holland, Miller, Patrick, Sparling, Wardle and Warwick

Apologies:

Councillors Atkinson, Ellis-Jones and Harvey

Also present:

Director Net Zero Exeter & City Management, Service Lead Housing Needs & Homelessness and Democratic Services Officer (HB)

In attendance:

Councillor Denning	Portfolio Holder for Council Housing Development and Support Services
Councillor Pearce	Portfolio Holder for Communities and Homelessness Prevention
Councillor Williams	Portfolio Holder for Place and City Management
Councillor Foale	Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Democratic Services and Environmental Health

24 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee held on 29 June 2023 were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair as correct.

25 **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made by Members.

26 **Questions from the Public under Standing Order No. 19**

No questions from members of the public were received.

27 **Questions from Members of the Council under Standing Order No 20**

In accordance with Standing Order No. 20, the questions below to the Portfolio Holder for Council Housing Development and Support Services - Councillor Denning, the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Homelessness Prevention - Councillor Pearce and the Portfolio Holder for Place and City Management - Councillor Williams, had been submitted by Councillors Atkinson, Moore, Miller and Rees and had been circulated in advance to Members of the Committee. In the absence of Councillor Atkinson, her questions were read out by the Chair. The responses of the Portfolio Holders are set out in italics.

Question to the Portfolio Holder for Council Housing Development and Support Services - Councillor Denning

Councillor Atkinson

In July 2023, the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 became law. This Act updates the Regulator of Social Housing's responsibilities and powers. Presently the Regulator can only investigate landlords such as the City Council when someone refers a complaint that passes a threshold that the conduct complained of "seriously harms (or could seriously harm) tenants."

The Act means that, starting in April 2024, the Regulator can more routinely and proactively, take action in a wider range of circumstances under the consumer standards.

Proposals for amending the standards registered providers must meet so tenants live in safe, quality homes, have choice and protection, and can hold landlords to account are currently being consulted. This consultation closes at 6:00pm on 17 October 2023.

Has the City Council responded to the consultation and what is our view about whether the proposed new standard will improve healthy living in Exeter's Council Homes?

Has the Regulator investigated a complaint that a landlord has breached the consumer regulation requirement that the conduct harms or could seriously harm tenants?

Response

The Council housing team are aware of the consultation from the Regulator for Social Housing and have been preparing a response to the consultation which has yet to be completed and agreed. As stated this consultation has to be submitted by the 17 October and will be agreed by the Portfolio Holder before being dispatched.

The regulation is welcome by the Council as it will ensure all social landlords in the city have a clear set of standards which they must comply with in a number of areas including complaints and the quality of homes. With regards to the council housing the Council has a fully costed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan which includes works and maintenance in relation to health and safety and compliance priorities. These standards are already part of our programme and service delivery and will be continually monitored to ensure we comply in all areas.

The Regulator has not investigated any complaints in relation to the consumer standard for the housing service and their main powers in relation to Local Authorities with retained stock come into power in April 2024.

In the period leading up to the new regulation the housing team are working on a review to ensure full compliance with the new consumer standards which will be considered by the Council Housing and Development Advisory Board once completed.

From Councillor Moore

The all parliamentary group for Council Housing is conducting an Inquiry and is looking for views on some or all of the following:-

- How important is council housing in addressing local/general housing need?;
- Does your area still have directly-own council housing? If not, do you think new/acquired council homes are needed? Please say why?;
- If your area has council housing, what condition is it in, what investment is needed, and what is stopping that investment?;
- What is your experience of stock transfer, Private Finance Initiative (PFI), Arm's Length Management Organisation (ALMO), Special Purchase Vehicle (SPV)s or other alternative mechanisms to build and manage council (or former council) housing?; and
- What do you think we need to do to secure a new generation of good-quality council homes?

Would the Portfolio Holder consider coordinating a response on behalf of the Council by the deadline?

Response

The following is the response the Council gave to the Inquiry.

Re: All-Parliamentary Group for Council Housing

Thank you for your correspondence asking for our views in relation to Council Housing which we welcome the opportunity to provide.

Exeter City Council is proud to have retained the council housing stock with approximately 4,800 homes provided at a social rent. As the largest social landlord in the city we believe it has a critical role in the provision of affordable housing to its residents. Council housing makes up 10% of the homes in the city and therefore also plays a key role in delivering great neighbourhoods and communities for residents to live in.

In terms of the stock condition of the Council's properties, we have a costed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan and will seek to address all maintenance priorities during that period. This will include an ambitious retrofit programme which, to date, has seen us complete full retrofit works to over 700 properties and a resulting carbon reduction of the properties and energy efficiencies of between 40% and 60% for the respective tenants. Given our dependence upon rental income for delivering our service, and the fact that our costs are generally driven by a CPI increase, there has to be a close link between the two. Where there is a gap, as in the rent cap this year that gives us an ongoing shortfall and reduces the base figure that we apply future a percentage increases to.

In order to demonstrate how important council housing is in addressing local general housing need we would offer the following local information:

- *According to our housing needs survey (2020) the average house price in Exeter is £249,000*
- *The ratio of income to house prices for lower quartile incomes and lower quartile house prices in Exeter is 9.27 (i.e. to buy a house a lower quartile home requires almost 10 times the average gross annual wages).*

- The median monthly private sector rent is £802 (higher than the rest of the south west). The highest monthly social rent in Exeter is £326.
- The median incomes in Exeter are £29,749
- Based on 25% of income being for renting and 3.5 x income multiple for buying the income required to access different tenures is as follows
 - Social rent £15,648
 - Affordable rent £29,040
 - Market rent £38,496
 - Market sale (10% deposit) £64,029
 - Shared ownership (50%) £47,389
- There are over 2,600 applicants on the housing register (which is a Devon-wide choice based letting scheme).
- Approximately 500 properties become available to let each year of which over 320 are from the council's own stock.
- Of the properties let over 30% were allocated to homeless applicants.

In order to deliver a new generation of good quality council homes we believe that there needs to be an ambitious build programme across all tenures that will allow for all tenures to be grown.

Exeter has an ambitious Council own build programme to deliver 500 new homes by 2030. This programme focusses on brownfield regeneration of sites in the Councils ownership, including garage sites and the regeneration of non-traditional stock. This brownfield regeneration approach comes with the additional costs associated with this type of development; demolition and associated asbestos removals; services redirections; land contamination; substation requirements; water attenuation; and existing tenant decants/home loss payments. This makes the development of these types of sites considerably more expensive than greenfield development, and coupled with material and labour cost increases across the industry the viability to deliver this much needed housing is very challenging.

Grant availability does assist (Homes England and Brownfield Land Release Fund), but does not by itself make these sites viable or deliverable. The biggest challenge to the viability of these schemes is the current interest rates, if the government's interest rates for borrowing were reduced this would ensure that these sites were viable again and would facilitate the delivery of these schemes.

Whilst we welcome the introduction of greater regulation in the sector to ensure quality, safe services and homes are provided to tenants this has brought with it additional costs implication that will impact on our ability to build additional homes. For example the regulator has just advised us that there will be a fee payable for their services which will equate to £35,000 to £40,000 of additional money being taken out of our new build or planned works budgets. We are also considering our resourcing levels in order to ensure we meet the regulatory requires which may adversely impact on our ability to deliver on other projects.

Whilst you have not asked the specific question we welcomed the self-financing changes at the time of introduction and do believe it is a fairer system than previously used. However it was significantly hampered by the introduction of the 5 year 1% rent reduction at the same time which impacted significantly on our HRA business plan anticipated income levels.

I hope this information is useful and if you require more information or detail from Exeter City Council we would be happy to assist with the final report or hosting an event in the south west.

Councillor Denning advised that a date was being arranged for representative of the All Party Parliamentary Group to meet locally with tenants.

Supplementary question and answer.

Do rent levels match the Council's policy on convergence rent levels and do funds from Right To Buy contribute to wider Council housing policies.

Answer

A written answer will be provided on statistics relating to convergence rent levels. Whilst there are commendable aspects to Right To Buy, the Council loses some 40 properties a year, effectively losing as many as can be built.

Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee agreed that a further submission be made to the Inquiry on the points raised from the supplementary questions.

Questions to the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Homelessness Prevention - Councillor Pearce

From Councillor Atkinson

Local authorities like Exeter in England do not have a duty to secure accommodation for all homeless people.

Rough sleepers are one of the most vulnerable groups in society. Studies have found strong correlations between homelessness and a multiplicity, and increased severity, of both physical and mental health conditions.

Despite the Government's [Housing First](#) strategy and present 2022 Ending Rough Sleeping for Good policy to end Rough Sleeping by 2024, the incidents of rough sleeping seems to be increasing.

How effective does the Portfolio Holder believe this strategy and support for Councils is in meeting this target. What needs to change?

Response

Whilst both of the cited strategies have undoubtedly promoted positive changes in practice towards supporting rough sleepers to come off the streets they ultimately have limited reach in light of wider issues such as underperforming house-building targets and the steady erosion of health and social care services. The ongoing cost of living pressures including record rising rent levels is registering a significant impact on affordability of homes, especially for lower income households including single person renters and those on benefits.

The HF and ERS strategies have been backed by funding to help Councils and local areas to add much needed capacity in terms of units of accommodation dedicated for homelessness including emergency "off-the-streets" accommodation for rough sleepers through the RSI initiative. Resettlement capacity has also been boosted by the Next Steps and Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme funding streams. However in many areas these recent additions to the local area supported accommodation for rough sleepers has only partially replaced the supported

accommodation units lost over the last 13 years following the wind-down of the national Supporting People programme.

In terms of change some of the key significant factors could include changing the Local Housing Allowance rates, i.e. the rate of housing benefit assistance for households on lower incomes. The current rates paid to either UC or HB claimants remain set on the lower quartile of the local average rent figure which means for most claimants there is a significant and growing “top-up” required to be paid from personal benefits income. For example a person aged 25+ renting a room in a shared house in Exeter will typically need to find a weekly top-up of £45 from a personal benefit of £85. When adding significantly increased utility bills this leaves basically no disposable income for food and other essentials.

Arguably a major investment in social housing development is also needed in order to provide more affordable housing to help meet the growing waiting lists whilst also preserving the current capacity from continual erosion due to policies such as right to buy. An equally significant level of investment in early help, family mediation, social care and child-to-adult transition services would conceivably help support a reduction in future risk of homelessness as would investment in accommodation step-down services from institutions such as prisons and offender institutions, hospitals and mental health institutions.

A further point of change, as recommended following last year’s local homelessness scrutiny assessment, is for homelessness funding to be less short-term (typically 3 year funding cycles or less). Longer term funding packages to housing authorities, registered social landlords and third sector housing and support agencies would arguably drive better investment into the provision of dedicated and specialist housing and tenancy-related support services for homeless people including rough sleepers.

From Councillor Moore

Please can the Portfolio Holder set out how the Council’s homeless support service reviews and responds to Inquest findings of people who have died while rough sleeping or while in the care of any service in the city offering support to people who are homeless? Please can examples of any changes as a result be given?

Please can someone give me a ring about the Healthy Homes email - I am not clear about the request.

The Director subsequently contacted the Councillor.

Response

The Council reports all deaths in service (including street-based) to Public Health (Devon); the details of which are databased and assessed when Public Health and the Devon County Council Safeguarding assess fatalities and incidents (including suicides and near misses) for serious case review purposes. The City Council actively takes a prevention role for high risk cases by holding multi-agency meetings with providers and Devon County Council. The work is to set up support and engagement pathways for people who are most at risk, often from near miss overdoses, and to put appropriate service interventions in place to address associated problems and to engage with addiction and or therapy services. Public Health (Devon) has recently devised and implemented a suicide prevention model policy and approach with city and countywide partner agencies.

The Council's Housing Needs and Homelessness service also has its own death in accommodation policy and procedures which incorporates review of each case/serious incident including a multi-agency approach to review and learning points. Although the statutory responsibility does not sit with the City Council, it remains the Council's ambition to work with statutory and voluntary partners to better formally review preventable deaths, The Council is continuing conversations with Devon County Council and Adult Safeguarding to agree on a way forward via advocating formal serious case reviews in homelessness. There have been no serious case reviews in homelessness as the details are normally assessed by the Coroner's office. To date, no practice changes have been identified or recommended as services have been able to demonstrate clear understanding of risk, recording of reasonable interventions (given available resource capacity in the sector) and application of due diligence in their respective duty of care for individuals.

Supplementary question and answer.

Has there been a review of Inquiry findings of any specific cases of individuals dying as a result of rough sleeping?

Answer

The Council works closely with Devon County Council, Adult Safeguarding and the Coroner's Office and information can be provided if notified of the detail of any specific case.

Question to the Portfolio Holder for Place and City Management - Councillor Williams

Councillor Atkinson

The Government said it plans to make it mandatory for local authorities to collect dry mixed recycling segregated by household. Is this still being progressed?

Has it published a monetised costs of "main affected group"? Such as the costs of transition ongoing costs to households and businesses of sorting waste for new collection requirements and the wider impacts on the recycling and waste industry?

Response

The Government consultation on 'Consistency in Household and Business Recycling in England' finished in June 2021. This followed on from an earlier consultation in 2019. The results of this, together with a number of related waste consultations, including a deposit return scheme and a producer responsibility scheme, have not been published or their implementation has consistently been pushed back.

Whilst this consultation did not specify how recycling would be collected from residents, it did indicate that food waste collection would eventually be mandatory. Recent announcements by the Government indicate that no direct announcement on statutory guidance for any of the revised waste proposals, or how they are to be funded, will be released anytime soon. Concerns regarding the delays were also expressed at a meeting of the Devon Authorities Strategic Waste Committee.

Councillor Moore

How long is the average current waiting time for residents to receive new bins, including garden waste, and what has the trend been over the last six months?

Since January 2023 the Council has experienced exceptionally high demand with respect to bin deliveries as a result of new housing developments being occupied and the roll out of food waste in parts of the city. In total, the Council has delivered 35,513 waste receptacles to households which include 32,672 food waste caddies. At present, the Council is seeing a three to four week delivery time for new bins, with this being up to eight weeks on a Monday due to the level of new build properties in this delivery day area. Whilst additional resource has been allocated with additional Saturdays worked to bring delivery times down, demand is higher than resource capacity at present.

Supplementary question and answer.

When will the request for new bins be met?

Answer

As soon as possible, subject to available resources, sickness etc.

What is the current level of reports and complainants, and the service performance trends over the last six months for each of the following areas:-

- Assisted bin service. The Council has conducted 3,283 assisted waste collections per week. Since January 2023 there have been 552 reports of missed collections (excluding food) out of the 128,037 scheduled collections which equate to 0.43% of the overall collection rate;
- Food waste collections The Council is currently conducting 21,000 food collections per week and had 1,598 reports of missed collections since January 2023;
- New bins, including garden waste – since January 2023, the Council had 762 enquiries from customers regarding their bin delivery order and;
- The collection of sharps – since January 2023, the Council had 792 enquiries from customers regarding their sharps collection. It must be noted that doorstep sharps collections are a discretionary service provided by the Council which is not provided by all Council's nationally.

Supplementary questions and answers.

Is the Council prioritising the collection of missed assisted bin collections?

Can bin stickers be provided on what can and cannot be disposed?

What is the average length of time to respond to requests for removal of sharps?

Answer

There are occasions when residents miscalculate the collection times of assisted bins and other times where crews make mistakes but all incidents are individually investigated and resolved.

Residents were notified when the new food waste collections service was introduced for their area and advised on the appropriate disposal of waste. Information is also available on the Council's website.

A written response will be provided in respect of sharps.

Bromhams Field re-establishment - please outline the problems with the topsoil and other issues that has led to the long delays to the re-establishment of Bromhams Field and how much has this cost the Council?

At the end of the Environment Agency (EA) flood alleviation works the EA contractors failed to reinstate the Bromhams pitches to playing field standards, as per its former status. The initial delay to the progression of investigations and works was as a result of the EA considering undertaking the work in house. Subsequently the EA agreed to fund the works but for the City Council to manage and deliver the project to its satisfaction. The main issues identified with the topsoil were as follows;

*Natural debris (stones and rocks);
Soil compaction;
Undulating terrain;
Inappropriate vegetation; and
Poor drainage.*

As a result, a remedial works package was agreed with a view to removing the topsoil, screening it, burying/sorting any stones, and re-establishing the topsoil with appropriately designed drainage and gradients. Additional clean topsoil, seeding, and fertilisation will then be used to ensure the site meets a minimum playing field quality. The EA is funding the remedial works at Bromhams fields with no current financial impact to the City Council.

Supplementary question and answer.

When will the reinstatement works commence?

Answer

A written answer will be provided.

Post meeting Note : The answer to the supplementary question regarding the time scale for Bromhams Field was already included in the Portfolio Holder's report on Page 17 item 3 where it states "Public and Green Space anticipates the contract for works will be awarded mid to late January 2024. Operations permitting, site development will take place from Spring 2024 with an anticipated opening date Spring/Summer 2025 subject to change.

Rougemont footpath: does this work include reopening the gate in the City wall between the two parks?

Response

The Rougemont footpath works, once complete, will allow residents and visitors to move freely between Northernhay and Rougemont Gardens. This however, will be through the tower access route not the lower archway. The Archway repairs continue to be investigated by the City Council's Heritage Officer and the Corporate Property team, and will take place at a later date when funding and resources allow.

Supplementary question and answer.

Has the investigation been completed and when will the works commence?

Answer

The Corporate Property Team and the Council's Heritage Officer have completed the investigation and are considering solutions in light of the quotes for the repair works on other sections of the city wall, vastly exceeding available funding.

Councillor Miller

In your report you mention that over the summer there has been a difficulty in releasing members of the grass team to carry out other work across the city such as maintaining shrubbery. Please can you go into a bit more detail about whether this has impacted any particular areas of the city, and how this compares to last year?

Historically we have a dry summer period which considerably slows grass growth and allows grass cutting staff to be diverted onto other activities. For the last two years, the warm, wet conditions have extended the grass season over the full course of the spring and summer period. This prevented grass teams being diverted onto those alternative activities such as shrub maintenance for six weeks mid-season. The impacts for the last two years had been the same and would have been noticeable city wide as shrubs became encased in bindweed and other growth, starting to encroach onto footways. The lack of resource meant that rather than a proactive programme of maintenance, the Council was forced to take a reactive approach, and only maintain beds where encroachment compromised access or safety.

The service establishment is fixed year round, based on the ability to offset operations seasonally i.e. shrubs/hedges are usually maintained over winter and grass is spring/summer work. Every year, operational teams take on two additional staff to inflate resource over the spring/summer to meet peak demand, however this additional resource is not enough if the Council can-not release the grass teams during the season. Should these weather patterns continue the Council will be forced to take on additional summer/spring resources to meet demand?

You mention in your report a struggle to recruit waste delivery drivers, and that you and the team have taken steps to address this. Please can you go into a bit more detail about what you see as the causes of this, and whether there is anything more as a Council we can be doing?

Over the last two years there has been a national shortage of Large Goods Vehicle (LGV) drivers which has impacted not only local authorities but also the private sector. As a result of this shortage, the private sector offered lucrative hourly rates which local authorities were unable to match. This resulted in qualified drivers leaving for better pay settlements. In addition, locally the Council has a very loyal but aging workforce. A number of drivers reached retirement age and are now happily enjoying their retirement. This led to a perfect storm which meant that the Council struggled for a period of time to recruit. However a development pathway was set up for staff, which, whilst was not an instant fix led to the Council developing members of the loyal workforce becoming drivers and thus creating a more long term sustainable solution to the workforce programme. This resulted in seven staff becoming drivers with a further two currently undertaking the training. In addition, over the last few weeks, recruitment agencies are reporting an increased amount of driver availability looking for work.

The Council has also struggled recently with the recruitment of loaders and MRF operatives. It is hoped that this is just a seasonal issue due to high vacancies in other sectors over the summer months, but should this not improve it will cause operational

issues. The Council regularly undertakes recruitment drives to fulfil positions that become vacant but this can be difficult finding the right person for the role.

Supplementary question and answer.

Is there potential within existing budgets to recruit additional drivers?

Answer

Recruitment would need to be considered in light of the ongoing cuts to services required as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan. The Cleansing team is very resourceful in identifying solutions to this problem.

The Portfolio Holder congratulated the Service Manager Public and Green Space and team for the progress made on the internal development programme giving staff within the service the opportunity to qualify as drivers.

Councillor Rees

1. What are the City Council plans for reducing our reliance on temporary and agency staff?

Over the last 12 months we have been reducing the Council's reliance on temporary and agency staff. This has been achieved through the adoption of a career progression pathway where loaders and MRF operative have been given the opportunity to progress onto driver training and roles. This has helped ease the issues with respect to driver recruitment which has enable the service to deliver all doorstep collection services over the last 12 months as planned. However, we do regular recruitment drives when staff leave the service. The service still requires the use of agency staff to fill for unexpected absence and vacancies to maintain service delivery, which is factored into the service budget.

Supplementary question and answer.

What lessons can be learnt from other authorities to reduce reliance on agency staff?

Answer

The team examines how other organisations retain staff. Although the private sector can offer higher wages, the remuneration relates to longer working hours. The latest pay award will assist in staff retention.

2. How much money is required for the Canal Gate and bank repairs?

The Exeter Canal was the first canal to be built in the UK since Roman times and therefore requires a great deal of ongoing maintenance and inspection. Estimates are being worked up at the moment for the more urgent works and those of a health and safety related nature. These are likely to be all that we can afford with the current financial pressures.

3. You mention teething problems with the initial food waste collection, which is to be expected. Please could you summarise the key learning from this initial phase, and how this will help to shape the future roll out.

Unfortunately whilst the Council was able to expand food waste roll out during the course of the year, new staff delivering the service coupled with unexpected

absences meant that we were not able to maintain crew continuity as much as was planned. This had led to some early missed bins and an inconsistent service at times. We have invested in training more crew members on the food collections rounds to have better continuity when there is absence to cover. Other learning points have been:-

- *to encourage residents to place their food caddy in a prominent position and not hidden behind other larger bins;*
- *collecting details of local arrangements that the refuse and recycling crews have been operating to but that were not recorded on the waste collection system; and*
- *trialling communal bin facilities in areas where individual caddies are not feasible.*

Initially, the Council was not able to return for missed collections due to capacity, but this has now changed due to settled teams on the two food waste vehicles. Crews now have to return to any genuine collections that they miss, thus enforcing the correct collection point for the crews.

Supplementary question and answer.

Have any further measures been introduced to improve collection?

Answer

The ability for residents to now log missed food waste bins on line will lead to an improved service.

4. Please could you share the time line/targets for the roll out to the different regions of the city?

As explained at the scrutiny presentation earlier in the year the Council is now at its capacity to accept food waste at Exton Road under the terms of our Environment Agency permit. It will not be able to commit to a timetable for further food waste roll out until the improvements to the Exton Road depot are completed and the limits on our permit lifted.

5. Are there any additional challenges or barriers might we face with the roll out to all areas of the city?

Recruitment of drivers and loaders is always a challenge but there has been more success with driver training lately as mentioned before. The uncertainty over central government policy on waste and recycling and the possibility of associated funding for new burdens also does not help with investment decisions.

Supplementary question and answer.

Are the problems associated with the collection of communal caddies being addressed?

Answer

Collections from houses in multiple occupation are less straight forward.

The Government's delay in providing guidance on household and business recycling, such as a deposit return scheme for glass collection, remains an issue. However, the team continues to seek improvements, such as identifying additional collection capacity as the rounds settle down. Members will be kept advised of progress.

6. Please could we have an update on the refurbishments of the MRF and the expected timeline for the completion of this work?

The investment in the MRF, which also includes the regulatory work required to alter the Environmental Permit, has been tendered and, like many tenders, at the moment has come back significantly higher than the estimate. With the Council's ongoing financial pressures this is currently unaffordable and alternative options are being explored via an options appraisal. The results of this work and any additional funding requirements will be brought to members via the usual committee process.

Role of questions and answers under Standing Order 20

Given the length of the time taken to respond to the questions received, the Chair invited suggestions for streamlining the system.

Suggestions included incorporating the relevant questions into the regular Portfolio Holder updates and the circulation of both questions and answers in advance of the meeting. Whilst the timing of the receipt of questions might require fine tuning prior circulation of the answers, this was considered an acceptable solution and would be put to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Programme Board.

It was recognised that a question and answer session helped inform the public of important issues and Members also referred to the need to focus more on the in depth scrutiny of issues/individual areas with an emphasis on outcomes as discussed at the recent scrutiny training exercise led by Bethan Evans.

28 **Update from the Portfolio Holder for Place and City Management - Councillor Williams**

Councillor Williams reported on the Place and City Management areas of her Portfolio, detailing the issues relating to achieving the Council's published priorities, major ongoing programmes of work, issues impacting delivery, financial performance and budget requirements and potential changes being considered. She referred to her shadowing of various services in recent months including bin collection including food waste, the Materials Re-cycling Facility, Car Park Enforcement, litter bin emptying and road sweeping.

She highlighted the following:-

- following the introduction of food waste collection, 700,000 kg of waste had been diverted from black bins since April;
- the acceptance of the Harbour Revision Order application prior to the deadline after which the cost would have increased;
- a successful Heritage Harbour Festival on 23-24 September 2023;
- the first phase of the food waste collection which had been well received.

In respect of the litter bin review and the removal of a number of bins, the Service Manager Public and Green Space had carried out one to one briefings with Members as part of street cleaning optimisations. The changes had been introduced as part of a vital savings exercise, including the decision not to fill existing vacancies. Delivery schedules for both deep clean and litter vans would be optimised and an update on the overall cleansing regime would be provided in the New Year after the evaluation had been completed. Section 106 contributions were utilised as far as possible from new developments to enhance litter bin provision and liaison was taking place with

businesses with view to possible sponsorship/involvement for the provision/retention of litter bins. Further feedback from Members on locating litter bins was welcome.

Members were advised that Ash Die Back was spreading more slowly than expected although it was still anticipated that over 90% of trees would be lost and, consequently, the budget for remedial works would be rolled over

29 **Homelessness Strategy - six month progress report**

The Service Lead, Housing Needs and Homelessness presented the report providing an update on the recommendations of the Homelessness Task and Finish Working Group. The update covered the key Issues in the last six months and progress under the new Homelessness Strategy which included actions to progress the recommendations of the Working Group which had met in the Autumn of 2022 with a number of key stakeholders and statutory providers. Members were also advised that key data reporting demand, outcomes and trends would be circulated via the new Housing Needs quarterly newsletter and that further reports would be submitted on progress with the actions within the Strategy. He emphasised that it was not simply a City Council policy document, but a strategy to be owned by the whole of Exeter.

He enlarged on progress made on the action points 1 to 19 below.

Action points 1 to 8 involved lobbying of Government and external bodies, in particular seeking an overhaul of the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) Scheme to more accurately reflect Exeter's circumstances in order to help individuals afford new homes or sustain tenancies. He advised that this was one of the areas to be raised for consideration by the Devon Housing Commission chaired by Lord Best and that the City Council would be submitting evidence to the Commission. Other areas being examined by the Commission included second home ownership and house building. A key ask was for central funding to extend beyond a one to three year support period to provide for long term planning and commitment.

Action points 9 to 12 involved system changes through working with local statutory partners and stakeholders to maximise current resources and identify new resources and strengthen partnership working.

Action points 13 to 19 related to the City Council's own processes including developing a more formalised partnership with statutory bodies and local accommodation and support providers through the Homelessness Housing Forum. Prioritising budgets to maximise capacity was also important and the Council had committed capital match funding through the Local Authority Housing Fund to purchase housing for those households who had come to the UK from Ukraine and Afghanistan through the Ukraine Family Scheme, the Homes for Ukraine Scheme and the Afghan Resettlement Scheme. Exeter was the only area where no one had become homeless after leaving Afghanistan Bridging hotels. A further initiative was the recent leasing of 16 units to provide additional temporary accommodation housing.

Responding to a Member who raised issues around Children's services highlighting a case where a young person felt safer sleeping in a tent rather than facing anti-social behaviour/drug taking etc. in shared accommodation, the Service Lead, Housing Needs and Homelessness referred to the Council and partners targeting funds for new supported housing units for homeless young persons including care leavers. Gap analyses had been co-designed with partners and completed for both Rough Sleeping needs and high needs Young Persons services. It was a key partnership

milestone in preparation for a November bid for capital and revenue to the Supported Housing Accommodation Programme (SHAP).

In response to a Member asking what is needed to end rough sleeping, the Service Lead, Housing Needs and Homelessness estimated that there was a requirement for 100 supported units which was costly to implement. The provision of safe, welcoming accommodation was vital to assist the street attached to progress into recovery and would also help address issues around sofa surfing, county lines and sexual exploitation. However, the 100 units would not necessarily be sufficient added capacity to address future flow onto the street from loss of supported accommodation and from institutional settings.

The Portfolio Holder for Communities and Homelessness Prevention referenced the importance of statutory partners and others working collaboratively across Devon and that it was not solely a District Council responsibility. Increasing the capacity and funding around mental health services, substance misuse, care of younger persons and care-leavers was crucial with, for example, 151 care leavers currently across the County.

The Chair invited Councillor M. Mitchell, the Chair of the Task and Finish Working Group, to address the Committee. Councillor Mitchell thanked the Service Lead, Housing Needs and Homelessness for the report and Councillor Denning who had first submitted the request for a review of regarding the impact of any increase in homelessness in Exeter as a result of benefit cuts and increases in the cost of living. He re-iterated the need to seek a review of the Local Housing Allowance which impacted on the homeless, those in rented accommodation as well as the employed. He stated that the average rent for a two bed property outside London was £1,278. Exeter was not below this average but was below the Local Housing Allowance rate.

Councillor Denning, the Portfolio Holder for Council Housing Development and Support Services, also thanked the Service Lead, Housing Needs and Homelessness for the report, stating that she worked closely with the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Homelessness Prevention on this area. She particularly praised the work in rehousing refugees which had received much praise through social media.

Responding to a Member's query, the Service Lead, Housing Needs and Homelessness confirmed that homelessness and street attached was not necessarily linked to anti-social behaviour. He advised that the City Council and the Police were drafting an action plan to challenge and unpick social connections to the street and which could also reduce enforcement solutions which ultimately fall short when reaching the Crown Prosecution Service. A report would be submitted to the Community Safety Partnership. He also referred to ethnographical studies undertaken with those who had experienced rough sleeping to help provide a better understanding of the problem.

Other initiatives included the availability of basic hygiene (showers and toilet facilities) which partners are still investigating and the identification of alternative venues such as drinking-permitted space in the city.

A Member moved that the Council seek to lobby the Government to provide additional funding to ensure the provision of 100 units of supported accommodation for ending rough sleeping including for young people and to change the Local Housing Allowance.

The motion was moved, seconded and carried unanimously.

RECOMMENDED that Council:-

- (1) be requested to agree to lobbying the City's MP's and prospective MP's, the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and the Local Government Association to:-
 - secure sufficient funding to provide for 100 units of supported accommodation for rough sleepers and young people; and
 - change the Local Housing Allowance by restoring the link to the lower quartile of the rental market; and
- (2) note the progress on the following 19 action points which were divided into those relating to Government/external bodies and those more within the Council's sphere of influence. Progress was reported in italics:-

Government/External Bodies:

-

- (1) To seek via the City's two MP's and the Local Government Association a fundamental review and overhaul of the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) Scheme with consideration to be given to the Allowance reflecting Exeter's circumstances as an urban area in its own right and not averaged with neighbouring authorities in the assessment of the allowance

The fundamental affordability issue resulting from the gap between market rents and LHA rates has been a repeated theme arising the Afghan bridging hotel resettlement programme work. Housing authorities up and down the country have repeatedly raised LHA as the key barrier to affordability and homelessness reduction with key ministers and in the presence of lead Home Office and DLUHC personnel. ECC council officers have lent support to this message to Government during webinars and seminars. The response has been that the Government is listening.

It was hoped that the high profile of the Afghan programme amidst the wider refugee resettlement challenges could be the vehicle that finally levers an uplift in LHA rates. However whilst this has not yet materialised the local action to propose a review of the Broad Market Rental Are via local MP offices is outstanding and will now be followed up by officers.

- (2) To lobby Central Government to increase the ability for local authorities to build social housing

Specific lobbying action has not yet been initiated due to other priorities. Elements of specific activity relating to this agenda remain in play through Planning and the HRA development programme. It is proposed that the Council feeds this and other nationally / regionally relevant lobbying actions via its engagement with the Devon Housing Commission.

- (3) To lobby Central Government for the funding of local authorities and agencies to be for a minimum of three years for projects relating to housing provision, as opposed to short term support
- (4) To lobby Central Government to support changes to the planning system to control/limit short term lets and holiday homes

- (5) To lobby Central Government to support the abolition of Section 21 evictions
- (6) To lobby Central Government to support the reform of the Business Tax and Council Tax regimes for an equitable contribution in respect of all properties
- (7) To seek a Government review of the current operation of the deposit system for private rented properties for mediation to get an agreement to last no longer than 28 days after which the full deposit is returned. This will assist the tenant to obtain a further deposit for an alternative property.

For actions 3 to 7 it is proposed that the Council also feeds these through the Devon Housing Commission.

- (8) To seek the support of the Crown and Magistrate Courts for the use of Plain English regarding paperwork relating to court proceedings

Not yet actioned.

- (9) To align with the County Council webpages to ensure linkage on information and advice that helps people to find early help and prevent people from becoming at risk of homelessness wherever possible

Focus on this action has to date been joint working with DCC Children's Services and Corporate Parenting directorate to finalise the working protocols between County and District / City housing authorities in homelessness 16-17 year olds and Care Leavers aged 18-25. The Care Leaver protocol has been approved by the leading District officers (including Legal teams) as at w/b 11.09.23. This is a key milestone in establishing an improved robust joint prevention approach across both authority tiers. Alignment of communication and marketing of the protocol alongside key information to young persons and representing agencies has been agreed by all partners. The expectation is that revised information will go live by the end of the calendar year.

Alignment of wider homelessness advice and help information including website content and format is outstanding and to be agreed once the local homelessness funding position is finalised post-December.

- (10) To work with Devon County Council's Children's Services, to ensure the Homelessness Prevention Worker function is able to help young people earlier and prevent them becoming at risk of homelessness wherever possible including young people leaving care and making better use of existing tools like Positive Pathways to improve supporting young people earlier on)

This action is part of the overall work with Corporate Parenting and to be developed within the new best practice Champion model due for Cabinet sign off this September. It is proposed that County and Districts will review the homelessness prevention resources under the "Care For Me" subgroup in order to focus on current delivery and gaps in accommodation and support services. The HPW function is to be reviewed alongside the current capacity for personal assistant casework with key focus on improving tenancy rescue. The Council is assessing options to work with County on the Supported Housing Accommodation Programme which will include an assessment of potential use of local County land / buildings for new housing for care leavers. Additional funding for support and earlier intervention work is to be deployed to care leavers through the "Staying Close" fund.

The above work is being progressed under the joint countywide approach to the Corporate Parenting duty which is currently a central priority on the monthly Team Devon CEX agenda.

- (11) To seek increased/joint service contributions from Devon County Council in co-production areas of work e.g. substance misuse services, social care, young persons including care-leavers etc.

Action relating to young persons and care leavers is reported as above. In relation to the needs of the wider cohort, having played a key role in the submission of data and impact information to the recent homelessness funding consultation, the Council is engaged with County in the co-design of a position statement on homelessness. This work is scheduled to produce an integrated view of homelessness need including multi-disciplinary funding models and proposals by the end of November.

Outside of this the Council has been working with local substance misuse and social care partners to develop new capacity for support to adults and young persons with complex and multiple need. This is being co-ordinated under the local joint working with Public Health drug and alcohol funding to grow additional capacity within services aligned to the model of trauma-informed relational practice as delivered by the (award winning) ECC-led Navigator service.

- (12) To seek increased capacity around mental health services including support for the newly formed Mental Health Alliance and building on existing City Council officer support in this area

Work to develop more capacity and improved delivery / outcomes for homeless people in Exeter is being led by Colab with support from the Council. One recent focus has been the recruitment of the mental health navigator and re-establishing the model of pathway interface with the statutory mental health service. Further work is required in this area to drive up capacity beyond what is currently a very limited resource in relation to need and demand.

The Council continues to fund via RSI grant monies the psychological wellbeing support service Real Life Psychology which supports clients and staff with key coping skills and reflective practice.

Exeter City Council responsibilities:

- (13) To undertake a city wide response to homelessness, through a more formalised partnership approach building on the city's social capital and developing flourishing communities - this could be via the proposed Homelessness Housing Forum (HHF) comprised of local accommodation and support providers to see the system as a whole and address blocks and barriers. The HHF will build on learning from the Exeter Homelessness Partnership Alliance as well as from national examples of good practice e.g. Homeless Link. This will build on the existing co-production mechanisms and with the ultimate aim of offering accommodation on first presentation. The involvement of the business/private sector will also be sought.

A number of work development areas have been in progress over the last 6 months:

- The renewal of a revised Exeter Homelessness Forum, building on the work of the 3-year funded Exeter Homelessness Partnership. The key focus to date has been co-ordinated response to the DCC homelessness funding consultation but other priority work is to revise the alternative giving scheme, raise resource for basic need / survival facilities (toilets, shelter, drinking water etc.) and develop wider service co-*

production with lived experience including education, training and employment pathways

- *Meetings with key civic partners to develop the action plan around relieving street-attached need including city centre ASB. This is a multi-agency partnership including the Council, police, civic partners such as Education, Commerce and businesses.*
- *The Council has continued to lead the Ending Rough Sleeping forum with homelessness and housing partners including some wider stakeholders. Part of the agenda is the development of wider engagement of partners such as Public Health with a view to build strategic consensus toward a wider Homelessness Reduction board*

The governance model proposed in the new Homelessness strategy has not yet been established due to other pressing priorities and is now set to be road-tested over the next 6 months by diverging the above key stakeholder meetings to pilot one strategic homelessness forum for Exeter.

- (14) To maximise renewal of the City Council contract(s) with providers with Member involvement to add greater focus on key areas and targets, including analysis of the evidence base

Contract renewals are in progression with temporary accommodation providers as a key priority given the pressure of statutory accommodation demand and the current squeeze on funding for housing-related support. The Council is prioritising the more risk-tolerant higher performing providers whilst assessing ongoing improvement agendas with other services alongside alternative service models (including in-house provision).

Contracts with young person's services for Homeless Prevention Workers were renewed in February but are now subject to the overall review with Corporate Parenting before any extension or procurement decisions will be taken for April 2024 onwards.

The Council has recently undertaken a contract review and negotiated a funding extension with MOJ/Probation services for its prison resettlement service.

The Council and Citizens Advice Exeter have continued with review meetings (CAE with new CEO from April) focusing on current trends and practice issues with a view to prioritise work streams in time for contract renewal in 2024. Demand on services sub-contracted to CAE and Homemaker SW remain high especially in areas such as household affordability, income maximisation, and arrears and debt management. Next steps will include further relationship building (referrals and communications) with the Council's housing advice services and strengthening of prevention-focused activity.

- (15) To seek the involvement of a third party organisation in statutory homelessness mediation cases

The Council has maintained contact with the Shelter (Plymouth) lead officer. Reviews and appeals of homelessness decisions have remained stable in number. The majority are appeals against social housing banding decisions and predominantly appear to be reflective of personal frustration (lack of housing availability and waiting lists) as opposed to incorrect decisions by the Council. The Council has recently proposed a policy amendment regarding appeals whereby (subject to Devon Home Choice approval) those that are not supported by additional supporting evidence or a change in circumstances following the initial decision may be rejected.

The Council plans to invite a third party advocacy service to monitor these cases as a first check and balance into this area of work. This is also for the purpose of trialling a new partner relationship wherein a mediation option may be developed for challenging prevention cases.

- (16) To welcome and support the In Exeter commitment to the provision of drinking fountains in the city centre and seek the review of the 24/7 provision of public toilets in the city

This action has not yet been progressed. It is likely to be on the priority agenda for the Exeter Homelessness Forum as per point 13.

- (17) To welcome and support One Exeter's review of the use of Plain English for Council tax and other written communications rather than by telephone

This action has not yet been progressed to completion. An option to add a summary statement to the letters atop the necessary policy and legal-led statutory language to be taken to Council Tax lead officer.

- (18) To seek City Council commitment to a continuation of funding for the leasing and purchasing options programme for the supported and temporary accommodation programme

To date the development of leasehold options to relieve pressure on temporary accommodation has not required additional budget from the Council general fund. Since February eight properties (7 new builds and 1 private market) have been purchased and added to the Council's HRA stock under the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) programme. An additional 5 properties are currently under offer / conveyance under LAHF round 2. These properties alongside 3 new PSL properties have been instrumental in ensuring no families were without a housing offer or made homeless as a result of the closing of the bridging hotels in Exmouth and Exeter in August.

In the last few weeks three new properties (16 units) have been leased by the Council for additional temporary accommodation housing. The transfer of some households into these properties will temporarily reduce the cost to the Council of use of hotel and B&B accommodation. This is key to the Housing Needs savings plan under the mid-term financial plan. However a combination of continuing pressures on statutory homelessness demand plus the limited existing capacity in housing-related support have not yet resulted in equivalent lasting reductions in hotel and B&B use. The Council is planning to combat this through increasing the number of leased units plus bidding into the SHAP fund respectively.

- (19) To seek City Council commitment to the expansion of the Housing First model particularly through local registered social landlords

As a first step the Council has led by example and committed to resource five existing 1-bed flats as additional Housing First (HF) tenancies to the existing 15 within Council HRA stock. Whilst one local housing association has also provided 7 units of accommodation under the HF model the scheme will be taken to wider partners as part of the leading Homelessness Reduction Board operational action plan.

30 **Update on street cleansing, bins and litter following the changed approach.**

The Chair reported that, following one to one briefings with Members, the update report would be submitted to the Committee in the New Year.

31 **Healthy Homes**

The Chair reported that a request for the scrutiny of Healthy Homes standards would be addressed as part of the report of the Director City Development on the new 'Exeter Plan' to be submitted to the meeting of the Strategic Scrutiny Committee on 16 November 2023. The report would outline the purpose, scope and content of the Plan and Members would be able to consider what further work they would wish to see, including any work on Healthy Homes, to strengthen the plan for the pre-submission version. Any resource implications would also need to be considered by SMB and the relevant Portfolio Holders.

Members noted the position.

32 **Scrutiny Programme Board Annual Report**

The Chair, as a member of the Scrutiny Programme Board, presented the Board's report which offered an annual update in respect of the Scrutiny work achieved during the Municipal Year 2022/23. He stated that it was the intention for future Annual Reports to set out in greater detail the areas scrutinised and to include the outcomes achieved. A Member requested that the list of ongoing requests for scrutiny, including those submitted using the agreed proformas, be circulated to all Members. The list, which included the status of each item, was now included on the agenda for meetings of the Scrutiny Programme Board and a Member also asked if the list could cover previous years and not just the last 12 months.

Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee noted the Annual Scrutiny Report 2022/23 which would be presented to Executive to note and to recommend to Council to approve.

33 **Forward Plan of Business and Scrutiny Work Plan**

The Chair reported the receipt of a number of additional proforma requests for scrutiny, some of which were effectively refreshing similar requests previously submitted.

Members noted the Forward Plan and the Scrutiny Work Plan.

34 **Howard Bassett**

The Chair reported that this would be Howard Bassett's last Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee prior to his retirement.

The Chair and Members thanked Howard for his service to the Council and wished him well on his retirement.

The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 8.09 pm

Chair

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REPORT TO CUSTOMER FOCUS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 30 November 2023

PORTFOLIO HOLDER'S REPORT TO SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

COUNCILLOR DENNING PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR COUNCIL HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT SERVICES

1. Issues relating to achieving the Council's published priorities
1. 75 new build council homes delivered in the last 3 years with a further 56 currently on site
2. The Council housing retrofit programme continues and will have delivered 750 properties completed by the end of the 2023/24 financial year funded via the housing revenue account and grant funding of £4.1m over the last 4 years.
3. Phase 1 of Vaughan Road (The Gardens, Whipton) on site and first 35 affordable Council homes under construction.
4. In light of new regulations coming on line there is a need to drive standards for engagement and consultation with Council House tenants.

2. Update or commentary on any major ongoing programmes of work
1. Delivery of a draft new Council Housing Strategy
2. Review of the Housing Tenancy Policy
3. Supporting the work of the Devon Housing Task Force and the Devon Housing Commission to enable a step change in social housing policy and delivery in local housing markets across Devon and Exeter.
4. Championing innovative and solutions focused proposals for unlocking sites and driving quality, including: identifying opportunities for working with SMEs, MMC and local training agencies to bridge the skills gap.

3. Issues that may impact : services delivery/financial performance/future budget requirements
1. Septembers CPI has now been set at 6.7%. The rent standard and regulations allow for the rents to be set at CPI + 1%. However, in

<p>previous years the government has capped the levels of rent increase at a lower %.</p> <p>It is important that rent levels are set at a level that allows the service to continue to deliver on its ambitious priorities.</p>
2. Strengthening strategic partnerships with RPs and other key industry players to build more homes in Exeter.
3. Council owned brownfield housing development sites are unviable, and will remain so without significant government interventions.
4. Build senior strategic relationships with key funding bodies and partners to support a place based approach to infrastructure investment and delivery of affordable homes.

4. Potential changes to services/provisions being considered
1. Introduction of lifetime tenancies, as part of Review of the Housing Tenancy Policy (see above).
2. The team responsible for the collection of housing rents has now moved into Tenancy Services.
3.
4.

3. Other matters the Portfolio Holder wishes to raise with the Scrutiny Committee
1.
2.
3.
4.

REPORT TO CUSTOMER FOCUS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 30th November 2023

Report of: Lawrence Blake

Title: Council Housing Strategy

Is this a Key Decision?

Scrutiny is a non decision making committee

Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Executive

1. What is the report about?

The report summarises the contents of the proposed Council Housing Strategy 2023-2027 and the context in which it has been developed. A copy of the full strategy document is appended.

2. Recommendations:

That Scrutiny Committee and Executive note and Council approves the new Council Housing Strategy as summarised in this report.

3. Reasons for the recommendation:

The new Council Housing Strategy provides a high level overview of the City Council's priorities for the future for its Council Housing Service whilst acknowledging other forms of housing tenure within the City and any impacts on the Council Housing Service.

4. Report details:

6.1 The Council Housing Strategy sets out the Council's vision and plans for its Council Housing Service over the next 5 years. It provides a guide to the work of the Council and our partners on housing matters.

There are many issues facing the Council and our residents including significant new legislation and guidance that has been and will continue to be forthcoming, we will be required to address all the requirements to make sure that we provide the best service we can to our tenants.

4.2 There are 5 key objectives set out in the strategy. These are:

- Enhancing Resident Experience
- Providing the Right Homes in the right Places
- Providing Value for Money Services
- Supporting our residents
- Ensuring the Safety of our Homes and Residents

For each priority we have set out where we are currently, where we want to be, how we will get there and how will we know we have got there. If the strategy is adopted the required actions will be added to the Housing Service Improvement Plan.

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

7.1 The delivery of this strategy will contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan, in particular the strategic priority of "housing and building great neighbourhoods".

7.2 The delivery of the objectives within this strategy accord with the principles of being a well-run council as set out in the Corporate Plan. For example value for money services and well managed assets.

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

8.1 Council housing represents approximately 10% of the cities homes with a need for more affordable housing. The risks are greater by not having a strategy with clear objectives in place.

8.2 With the introduction of more stringent regulation in the affordable housing sector there is a risk by not having a strategy agreed which sets out the next 5 years for the service ensuring we are regulation ready and fit for purpose.

7. Equality Act 2010 (The Act)

11.1 Under the Act's Public Sector Equalities Duty, decision makers are required to consider the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct;
- advance equality by encouraging participation, removing disadvantage, taking account of disabilities and meeting people's needs; and
- foster good relations between people by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

11.2 In order to comply with the general duty authorities must assess the impact on equality of decisions, policies and practices. These duties do not prevent the authority from reducing services where necessary, but they offer a way of developing proposals that consider the impacts on all members of the community.

11.3 In making decisions the authority must take into account the potential impact of that decision in relation to age, disability, race/ethnicity (includes Gypsies and Travellers), sex and gender, gender identity, religion and belief, sexual orientation, pregnant women and new and breastfeeding mothers, marriage and civil partnership status in coming to a decision.

11.4 No potential impact has been identified on people with protected characteristics as determined by the Act because the report is for noting only

8. Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

12.1 Important to complete this section in light of the Council declaring a Climate Emergency. Consider whether the recommendations you are making in the report will help, hinder or have no direct impact on delivering our carbon reduction target (carbon neutral by 2030).

12.2 You should think about things like:-

- Travel (and, if travel is unavoidable, whether lower carbon options will be pursued e.g. walking, public transport, electric car);
- Infrastructure (e.g. LED lighting, energy efficient heating/hot water, solar panels, electric car charging points);
- Waste (e.g. recycling, composting, reducing non-recyclable waste); and
- Any other specific carbon reduction initiatives.

12.3 If there are no direct carbon/environmental implications for the decision please state:

No direct carbon/environmental impacts arising from the recommendations.

Director Ian Collinson

Report Author: Lawrence Blake

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

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

None

Contact for enquires:
Democratic Services (Committees)
Room 4.36
01392 265275

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Exeter City Council Housing Services

Council Housing Strategy

2023 – 2027

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Version:	Created By:	Approved By:	Effective Date:	Review Date:
1			01.04.2024	2027

Foreword

Exeter City Council owns and manages 4,800 rented homes and just over 1,000 leasehold properties. We are proud that we are a stock-retaining authority that looks after its tenants and leaseholders and provides an excellent level of service. We believe we are forward thinking, with an ambitious new homes programme building to the highest standards and we ensure that our existing properties are retrofitted to future-proof our tenants against rising heating costs and maintained in a timely manner. It has been recognised that our staff take pride in the delivery of services. Indeed in a recent Peer Review of the service the Local Government Association (LGA) said ‘there is a strong moral imperative to ‘do the right thing’, not just because it’s a statutory service, but because providing the best possible service is the cornerstone of the Council’.

Social housing providers across the country are now part of an increased regulatory regime, and Exeter City Council’s Housing Service is no exception. The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 follows on from the 2020 Social Housing White Paper and will introduce a wide-ranging consumer regulation regime. We are well prepared for this increased scrutiny and have put in place policies, procedures and practices that will ensure compliance with these requirements.

The Housing Ombudsman issued a new code of practice in March 2022. This Complaint Handling Code has been fully adopted by Exeter City Council’s Housing Service.

The safety of our tenants has always been at the core of our provision of housing. The Housing Services function includes a Compliance Team which have and will continue to, ensure that our tenants live in homes that are safe and well maintained.

Anti-Social Behaviour on our estates is an issue that is high in our priorities and we continue to look at ways of improving how we play our part in tackling it. Our Housing Officers follow a detailed procedure to ensure that both victims and perpetrators are treated fairly and that action, when it is needed is taken swiftly.

Increasingly, especially after COVID-19 ‘lockdowns’ people became more aware of their immediate neighbourhood. Our Resident Involvement Team continues to work with communities to improve the areas in which they live. Following the introduction of our new Resident involvement Strategy our staff have improved the methods and scope by which our tenants can engage with us to help shape and ultimately improve our service.

In Exeter, as well as the rest of the country we face a series of complex challenges not least a shortage of social rented housing. We have been forward-thinking in this regard and have already built 205 new homes, with a further 91 in the pipeline. All these homes have been constructed to the highest standards of energy efficiency, something we pledge to continue to do. These homes will be built on existing HRA owned sites.

We in Housing Services are contributing to the strategic priorities set out in the Corporate Plan 2022-26 [Corporate Plan 2022-2026 - Exeter City Council](#) . We are building housing,

great neighbourhoods and communities. Our staff provide customer focused services and we manage our housing assets well.

We have five key objectives of this strategy:

Priority 1: Enhancing Resident Experience

Priority 2: Providing the Right Homes in the Right Places

Priority 3: Providing Value for Money Services

Priority 4: Supporting our residents

Priority 5: Ensuring the Safety of our Homes and Residents

All these will take our Housing Services forward over the next five years, continuing to improve our provision so that we can tackle both high profile national issues and the issues that matter to residents in Exeter.

Cllr Barbara Denning

Portfolio Holder for Council Housing Development and Support Services

National Policy Context

The Government's Social Housing White Paper '[The Charter for Social Housing residents](#)' launched in November 2020 set out seven key commitments that residents in social housing can expect from their landlords. These have been incorporated into the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023.

1. **To be safe in your home** – the Government will work with industry and landlords to ensure every home is safe and secure
2. **To know how your landlord is performing** – including on repairs, complaints and safety and how it spends its money, so you can hold it to account
3. **To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly** – with access to a strong Ombudsman, who will give you swift and fair redress when needed
4. **To be treated with respect** - backed by a strong consumer regulator and improved consumer standards for tenants
5. **To have your voice heard by your landlord** – through regular meetings, scrutiny panels or being on its board. The Government will provide help, if you want it, to give you the tools to ensure your landlord listens
6. **To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in** – with your landlord keeping your home in good repair
7. **To be supported to take your first step to ownership** – so it is a ladder to other opportunities, should your circumstances allow.

The key overarching themes within the Act are building safety, resident voice, and accountability. To ensure compliance, a number of measures have been passed into law, while the role of the Regulator for Social Housing and the Housing Ombudsman has also been reviewed and strengthened.

The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) sets the standards that landlords have to meet to promote a well governed sector and deliver a high standard and quality of service and homes. The RSH will start to move from a reactive form of regulation, to a proactive one which will see even closer working between landlords and the regulator.

There are four consumer standards: Home, Tenant Involvement & Empowerment, Neighbourhood and Community and Tenancy. In July 2023, the RSH published its updated [Consumer Regulation Review 2022-2023](#) with the following key lessons for providers:

1. Landlords must maintain a tight grip on the quality of the homes they manage
2. Local authorities must act now to ensure compliance with the consumer standards
3. Effective tenant engagement is fundamental to meeting the requirements of the consumer standards
4. Meeting statutory health and safety requirements, including landlord gas safety requirements, is non-negotiable

The Housing Ombudsman has recently expanded its scope, underlined with the publication of its [Complaints Handling Code](#) in July 2020. The code streamlined the complaints process, enabling assessment against the code to ensure ongoing compliance. For landlords, any cases which are judged to show severe maladministration will be published by the Ombudsman.

The Building Safety Act 2022 gained Royal Assent in April 2022 and is the result of many years of work following the Grenfell Tower tragedy and the Hackitt Review which followed. The [Building Safety Act 2022](#) will bring further secondary legislation, but the key areas of focus for landlords were:

1. The creation of a Building Safety Regulatory role, as part of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), as well as a National Regulator of Construction and a New Homes Ombudsman
2. Specific provisions for high rise (18m in height or more) buildings, including the role of 'Responsible Persons'
3. Amendments to the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 where the responsibility for historic remedial works now sits with the developers or landlords as opposed to tenants or leaseholders
4. An establishment of three 'gateways' which must be achieved before a building can be occupied – Planning, Pre-construction, and Post-inspection

The Renters Reform Bill looks to improve conditions and rights for tenants in both the private rented sector and the social housing sector. [This bill](#) will extend the Decent Homes Standard into the private rented sector, ban Section 21 'no fault' evictions, empower and strengthen the ability of private landlords to take back their property if there are rent arrears or ASB, and establish a new Private Renters Ombudsman. The bill further emphasises the principles of transparency, scrutiny and regulation from the White Paper for residents of social housing.

The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill begins to develop the framework to deliver against the targets and principles contained within the [Levelling Up White Paper](#). There are four key elements contained within the bill:

1. **Providing a legal basis for the setting and reporting against the levelling up missions** – placing emphasis on the government to report on the progress and achievement against the missions outlined in the Levelling Up White Paper with clear metrics to measure success
2. **Devolving powers to all areas in England that want them, providing more control over budgets, transport and skills** – ensuring that all parts of the country, not just major cities, can benefit from bespoke devolution deals which will empower local leaders to meet the needs of their communities
3. **Empowering local leaders to regenerate towns and cities and restore local pride in places** – enabling regeneration and releasing land, it also empowers local authorities

to double Council Tax on any home left empty for longer than a year, with the aim of bringing more empty properties back into use.

4. **Improving the planning process** – giving communities control over what is built, where it is built and what it looks like, delivering an incentive to welcome development in their local areas

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the governments planning policies for housing. It was first established in 2012, with the [latest revision in 2021](#). The 2021 revision places a greater emphasis on ‘beautiful’ housing, empowering local authorities to reject low quality scheme proposals. Local authorities have also been mandated to develop their own local design codes, while there is an increased emphasis on biodiversity and access to nature.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 placed new duties on local authorities to work with homeless families to prevent or relieve homelessness before a homeless duty is accepted, this was in addition to the existing statutory duty outlined in the Housing Act 1996. In addition to this, the Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018 set a target to halve rough sleeping by 2022, and to end it by 2025.

Finally, the cost of living crisis is sure to impact households in Exeter, and across the whole country over the short to medium term of this strategy. Inflation is currently at 10.1% (May 2022) putting increased pressure on the cost of goods, while wages are not keeping pace in real terms. The energy price cap has seen growth unlike anything seen before and the Government consulted on proposals to cap rent increases for the financial year 2023/24. Exeter city Council decided to cap its rents at 7% as against the 12%+ increase that could have been levied. With all this combined, it is certain to be a challenging economic climate for both the Council and our residents alike.

Local Context

The Council Housing Strategy for 2023 – 2027 forms part of a wider strategic approach at Exeter City Council. The ambitions outlined in this strategy directly support the five priorities of the Corporate Plan:

- Prosperous local economy
- Healthy and active city
- Housing and building great neighbourhoods and communities
- Net zero carbon city
- Thriving culture and heritage

Alongside the Council Housing Strategy, there are several other supporting documents which will help us to achieve our aims. These include:

- Exeter City Council Asset Management Strategy
- Exeter City Council Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan
- Exeter City Council Homelessness Strategy
- Exeter City Council Private Sector Strategy
- Exeter City Council Tenancy Strategy
- Exeter Local Housing Needs Assessment. [Evidence base for existing adopted Local Plan - Local Housing Needs Assessment \(LHNA\) - Exeter City Council](#)
- Exeter City Council's Emerging Exeter Plan (2020-2040)
- Exeter City Council's Core Strategy (2006-2012)

Exeter City Council owns and manages 4,800 homes, which is made up of the following:

Property type	Bedroom size	Specialist	Numbers of homes/properties
House	1	0	3
	2	0	527
	3	0	1,353
	4	0	83
	5	0	7
Flat	1	376	1,324
	2	125	906
	3	0	8
Bungalow	1	56	138
	2	45	103
	3	0	10
Maisonette	1	2	2
	2	1	109
	3	0	85
Bedsit	N/A	25	142

**Specialist includes supported housing, housing for older people, sheltered housing.*

The Exeter Local Housing Needs Assessment identifies that there is a need to provide 627 new homes each year to 2040 in order to meet the need and demand in Exeter. This is based on the Government's 'standard method' for determining housing need. This figure will change during the lifetime of this strategy as it is based on a formula related to The Office for National Statistics (ONS) population data.

There are 2,160 households on the waiting list and 128 in Council temporary accommodation. There are also over 600 formerly homeless households in supported temporary accommodation in the city who require more permanent re-housing. We will be looking to work closely with our partners to deliver these much-needed homes over the life of this strategy.

The average cost of a property in Exeter has been identified in the table below:

Property size- Bedrooms	Average rent (private – median)	Average rent (social)	Average rent (affordable)	Open market ownership
1	£148.34	£74.95	£106.91	£150.85
2	£183.98	£85.69	£126.31	£183.84
3	£217.33	£94.79	£145.31	£254.05
4 +	£498.60	£114.72	£160.83	£337.98

**Figures are weekly costs taken from the Local Housing Needs Assessment*

How we are performing-some key statistics from 2022/23:

- We have carried out 15,718 repairs to our properties
- 91% of these were completed at the first visit
- By April 2023 we had completed retrofit works to 650 properties
- Since 2021 we have delivered 75 new affordable homes
- We have re-housed 638 households people under the statutory duty
- Rent arrears were 2.4% as at March 2023
- We had resolved 121 ASB cases resolved
- Number of complaints handled and closed: 127
- Overall satisfaction with repairs: 80.1% for General Needs and Older Persons' Housing & 64.6% Leaseholders
- 83 % of our General Needs and Older Persons' tenants were satisfied with neighbourhood as a place to live (71.9% Leaseholders)
- Overall satisfaction with our service: 81.8% General Needs & Older Persons' Housing, 54.7% for Leaseholders
- Average re-let time: 43 days

Note: Throughout this document we refer to 'residents' to mean both Council Housing tenants and leaseholders, the latter living in formerly Council owned properties.

Priority 1: Enhancing Resident Experience

Service expectations are continually changing and evolving, and this has been further accelerated by experiences during the Covid-19 pandemic. With the increased emphasis on resident engagement, voice and empowerment from both the Government and the RSH, it is essential that we begin to look at our service from our tenants' and leaseholders' perspective to enhance their experience with us.

The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 clearly outlines an expectation that residents will be more closely involved with service design and delivery, and we need to ensure that we have the right systems, processes and procedures in place to facilitate this.

We want our tenants and leaseholders to feel pride in the homes and neighbourhoods that they live in and know that they are empowered and listened to by us as their landlord.

Where are we now?

Our Resident Involvement Team is made up of a Strategic Lead and two Housing Community Initiatives Officers, together they work together to offer a wide range of activities and events to encourage participation in shaping our service and to capture the 'tenant voice'.

There are 7 priorities outlined in more detail in the Council's Resident Involvement Strategy 2021-2025:

1. Promotion and support for more resident involvement, providing a range of opportunities to become involved including the encouragement of residents' groups to promote a sense of community and local pride.
2. Use customer insight to improve our services, embedding resident involvement in business planning and shaping services. Have tenant representation on the Council Housing and Development Advisory Board (established in 2020). To enable tenants and leaseholders to have direct influence over housing strategy, policy, standards, and performance targets and that they are involved in performance monitoring and management.
3. Setting up projects that will help local communities, understand in their priorities, help them develop solutions and the capacity to address issues, linking community engagement to the Council's wider priorities and help communities to access the Exeter Grants Programme
4. Support for individual residents by offering training/capacity building, mentoring where needed. Arranging training and development for staff across the housing service on the skills needed to promote resident involvement.
5. Improving the ways we communicate with tenants and leaseholders, in the way they choose using their views to inform the direction of their services. Creating a method of feedback, providing evidence of the benefits of engagement. Encouraging the greater use of new technologies to increase access to information and to allow feedback and ideas to be shared in a digital/virtual way. Promotion of opportunities for tenant and leaseholder involvement, using a variety of media channels.
6. Promotion of fairness and equality, to encourage involvement from all residents irrespective of their personal characteristics, recognising that some people and groups find it difficult to have their voices heard and work to find the hidden voices. Tailoring opportunities for involvement to meet different needs/expectations.

7. Measuring our performance better, to look at outcomes, developing methods to measure social value. Enabling residents to monitor the progress of this Strategy through regular consultation. Evaluation of the changes brought about through resident involvement and publicising these with staff, tenants, leaseholders, communities and stakeholder organisations.

Currently there are a number of ways that our residents-both tenants and leaseholders can engage with us. We have a well-established 'Tenants' Voice' group who meet regularly to discuss and contribute to new policies and service standards. A similar group 'Leaseholders' Voice' also exists to consult with leaseholders as they have a slightly different relationship with us.

We have a new Complaints and Performance group who will scrutinise the key performance indicators produced by the housing services team and will act to help people resolve their complaints with us. We also have online consultation groups who offer their assistance in virtual ways.

The team set-up and organise many events and activities in the community such as drop-ins or housing surgeries, social events, both large and small and are helping to reduce social isolation amongst our older tenants by arranging interesting activities.

The team work alongside colleagues who undertake planned works for example to ensure that our tenants and leaseholders are consulted and informed about improvements to be made to their homes.

The work of the Resident Involvement team will expand as demand increases and they will ensure that the requirements as laid down in the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 are met.

Where do we want to be?

We want our tenants and leaseholders to have a great experience every time they interact with us. We are pragmatic and realise that we won't always get everything right, but when things do go wrong, we will make it easy for our residents to tell us, and make things right in the most efficient way possible.

We want to see this reflected in our customer satisfaction results, but also in the culture of how we work at Exeter. We should have our residents at the forefront of our thinking in everything that we do, and making sure that we deliver our services in this way will enable and enhance resident experience.

How will we get there?

We will work collaboratively with our residents to ensure that the opportunities for co-design are maximised. We value the voice of our residents in how our services are delivered and performing and will embrace resident input to design and deliver a service that is fit for purposed now and in the future.

We will do this by:

- Carrying out a compliance assessment against each area in the RSH regulatory framework (consumer standards) to evidence how we meet the standards expected of a provider of social housing
- Carrying out a customer journey mapping project to fully understand how our residents experience our services, and where the opportunities are for improvements.
- Delivering a programme of customer service training to all colleagues within housing services, to embed a new cultural approach as well as our revised service standards
- Consider carrying out research to understand best practice for customer service.
- Reviewing our service standards (developed in 2022) in partnership with our residents, fully reflecting what they expect from us when they engage with us.
- Reviewing our Resident Involvement Strategy (2021-2025) with our residents to develop a new strategic approach
- Undertaking the Tenant Satisfaction Measures Perception Surveys as prescribed by the RSH and analysing these results.

How will we know when we have got there?

We have set the following targets and deliverables which will help us to assess when we have successfully delivered on this strategic objective:

- The launch of co-designed service standards, developed with our Tenants' Voice group, complete with measurable indicators that will become part of our Key Performance Indicators
- Services that have been reviewed and redesigned with the resident experience in mind. This will take time to do, but will be delivered over the life of the strategy
- All staff within housing services have received customer service training, accurately reflecting the resident first approach that will flow from this strategy
- We will use the following metrics to report on the achievement of this strategic objective:

Measure	Performance 2021/22	Target 2027
Overall satisfaction	81.9%	85%
Exeter gives residents the opportunity to make their views known	55.4%	80%
Complaints responded to within timescales	89%	90%

Priority 2: Providing the Right Homes in the Right Places

We know that there is a high level of demand for affordable housing, and a drive to make these new homes more energy efficient and desirable. The Local Housing Needs Assessment identifies that there are 627 new homes a year required in Exeter in order to meet demand, and we will work with our partners to deliver against this target. This translates to a total of 12,540 additional homes required over 20 years from 2020 to 2040 in Exeter. There has been a specific need identified for homes for older people, and single occupancy homes in Exeter.

When looking at affordability in Exeter, the Local Housing Needs Assessment has highlighted that households who are in receipt of Universal Credit would be unable to meet the lower and median quartile rents in the private sector, further highlighting the need to develop more affordable housing in the city to meet need in line with affordability.

It is equally as important that these homes are delivered in the right areas too, building homes and neighbourhoods that are fit for the future and meet the needs and expectations of residents in Exeter.

Our Homelessness Strategy is intrinsically linked to this strategic priority. In 2021/22 we had an average of 3,131 households who were on our waiting list for housing, with a rolling average of 121 households in temporary accommodation and 193 identified as rough sleeping in Exeter. We are fully committed to delivering against the government Rough Sleeping Strategy to eradicate rough sleeping by 2025, while we understand the financial pressures that are brought by utilising temporary accommodation solutions for homeless households, the majority of which will be housed within private sector accommodation.

There were 537 empty homes in Exeter at the end of 21/22, and we will work to bring these properties back into use to help increase the supply and provision of suitable housing for those households that need them the most.

Where are we now?

Exeter City Council has 4,800 homes that it owns, and we provide responsive, planned and cyclical works to these homes to keep them in good and safe condition. In the last five years, we have delivered new homes in Exeter through our partnership with other organisations with 523 being new affordable homes. We have recently received the outcomes of the Local Housing Needs Assessment, which enables us to accurately predict the need for new homes in Exeter, and we will be working closely with developers to deliver against these targets for the residents of Exeter.

Policy CP7 of the Exeter Core Strategy requires developments of 10 or more homes to include 35% affordable homes subject to viability. We will be looking to include a similar replacement policy in the emerging Exeter Plan, with the percentage based on affordable housing and development viability.

Where do we want to be?

We want to make sure that we are building and enabling the development of the homes and neighbourhoods that our residents need. We aim to deliver on the target of 627 new homes each year and will ensure that we utilise our powers under Section 106 agreements to deliver desirable neighbourhoods which go further than just bricks and mortar.

We want to reduce our re-let times to ensure that available homes are fit for occupation as soon as is practicably possible. This will also help us to maximise our rental income and further strengthens our ability to do more with a strong Housing Revenue Account (HRA). Alongside this, we also want to continue our 'whole-property' retrofit programme and deliver energy efficiency benefits to all tenants – on completed properties, tenants are currently benefitting from reduced electric and gas costs of between 40% and 60%.

How will we get there?

We will work closely with our partner agencies and other departments within the council to deliver the homes that are needed within Exeter over the life of this strategy through our development and enabling function. We are in a unique position where we provide services to those who need homes the most, and yet are not able to provide the number of homes needed without the assistance of other partner organisations. A collaborative and productive relationship is required for us to meet this demand moving forward.

We will maintain a comprehensive Asset Management Strategy, alongside a Private Sector Strategy which will give us clarity over the areas that we need to focus on in the coming years. We will utilise the data that we hold to make sure that the decisions that we take are

based on evidence and fact, enabling targeted provision for the needs of our communities now and into the future.

We will work to bring empty homes back into use across the city, providing an additional source of supply to meet demand, and strengthen our links with private landlords to further grow our availability to help those households that need it the most.

How will we know when we have got there?

We have set the following targets and deliverables which will help us to assess when we have successfully delivered on this strategic objective:

- The delivery of 627 new homes per year in Exeter, in line with the findings from the Local Housing Needs Assessment
- The delivery of our planned maintenance programme to keep our existing stock modern and safe
- The development of a new Asset Management Strategy, which will set out our ambitions and financial position to develop and maintain homes in Exeter including completion of the full retrofit of properties
- The establishment of new resident groups to work closely with us on all aspects of development and upkeep, including elements of our planned investment programme
- We will incentivise and proactively target bringing empty properties in Exeter back into use.
- We will use the following metrics to report on the achievement of this strategic objective:

Measure	Performance 2022/23	Target 2027
Number of new homes built	544 (20/21 figure)	3,135 (627 per year x 5)
Number of new affordable homes built to date	101	500 by 2030
Number of households on the waiting list (Devon Home Choice figure)	2,200 (Devon Home Choice figure)	N/A
Percentage of our planned investment programme successfully delivered	90% - £10.3m of a budget of £11.5m	100%

Measure	Performance 2022/23	Target 2027
Retrofit Programme - Number of properties completed	650	4700 (by 2038)
Satisfaction with works carried out as part of our planned investment programme	80% (May 2023)	90%
Re-let times	43 days	30

Priority 3: Providing Value for Money Services

Where are we now?

In an increasingly challenging economic climate, we strive to provide services that deliver value for money for our residents. From the provision of our responsive and planned maintenance service to the upkeep of our estates and improvements to our leasehold properties, we consistently seek to strike the right balance between cost and quality for our residents.

The provision of most of these services is funded through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) which is a ring-fenced account purely to fund the delivery of housing related services. The Exeter Housing Revenue Account Business Plan details our financial planning for future years to 2042, and the amounts that we will invest in the maintenance and upkeep of our existing homes as well as the provision of other services.

We want to ensure that the rent and other income that our residents pay to us is spent in an effective and efficient way and will ensure that we are financially prudent in how we procure goods and services to residents.

Additional factors can also affect our financial position, such as the number of our homes that are empty in Exeter and the time it takes us to let our vacant properties. We will work to ensure that our re-let times meet challenging targets and bring empty properties back into use.

Where do we want to be?

We want to maintain a healthy Housing Revenue Account (HRA) to enable us to deliver more services for our residents, maximising our income from rent and service charges. This in turn will allow us to procure and deliver more for your money that you pay to us, delivering better services for our residents.

We want to be proactive in the management of our existing contracts, reviewing the performance with suppliers and contractors on a regular basis to ensure that we are delivering real value for money in our current service provision.

How will we get there?

We will:

- Carry out a review of our existing contracts and supply chain to ensure that the money invested in these services is delivering value for money for our residents
- Move our income collection service to a preventative and proactive model, working with our residents to sustain their tenancies and maximise the income into the Housing Revenue Account (HRA)
- Continue to publish our financial performance yearly to be accountable, open and transparent as part of our annual report
- Benchmark our financial performance against other similar landlords to ensure we are performing in line with the rest of the sector, and act where we might be an outlier
- Consult with our involved residents to ensure that our money is being spent on the things that matter to the residents of Exeter
- Look at the potential of technology to help with the management of rent arrears (predictive analytics, opportunities to pay rents in different ways).

How will we know when we have got there?

We have set the following targets and deliverables which will help us to assess when we have successfully delivered on this strategic objective:

- Top quartile financial performance achieved and reflected in benchmarking
- Achieving a target of 2% or below for rent arrears in our homes

- A decrease in residents being evicted for rent arrears as a result of a preventative model of rent management
- High performing contracts and supplier relationships built on resident facing metrics
- We will use the following metrics to report on the achievement of this strategic objective:

Measure	Performance 2022/23	Target 2027
Rent arrears (%)	2.40% as of March 2023 Housemark average 2.80%	2%
Delivery of agreed targets for repairs (planned and responsive)	TBC	TBC
Total spend vs budget (for Housing Revenue Account [HRA], capital budgets and general fund)	Revenue - 84% Capital – 90%	100%
Repairs cost per property	TBC	TBC
Number of repairs per property	3.3	N/A
Repairs completed at first visit	91% (March 2023)	95%
Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the repairs service that you received this time	94% (March 2023)	96%
How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that your rent provides value for money	84.1% (GN & HfOP only)	90%

Priority 4: Supporting our residents

Where are we now?

We know that our residents will need more support from us now and in the coming years. With the current cost of living, higher than normal rent increases, inflationary pressures and numbers of affordable homes that are insufficient to meet demand means that we must work harder than ever to support our residents living in our homes.

In 2021/22 we successfully sustained 282 tenancies, preventing evictions through conversations with our residents and agreeing repayment plans for arrears. This is something that we will look to make a cornerstone of our approach in supporting residents.

We continue to see significant demand for affordable housing in Exeter. While we are working to provide homes for all of those who need them, there is a shortfall between the level of need and demand. In 2021/22 we accepted a statutory homelessness prevention duty for 423 households, with 76 of those housed within Exeter City Council homes (55 in 22/23) and a further 85 in accommodation provided by our partner housing associations (70 in 22/23), the remainder were accommodated in the private rented sector.

There were 193 people rough sleeping in Exeter in 2021/22, and this is an area where we recognise the need to focus support for residents in partnership with other organisations in Exeter.

Where do we want to be?

We want to work with our residents and partners to provide as much support to our residents as is needed. We want to utilise our data, knowledge, relationships and insight to move our income management to a proactive model, engaging with residents before they fall into arrears.

We will aim towards ending rough sleeping in Exeter by 2025 in line with the Government's Rough Sleeping Strategy, and we want to utilise the findings from the Local Housing Needs Assessment to ensure that we are delivering the numbers of homes identified as being required to meet local need.

We want our residents to be able to engage with us, knowing that we are there to support them with whatever difficulties they may face, and that even where we cannot provide direct support, we can utilise our extensive network of partners to signpost or refer to in order to help.

We want to maximise the supply of good quality, affordable housing in order to meet demand. To enable us to do this, we need to work closely with private landlords and other housing providers in Exeter.

How will we get there?

We will develop partnerships with agencies throughout Exeter to ensure we can provide support to our residents when they need it. Through the analysis of our resident voice through complaints, contact and involved groups, we will be able to proactively understand

where our residents need our support the most, and we will track this on a regular basis to enable us to respond and react accordingly.

We want to ensure that there are no rough sleepers in Exeter by 2025, and we will develop a toolkit of interventions with our partners to achieve this, focusing not only on the provision of homes but also tackling the root causes and complexities that lead to rough sleeping in a holistic way. This will help to sustain those who will transition from rough sleeping into settled accommodation.

The provision of money advice and support will become ever more important, and we need to make sure that our staff have the knowledge and skills to be able to provide this level of support. We are pragmatic in our view that we cannot be specialists in every field, and we will look to partner with agencies who can provide advice and support in areas such as energy, mental health and broader money advice.

The importance of using our data to provide targeted and proactive support cannot be underestimated, and we will carry out both a data audit and data maturity assessment to see how we can improve our insight and analytical capabilities. We will also review the information provided on our website and revisit our wider digital offer, so that we are available to support our residents when they need us, and they can communicate with us in a wide variety of ways.

Our Planning Team and their adopted strategies-such as the Exeter's Core Strategy and the emerging Exeter Plan provide help in delivering affordable homes.

How will we know when we have got there?

We have set the following targets and deliverables which will help us to assess when we have successfully delivered on this strategic objective:

- The establishment of a network of support agencies and a process for referral and engagement, both within Exeter but also nationally where the expertise is required
- No rough sleeping in Exeter by 2025
- The commission and completion of a data audit and data maturity assessment
- The review of our digital offer for residents, looking at the options for multi-channel contact across the council
- The review of information held and provided through our website so that residents can access information when they need it
- A reduction in the number of evictions as a result of rent arrears, through the provision of a pro-active, people centred approach to income management.
- We will use the following metrics to report on the achievement of this strategic objective:

Measure	Performance 2022/23	Target 2027
Number of referrals to external partner organisations for support	TBC	TBC
Number of evictions as a result of rent arrears	TBC	0
Number of tenancies sustained as a result of interventions and support	TBC	TBC
Numbers of individuals/households identified as rough sleeping	193	0
How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that Exeter City Council is easy to deal with	62.95% (all tenures)	90%

Priority 5: Ensuring the Safety of our Homes and Residents

Where are we now?

A key priority for us is to ensure that our tenants and leaseholders are safe in our homes. We do this in a variety of ways, from the electrical and gas safety checks that we carry out, the management of anti-social behaviour (ASB) on our estates, to the maintenance and upkeep of our properties through our responsive and planned maintenance service.

In 2022/23 we carried out:

- More than 15,700 responsive repairs jobs
- More than 4,500 gas safety checks
- Just over 1,200 domestic electrical safety checks
- Over 1,000 Health and Safety inspections, including asbestos, legionella and lifts
- More than 500 Fire Risk Assessments

There has been an increased emphasis on building safety within the social housing sector following the tragic events at Grenfell Tower, the Hackitt Review that followed and the Government White Paper now the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 all deal with this. There is now a clear and consistent standard that landlords have to meet around building safety which is significantly more comprehensive than it was previously, and we have more work to do to continue to ensure our residents are kept safe.

Where do we want to be?

We want to take a zero-risk approach to any health and safety matters relating to our homes and residents. We will ensure that we are completing all health and safety checks within the mandatory timescales to protect our residents, and will work closely with our involved residents to deliver on this aspect.

We want to investigate how new technology can also help us to move towards a more proactive approach to safety in our homes. In-home devices can now let landlords know when an element (such as a boiler, or a smoke alarm) is about to fail, which removes risk even further than the current approach.

We want to play our part in making our environment more sustainable, looking at energy efficiency options and maximising our green spaces on our estates. We will develop an Environmental Sustainability Strategy for the whole council which will look at our homes and estates, identifying areas where we can start to deliver improvements in our approach to the environment.

It is important for us to be compliant with both legislation and the regulatory standards, and we will commission a review to look at how we comply with the new Building Safety Act as well as the Home Standard within the regulatory standards. We will carry this out in partnership with our residents to make sure that the resident voice is heard in this important area.

A tiny minority of tenants make it extremely difficult for us to carry out safety inspections in their homes. This impacts not just their own wellbeing but also the safety of their neighbours. It also adds to costs and takes away resources which would be better used to improve our service. We will work closely with our tenants and our Legal team to create strategies which ensure we gain access when we need to so that we are always compliant and all our residents live in (and next to) safe properties.

We take all reports of anti-social behaviour (ASB) on our estates seriously, and we will work with our residents, the Police, and other organisations, to tackle and eradicate ASB as quickly and successfully as possible. To make sure that our service is in line with best practice, we will carry out a review and benchmark our performance in this area to allow us to continually improve.

We take all accidents seriously, we work closely with our residents and when appropriate/necessary we collaborate with other organisations and contractors. When things do go wrong, we actively, impartially and thoroughly investigate the event. We do this to make sure that the same event does not happen again. To date, this action has further significantly increased safety with homes and has enable us to put in place improved practices to help keep everyone safe.

How will we get there?

We will review and enhance the data that we hold on our homes to ensure that we remain fully compliant in all aspects of health and safety and are protecting our residents. By reviewing our performance in this area, we will be able to understand where there are opportunities for improvement, and we will introduce a 'Safety First' culture for both our colleagues and residents which will ensure that this area is at the forefront of how we operate.

We will develop strategic approaches to environmental sustainability, health and safety and ASB which will give us a clear direction on the evolution and improvement in these areas. We want to be in the top quartile performance for tackling ASB, while our no risk approach means that we will have none of our key health and safety inspections out of date (e.g. gas, electrical safety and fire risk assessments).

Key to us achieving in this area will be the partnerships that we develop with our residents, suppliers and partner agencies. We will work to develop processes and networks that will provide a seamless multi-agency approach to each of these areas.

How will we know when we have got there?

We have set the following targets and deliverables which will help us to assess when we have successfully delivered on this strategic objective:

- Exploration of the potential of new technology in relation to Building Safety
- Achieving top quartile performance in relation to ASB
- All relevant colleagues will have undertaken mandatory health and safety training to help build a 'Safety First' culture including asbestos awareness for all staff
- We have a package of 15 mandatory health & safety courses that all staff must undertake including COSHH awareness, legionella awareness, DSE awareness, lone working, manual handling, electrical safety awareness & risk assessment training
- Review completed on our compliance with legislation and regulation, with an action plan produced
- We will use the following metrics to report on the achievement of this strategic objective:

Measure	Performance 2022/23	Target 2027
Percentage of homes with a valid gas safety certificate	99.73%	100%
Percentage of homes in receipt of an electrical safety check (where required)	95.85%	100%

Measure	Performance 2022/23	Target 2027
Percentage of fire risk assessments completed (where required)	100%	100%
Numbers of relevant housing staff completed mandatory health & safety training	39%	100%
How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that Exeter City Council provides a home that is safe and secure	79.8% satisfied neither 9.8%, dissatisfied 10.4%	95%

Conclusion

We believe that this strategy offers the best and most appropriate priorities for the tenants of Exeter City Council by setting out how we are going to take our services forward over the next four years. By enhancing the resident experience, making it easier to contact us and ensuring that our tenants can play a part in shaping our services; providing new homes of the right type where they are needed; ensuring that the monies we receive in rents is spent wisely in the most cost-effective manner; supporting our residents in their homes and making sure that our homes are safe for our tenants to live in will all contribute to improving our vision so that we can respond to national issues and the issues that matter to residents in Exeter.

Equality Impact Assessment: Council Housing Strategy

The Equality Act 2010 includes a general duty which requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- **Eliminate discrimination**, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
- **Advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- **Foster good relations** between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not

In order to comply with the general duty authorities must assess the impact on equality of decisions, policies and practices. These duties do not prevent the authority from reducing services where necessary, but they offer a way of developing proposals that consider the impacts on all members of the community.

Authorities which fail to carry out equality impact assessments risk making poor and unfair decisions which may discriminate against particular groups and worsen inequality.

Committee name and date:	Report Title	Decisions being recommended:	People with protected characteristics potentially impacted by the decisions to be made:
Executive 9 th January 2024	Council Housing Strategy	To agree the updated strategy	

Factors to consider in the assessment: For each of the groups below, an assessment has been made on whether the proposed decision will have a **positive, negative or neutral impact**. This must be noted in the table below alongside brief details of why this conclusion has been reached and notes of any mitigation proposed. Where the impact is negative, a **high, medium or low assessment** is given. The assessment rates the impact of the policy based on the current situation (i.e. disregarding any actions planned to be carried out in future).

High impact – a significant potential impact, risk of exposure, history of complaints, no mitigating measures in place etc.

Medium impact – some potential impact exists, some mitigating measures are in place, poor evidence

Low impact – almost no relevancy to the process, e.g. an area that is very much legislation led and where the Council has very little discretion

Protected characteristic/ area of interest	Positive or Negative Impact	High, Medium or Low Impact	Reason
Race and ethnicity (including Gypsies and Travellers; migrant workers; asylum seekers).	Neutral	Low	This group of people are not adversely affected by this strategy
Disability: as defined by the Equality Act – a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse impact on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.	Neutral	Low	Providing the right homes in the right places includes ensuring that we provide more homes for those people with disabilities.
Sex/Gender	Neutral	Low	Legislation governs all aspects of housing services provision in respect of protected characteristics such as sex/gender.
Gender reassignment	Neutral	Low	As above
Religion and belief (includes no belief, some philosophical beliefs such as Buddhism and sects within religions).	Neutral	Low	As above
Sexual orientation (including heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual).	Neutral	Low	As above
Age (children and young people aged 0-24; adults aged 25-50; younger)	Positive	Medium	The Council Housing Strategy looks to the future where the impact of its proposals will affect those who have yet to require housing

Protected characteristic/ area of interest	Positive or Negative Impact	High, Medium or Low Impact	Reason
older people aged 51-75/80; older people 81+; frail older people; people living with age related conditions. The age categories are for illustration only as overriding consideration should be given to needs).			as separate households. It sets out how our priorities of supporting people of all ages in our homes, or yet to become tenants.
Pregnancy and maternity including new and breast feeding mothers	Neutral	Low	As above
Marriage and civil partnership status	Neutral	Low	As above as this is a protected characteristic

Actions identified that will mitigate any negative impacts and/or promote inclusion

-

Officer: Sarah Hemming

Date: 24.10.23

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REPORT TO CUSTOMER FOCUS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 30th November 2023

Report of: Lawrence Blake

Title: Tenancy Policy and Strategy review

Is this a Key Decision?

Scrutiny is a non decision making committee

Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Executive

1. What is the report about?

The report summarises the revised Tenancy Strategy and Policy following a review and consultation. It is proposed that the revised Tenancy Strategy and Policy 2023-2027 be adopted and implemented. A copy of the Strategy and Policy documents are appended.

2. Recommendations:

That Scrutiny Committee and Executive note and Council approves the new Tenancy Strategy and Policy as summarised in this report.

3. Reasons for the recommendation:

The council is required to provide a Tenancy Strategy which contains provisions on expectations for all social landlords who operate in Exeter in areas such as types of tenancies and length of fixed term tenancies if used.

As Exeter City Council is a social landlord with its own housing stock, we are required to have a Tenancy Policy. In this policy, we detail how Exeter City Council will take into account the Tenancy Strategy and issue tenancies.

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

With the requirement to review fixed term tenancies being removed from Housing Officers functions this will reduce a small proportion of their workload. This has been more than compensated by the regulatory expectations about compliance and understanding our tenants better and tailoring our services to ensure we deliver fair and equitable services.

5. What are the legal aspects?

Legal Services have been consulted and input into the drafting of the policy.

6. Report details:

6.1 Although many social landlords who operate in Exeter work across several local authorities it is expected that they will have due regard to the Tenancy Strategy.

The Localism Act of 2011 requires every local authority to publish a Tenancy Strategy, which contains provisions on expectations for all social landlords in the area in relation to:

- The types of tenancies that will be granted
- The length of fixed term tenancies where these are granted
- The circumstances under which a particular type of tenancy will be granted
- The process for reviewing tenancies at the end of the fixed term and the circumstances under which a tenancy may or may not be renewed either in the same property or in a different property
- All social landlords are required to set out the way in which a tenant or prospective tenant may seek a review of:
 - The length of the fixed term
 - The type of tenancy offered
 - A decision not to grant another tenancy upon the expiry of the fixed term

The draft Tenancy Strategy is appended to this report.

6.2 Exeter City Council expects all social landlords with homes in Exeter to set out and publish a Tenancy Policy.

As Exeter City Council is also social landlord with its own housing stock, we are required to have a Tenancy Policy. In the policy we detail how Exeter City Council will address the issues outlined in the accompanying Tenancy Strategy.

This policy will be reviewed every three years; however, we may carry out a review earlier if there are legislative, regulatory or other strategic changes which would have a material impact on any element of this policy.

6.3 Exeter City Council has taken the decision to revert to offering secure lifetime tenancies in all circumstances for its own social housing stock. Where a tenancy is offered to a new social housing tenant or a person who has previously held a social housing tenancy but with a break in tenure, the secure tenancy will be preceded by a 12-month introductory tenancy plus a potential extension of 6 months.

All existing fixed-term tenancies will be transitioned to secure lifetime tenancies following the successful completion of the introductory tenancy.

As well as addressing issues regarding tenancy and tenure type, this Tenancy Policy also sets out how Exeter City Council deals with applications for succession following the change in law brought about by the Localism Act 2011.

6.4 Since 2015 we have offered a 5 or 2 year fixed term tenancy (with an introductory period). No one is offered a less secure tenancy. The tenancy would not be renewed if there are serious breaches of the tenancy agreement or the property is significantly under or over crowded.

Over 1000 fixed term tenancies have been issued since the previous tenancy policy was introduced. Of these 60% have been renewed at the original property, 38% have been extended (2 years) whilst alternative properties are located and 2% were terminated at the point of review.

6.5 Consultation has taken place with both tenants and stakeholders. There were 418 responses received from the consultation of which 81% were supportive of lifetime tenancies. 33% of social landlords operating in Exeter retain the option to issue a fixed term tenancy.

6.6 At the time of the original decision to introduce fixed term tenancies it was expected that the introduction of fixed term tenancies would free up more social housing as people's circumstances changed. With only 2% properties being freed up over 7 years this was not the outcome anticipated.

6.7 It could be argued that by offering tenants lifetime tenancies they will more inclined to engage within the community and neighbourhoods than if on a 5 year tenancy. This accords with the following priorities:

Corporate Plan Priorities include

"Housing and building great neighbourhoods and communities"

Exeter Live Better

"Exeter thrives on community spirit"

Wellbeing Exeter

"Community life and social connections are vital to all our health and wellbeing"

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

7.1 The delivery of this strategy will contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan, in particular the strategic priority of "housing and building great neighbourhoods".

7.2 The delivery of the objectives within this strategy accord with the principles of being a well-run council as set out in the Corporate Plan. For example value for money services and well managed assets.

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

8.1 There are reputational risks in not having an up to date Tenancy Policy and Strategy. With the introduction of more stringent regulation any inspection of the housing service would expect to review our policies and strategies to ensure they are fit for purpose.

9. Equality Act 2010 (The Act)

11.1 Under the Act's Public Sector Equalities Duty, decision makers are required to consider the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct;
- Advance equality by encouraging participation, removing disadvantage, taking account of disabilities and meeting people's needs; and
- Foster good relations between people by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

11.2 In order to comply with the general duty, authorities must assess the impact on equality of decisions, policies and practices. These duties do not prevent the authority from reducing services where necessary, but they offer a way of developing proposals that consider the impacts on all members of the community.

11.3 In making decisions the authority must take into account the potential impact of that decision in relation to age, disability, race/ethnicity (includes Gypsies and Travellers), sex and gender, gender identity, religion and belief, sexual orientation, pregnant women and new and breastfeeding mothers, marriage and civil partnership status in coming to a decision.

11.4 No potential impact has been identified on people with protected characteristics as determined by the Act because the report is for noting only.

10. Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

10.1 There are no direct carbon/environmental impacts arising from the recommendations.

11. Are there any other options?

A decision could be made to continue with fixed term tenancies however for the reasons set out in this report this is not considered a viable option.

Director Ian Collinson

Report Author: Lawrence Blake

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

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

None

Contact for enquires:
Democratic Services (Committees)
Room 4.36
01392 265275



Exeter City Council Housing Services

Tenancy Strategy 2023 – 2027

1. Introduction

There have been many changes in the national housing landscape since Exeter City Council last published its previous Tenancy Strategy. In 2012, there was a drive from the Government to ensure that social housing tenants would not benefit from greater tenancy security than tenants in the private rented sector, introducing the use of discretionary fixed term tenancies for social housing landlords.

In 2016, the Government introduced the Housing and Planning Act 2016 with the intention of phasing out the award of lifetime tenancies, but landlords would still be able to offer tenancies lasting up to the 19th birthday of the youngest occupant.

These provisions were not implemented, and the events at Grenfell Tower in 2017 changed the national housing landscape and the Government approach to policy. In the social housing green paper 'A New Deal for Social Housing' the Government explained that they would not implement compulsory fixed term tenancies, while in the private sector, there have been policy decisions taken to extend the length of tenancies offered by landlords, and the removal of 'no fault' evictions.

The Secure Tenancies (Victims of Domestic Abuse) Act 2018 recognised that where a secure (lifetime) tenant was offered a new tenancy when moving due to domestic abuse, they should retain their existing security of tenure and not be offered a fixed-term tenancy.

2. Strategic overview

Exeter City Council recognises that it may have limited influence over decisions made by other social landlords within Exeter, many of whom will operate across multiple local authority areas. The changes in housing policy have meant some landlords have removed the use of fixed term tenancies, returning to issuing lifetime tenancies in the process. Exeter City Council expects social landlords within Exeter to have due regard to this strategy, so that tenants and applicants in the city understand the types of tenancy available.

The Localism Act of 2011 requires every local authority to publish a Tenancy Strategy, which contains provisions on expectations for all social landlords in the area in relation to:

- The types of tenancies that will be granted
- The length of fixed term tenancies where these are granted
- The circumstances under which a particular type of tenancy will be granted
- The process for reviewing tenancies at the end of the fixed term and the circumstances under which a tenancy may or may not be renewed either in the same property or in a different property
- All social landlords are required to set out the way in which a tenant or prospective tenant may seek a review of:

- The length of the fixed term
- The type of tenancy offered
- A decision not to grant another tenancy upon the expiry of the fixed term

3. Strategy Statement

Exeter City Council expects all social housing providers to produce and publish a Tenancy Policy, which addresses all of the items listed above in section 2. Exeter City Council sets out our strategy below relating to those items, and expects social landlords operating within Exeter to have due regard to these strategic objectives.

3.1 What types of tenancy will be granted?

The Council expects that social landlords will offer either fixed term tenancies or lifetime tenancies (secure or assured) and that these tenancies may be preceded by an introductory or probationary 12 month tenancy.

3.2 If fixed term tenancies are offered, how long will they last?

Exeter City Council does not support the granting of fixed term tenancies for less than five years. Exeter City Council would expect that fixed term tenancies, where granted, would be for a minimum period of five years or longer, or up to the 19th birthday of the youngest occupant.

3.3 Under what circumstances will a particular tenancy be granted?

Where social landlords offer introductory or probationary tenancies, it should be offered to all new social housing tenants.

Existing social housing tenants should not lose their security of tenure, or other tenancy rights following a move to a different social housing tenancy where there has been no break in tenancy.

Social landlords may wish to offer a fixed term tenancy to existing or new tenants moving to a new build affordable rent property.

Social landlords may wish to offer a mix of fixed term and lifetime tenancies depending on various circumstances, for example:

- Offering lifetime tenancies to people over pensionable age, or those with physical or mental disabilities
- Fixed term tenancies to tenants moving to certain types or size of home

3.4 What process will be used to review tenancies at the end of the fixed term?

Social landlords must have a clear policy for reviewing a tenancy prior to the end of the fixed term. This should include details of any financial limits relating to arrears that would prevent the award of a further tenancy, and how a landlord will decide if a property continues to meet the needs of the household.

The tenancy review should be an opportunity for both the landlord and the tenant to consider whether the property still best meets the tenant's needs and how it might meet the tenant's future housing aspirations.

Where the review is carried out with a tenant who may be vulnerable, we expect social landlords to take all reasonable steps to ensure that the tenant can fully participate in the review hearing.

We would expect the review to take place at least nine months before the tenancy is due to end to allow the tenant time to find suitable, alternative accommodation if the tenancy is not renewed and alternative accommodation will not be provided.

3.5 Under what circumstances will a tenancy not be renewed either in the same property or a different property?

Given that Exeter City Council has a strategic responsibility to prevent homelessness where possible, and to ensure that realistic housing options are available to those in housing need, it would be damaging for landlords not to renew tenancies unless they have carried out a thorough review, including offering appropriate advice and guidance to find alternative accommodation.

Under the Localism Act 2011, it is the responsibility of the landlord to provide such advice. However, Exeter City Council can provide support to all applicants for social or affordable housing, including options within the private rented sector.

As Exeter City Council retains the statutory responsibility to provide housing for homeless households in priority need, we want to ensure that a robust approach is taken to the provision of advice and assistance where a tenancy is not renewed, and we would ask all landlords in Exeter to:

- Notify the Council when a tenancy is not to be renewed, and the agreed alternative housing arrangements
- If the landlord is not making use of the Council's advice and assistance service (which is our preferred option) provide details of the advice and assistance given

All social landlords are required to set out the way in which a tenant or prospective tenant may seek a review of:

- The length of the fixed term
- The type of tenancy offered
- A decision not to grant another tenancy on the expiry of the fixed term

The Council expects social landlords to ensure their Tenancy Policies contain the following information:

- How and whom review requests should be made, including timescales for making the request
- How any review panel will be made up and implemented
- Provision of timescales for administering the review

Tenancy Policies should be widely publicised and accessible for tenants and prospective tenants.

3.6 The Tenancy Standard

The Regulatory Framework for social housing in England sets out the specific standards that Registered Providers (RP's) must meet. The Tenancy Standard requires RP's to let their homes in a transparent and efficient way and to take account of the housing needs of tenants and potential tenants. They must demonstrate how their tenants:

- Make the best use of available housing
- Are compatible with the purpose of the housing
- Contribute to local authorities strategic housing functions and sustainable communities

RP's are also expected to co-operate with local authorities strategic housing functions and their duty to meet identified local housing need. This includes assistance with local authorities' homelessness duties, and through meeting obligations in nominations agreements.

The standards in the Regulatory Framework are currently under review, with a refreshed set of obligations to be launched on the 1st April 2024. Once these are launched, we will refresh this strategy and our own Tenancy Policy to ensure ongoing compliance with the new Regulatory Framework.

As Exeter City Council owns and manages its own social housing, we will produce our own Tenancy Policy which will adhere to the principles in this strategy.

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Exeter
City Council



Council Housing
& Development Services

Exeter City Council Housing Services

Tenancy Policy 2023 – 2027

1 Introduction

- 1.1 As Exeter City Council is a social landlord with its own housing stock, we are required to have a Tenancy Policy. In this policy, we will detail how Exeter City Council will address the issues outlined in the accompanying Tenancy Strategy.
- 1.2 This policy will be reviewed every three years; however, we may carry out a review earlier if there are legislative, regulatory or other strategic changes which would have a material impact on any element of this policy.
- 1.3 Exeter City Council has taken the decision to revert to offering secure lifetime tenancies in all circumstances for its own social housing stock. Where a tenancy is offered to a new social housing tenant or a person who has previously held a social housing tenancy but with a break in tenure, the secure tenancy will be preceded by a 12-month introductory tenancy plus a potential extension of 6 months.
- 1.4 All existing fixed-term tenancies will be transitioned to secure lifetime tenancies following the successful completion of the introductory tenancy.
- 1.5 As well as addressing issues regarding tenancy and tenure type, this Tenancy Policy also sets out how Exeter City Council deals with applications for succession following the change in law brought about by the Localism Act 2011.

2 Policy statement

- 2.1 We will offer 12-month introductory tenancies (with the ability to extend for a further 6 months) to all new social housing tenants of Exeter City Council.
- 2.2 We will transition all tenancies to secure, lifetime tenancies where the introductory or fixed term tenancy has been conducted successfully. A review will not take place, the tenancies will automatically revert.
- 2.3 We will grant secure, lifetime tenancies to existing social housing tenants who are transferring or moving from another organisation that offers fixed-term tenancies.
- 2.4 We will no longer be offering fixed-term tenancies to tenants of Exeter City Council.
- 2.5 No one will be offered a tenancy that is any less secure than that which they already hold.
- 2.6 In line with regulatory requirements, social landlords are required to set out the ways in which a tenant or prospective tenant may seek a review of the length of the fixed term, the type of tenancy offered or a decision not to grant another tenancy upon the expiry of the fixed term. This is not applicable to Exeter City Council due to the fact that we will no longer offer fixed term tenancies.
- 2.7 There are no rights for tenants to ask for a formal review of an introductory tenancy. However, where a tenant believes that Exeter City Council has

incorrectly awarded an introductory tenancy, this should be raised through the formal complaints process, the details of which can be found on our website. These complaints should be raised within 14 days of signing the Tenancy Agreement, and requests will only be considered where an introductory tenancy has been granted in contravention of this policy.

- 2.8 We will provide information to tenants regarding requirements for review hearings if an introductory tenancy is to be extended or ended no less than three months before the end of the 12-month period.
- 2.9 We will, in line with legislation and your tenancy agreement, offer the following options in relation to succession of a tenancy:
- For tenancies that commenced prior to 1st April 2012, we will offer succession to a partner or spouse, or succession to a family member living with the tenant for the preceding 12 months. Family members are those as defined by the Housing Act 1985, section 113.
 - For tenancies that commenced after 1st April 2012, we will offer succession only to a partner or spouse, in line with legislation
- 2.10 We will support to provide alternative accommodation subject to Devon Home Choice qualifying criteria to a full-time live-in carer (who does not qualify as a family member) and who gave up social housing accommodation to provide care for the deceased tenant for a minimum of 12 months prior to death, and where no alternative or economically realistic housing option exists. There is no right of succession to a carer employed by the deceased tenant.
- 2.11 Successors to a tenancy, irrespective of the tenancy start date, may be required to move to accommodation that meets their household needs.
- 2.12 Survivorship of a tenancy by joint tenants applies in all tenure types. Joint tenants have the right of survivorship following the death of a joint tenant. There is no residency criteria for survivorship to take place, therefore, a non-resident joint tenant will survive the tenancy and remain a tenant. There is no right of succession once a tenancy has been survived.

3 Assignment

- 3.1 Assignment is the transfer of a tenancy during the life of the tenant. The person transferring the tenancy is the 'assignor' and the tenancy is transferred to the 'assignee'
- 3.2 The assignment means the assignee becomes the tenant of Exeter City Council under the same tenancy agreement.
- 3.3 Requests for assignments will be considered in line with the Housing Act 1985 s91(3) which sets out when a secure tenancy can be assigned. The three circumstances are:

- Assignment by way of Mutual Exchange.
- Assignment following an order of the Court made in certain Matrimonial, Civil Partnership or Children Act Proceedings.
- Assignment to a potential successor to the tenancy.

4 Direct Matches

- 4.1 All allocations will be made through a choice-based lettings scheme- Devon Home Choice. This operates independently of the Council.
- 4.2 In exceptional circumstances the City Council has the discretion to allocate our own stock outside of the Devon Home Choice (DCH) Policy.

5. Review

- 5.1 In conjunction with this policy staff will be provided with an operational procedure on the granting of tenancies going forward.
- 5.2 This Policy has been written in line with good practice and current relevant legislation. Unless there any changes to such legislation beforehand, the Policy will be reviewed every three years.

Equality Impact Assessment: Tenancy Strategy

The Equality Act 2010 includes a general duty which requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- **Eliminate discrimination**, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
- **Advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- **Foster good relations** between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not

In order to comply with the general duty authorities must assess the impact on equality of decisions, policies and practices. These duties do not prevent the authority from reducing services where necessary, but they offer a way of developing proposals that consider the impacts on all members of the community.

Authorities which fail to carry out equality impact assessments risk making poor and unfair decisions which may discriminate against particular groups and worsen inequality.

Committee name and date:	Report Title	Decisions being recommended:	People with protected characteristics potentially impacted by the decisions to be made:
Executive 9 th January 2024	Tenancy Strategy	To agree the updated strategy	

Factors to consider in the assessment: For each of the groups below, an assessment has been made on whether the proposed decision will have a **positive, negative or neutral impact**. This must be noted in the table below alongside brief details of why this conclusion has been reached and notes of any mitigation proposed. Where the impact is negative, a **high, medium or low assessment** is given. The assessment rates the impact of the policy based on the current situation (i.e. disregarding any actions planned to be carried out in future).

High impact – a significant potential impact, risk of exposure, history of complaints, no mitigating measures in place etc.

Medium impact – some potential impact exists, some mitigating measures are in place, poor evidence

Low impact – almost no relevancy to the process, e.g. an area that is very much legislation led and where the Council has very little discretion

Protected characteristic/ area of interest	Positive or Negative Impact	High, Medium or Low Impact	Reason
Race and ethnicity (including Gypsies and Travellers; migrant workers; asylum seekers).	Neutral	Low	All races and ethnic groups are treated equitably
Disability: as defined by the Equality Act – a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse impact on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.	Neutral	Low	There are no adverse effects for this group
Sex/Gender	Neutral	Low	All genders are treated equitably
Gender reassignment	Neutral	Low	There are no adverse effects for this group
Religion and belief (includes no belief, some philosophical beliefs such as Buddhism and sects within religions).	Neutral	Low	There is no mention of any religion in this strategy
Sexual orientation (including heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual).	Neutral	Low	Treatment is equitable
Age (children and young people aged 0-24; adults aged 25-50; younger older people aged 51-75/80; older	Neutral	Low	

Protected characteristic/ area of interest	Positive or Negative Impact	High, Medium or Low Impact	Reason
people 81+; frail older people; people living with age related conditions. The age categories are for illustration only as overriding consideration should be given to needs).			
Pregnancy and maternity including new and breast feeding mothers	Neutral	Low	There is no aspect of this strategy that particularly effects those who are pregnant
Marriage and civil partnership status	Neutral	Low	This strategy is for all tenants, whether married, single or in a civil partnership

Actions identified that will mitigate any negative impacts and/or promote inclusion

Officer: Sarah Hemming
Date: 02.11.2023

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Equality Impact Assessment: Tenancy Policy

The Equality Act 2010 includes a general duty which requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- **Eliminate discrimination**, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
- **Advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- **Foster good relations** between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not

In order to comply with the general duty authorities must assess the impact on equality of decisions, policies and practices. These duties do not prevent the authority from reducing services where necessary, but they offer a way of developing proposals that consider the impacts on all members of the community.

Authorities which fail to carry out equality impact assessments risk making poor and unfair decisions which may discriminate against particular groups and worsen inequality.

Committee name and date:	Report Title	Decisions being recommended:	People with protected characteristics potentially impacted by the decisions to be made:
Executive 9 th January 2024	Tenancy Policy	To agree the updated policy	

Factors to consider in the assessment: For each of the groups below, an assessment has been made on whether the proposed decision will have a **positive, negative or neutral impact**. This must be noted in the table below alongside brief details of why this conclusion has been reached and notes of any mitigation proposed. Where the impact is negative, a **high, medium or low assessment** is given. The assessment rates the impact of the policy based on the current situation (i.e. disregarding any actions planned to be carried out in future).

High impact – a significant potential impact, risk of exposure, history of complaints, no mitigating measures in place etc.

Medium impact – some potential impact exists, some mitigating measures are in place, poor evidence

Low impact – almost no relevancy to the process, e.g. an area that is very much legislation led and where the Council has very little discretion

Protected characteristic/ area of interest	Positive or Negative Impact	High, Medium or Low Impact	Reason
Race and ethnicity (including Gypsies and Travellers; migrant workers; asylum seekers).	Neutral	Low	All races and ethnic groups are treated equitably
Disability: as defined by the Equality Act – a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse impact on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.	Neutral	Low	This policy is designed to provide more security of tenure for all our tenants
Sex/Gender	Neutral	Low	All genders are treated equitably
Gender reassignment	Neutral	Low	There are no adverse effects for this group
Religion and belief (includes no belief, some philosophical beliefs such as Buddhism and sects within religions).	Neutral	Low	There is no mention of any religion in this policy
Sexual orientation (including heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual).	Neutral	Low	Treatment is equitable
Age (children and young people aged 0-24; adults aged 25-50; younger older people aged 51-75/80; older	Neutral	Low	

Protected characteristic/ area of interest	Positive or Negative Impact	High, Medium or Low Impact	Reason
people 81+; frail older people; people living with age related conditions. The age categories are for illustration only as overriding consideration should be given to needs).			
Pregnancy and maternity including new and breast feeding mothers	Neutral	Low	There is no aspect of this policy that particularly effects those who are pregnant
Marriage and civil partnership status	Neutral	Low	This policy is for all tenants, whether married, single or in a civil partnership

Actions identified that will mitigate any negative impacts and/or promote inclusion

Officer: Sarah Hemming
Date: 02.11.2023

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WORK PLAN FOR SCRUTINY ITEMS 2023/2024*Working Draft November 2023 To be updated after Scrutiny Programme Board meeting*

Strategic Scrutiny Committee	Item	Director/	Portfolio Holder	Origin of Business	Status
16 November 2023	Portfolio Holders Report (Cllr Wood)			Yearly report	
16 November 2023	Live and Move Programme Update	Director Culture, Leisure and Tourism (JP)	<i>Portfolio Holder Leisure & Physical Activity (Cllr Wood)</i>	<i>Report from Strategic Scrutiny Committee 16 March 2023 - half yearly report</i>	
16 November 2023	Exeter Local Plan Consultation	Director City Development (IC)	Portfolio Holder City Development (Cllr Morse)	<i>Proforma by Progressive Group</i>	Timetabling agreed at SPB 13 September 2023
25 January 2024	Portfolio Holders Report (Cllr Parkhouse/ Wright)			Yearly report	
25 January 2024	Ethical and Low Carbon Advertising Policy (<i>Moved from November meeting</i>)	Director Culture, Leisure and Tourism (JP)	Portfolio Holder Climate & Ecological Crisis (Cllr Parkhouse)	Notice of Motion by Councillor Sparling Council 18 April 2023 (report to Strategic Scrutiny Committee 22 June 2023)	
Combined Strategic Scrutiny and Customer Focus 7 February 2024	Budget	Director Finance (DH)		Yearly report	
14 March 2024	Portfolio Holders Report (Cllr Morse TBC)			Yearly report	

Strategic Scrutiny Committee	Item	Director/	Portfolio Holder	Origin of Business	Status
14 March 2024	Live and Move Programme Update	Director Culture, Leisure and Tourism (JP)	Portfolio Holder Leisure & Physical Activity (Cllr Wood)	Report from Strategic Scrutiny Committee 16 March 2023 half yearly	
14 March 2024	Working Towards Net Zero - Exeter City Council's Corporate Carbon Footprint Report and Carbon Reduction Action Plan	Director Net Zero Exeter & City Management (DB) Service Lead Net Zero & Business (VH)	Portfolio Holder Climate & Ecological Crisis (Cllr Parkhouse)	Report from Strategic Scrutiny Committee 29 September 2022 half yearly report	
14 March 2024	Progress Report Shared Prosperity Fund - Update	Director Net Zero Exeter & City Management (DB) Service Lead Net Zero & Business (VH)	(Portfolio Holder Climate & Ecological Crisis (Cllr Parkhouse)	Report from Strategic Scrutiny Committee 29 September 2022 half yearly report	
6 June 2024	Portfolio Holders Report (Leader TBC)				
6 June 2024	Presentation on the Role of Scrutiny	Director Corporate Services (BAK)		Timetabled report	
12/19 September 2024	Portfolio Holders Report (Cllr TBC)				
12/19 September 2024	Live and Move Programme Update	Director Culture, Leisure and Tourism (JP)	Portfolio Holder Leisure & Physical Activity (Cllr Wood)	Report from Strategic Scrutiny Committee 16 March 2023 half yearly	
12/19 September 2024	Working Towards Net Zero - Exeter City Council's Corporate Carbon Footprint	Director Net Zero Exeter & City Management	Portfolio Holder Climate & Ecological Crisis (Cllr Parkhouse)	Report from Strategic Scrutiny Committee 29 September 2022 half yearly report	

Strategic Scrutiny Committee	Item	Director/	Portfolio Holder	Origin of Business	Status
		(DB) Service Lead Net Zero & Business (VH)			
12/19 September 2024	Report and Carbon Reduction Action Plan	Director Net Zero Exeter & City Management (DB) Service Lead Net Zero & Business (VH)	Portfolio Holder Climate & Ecological Crisis (Cllr Parkhouse)	Report from Strategic Scrutiny Committee 29 September 2022 half yearly report	
12/19 September 2024	Progress Report Shared Prosperity Fund - Update	Director Net Zero Exeter & City Management (DB)Service Lead Net Zero & Business (VH)	Portfolio Holder Climate & Ecological Crisis (Cllr Parkhouse)	Report from Strategic Scrutiny Committee 29 September 2022 half yearly report	
12/19 September 2024	Scrutiny Programme Annual Report	Director Corporate Services (BAK)		Yearly report	
14 November 2024?	Portfolio Holders Report (Cllr TBC)				
23January 2025?	Portfolio Holders Report (Cllr TBC)				
Combined Strategic Scrutiny and Customer Focus Feb 25	Budget	Director Finance (DH)		Yearly report	

Strategic Scrutiny Committee	Item	Director/	Portfolio Holder	Origin of Business	Status
13 March 2025?	Portfolio Holders Report (Cllr TBC)				
13 March 2025?	Live and Move Programme Update	Director Culture, Leisure and Tourism (JP)	Portfolio Holder Leisure & Physical Activity (Cllr Wood)	Report from Strategic Scrutiny Committee 16 March 2023 half yearly	
13 March 2025?	Working Towards Net Zero - Exeter City Council's Corporate Carbon Footprint Report and Carbon Reduction Action Plan Progress Report	Director Net Zero Exeter & City Management (DB) Service Lead Net Zero & Business (VH)	Portfolio Holder Climate & Ecological Crisis (Cllr Parkhouse)	Report from Strategic Scrutiny Committee 29 September 2022 half yearly report	
13 March 2025?	Progress Report Shared Prosperity Fund - Update	Report from Strategic Scrutiny Committee 29 September 2022 half yearly report	Portfolio Holder Climate & Ecological Crisis (Cllr Parkhouse)	Report from Strategic Scrutiny Committee 29 September 2022 half yearly report	
5 June 2025?	Portfolio Holders Report (Cllr TBC)				
5 June 2025?	Presentation on the Role of Scrutiny	Director Corporate Services (BAK)		Timetabled report	

Outstanding Items

Review findings of the Car Parks Strategy report - *Report to be progressed following further work Date TBC*

Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee	Item	Director	Portfolio Holder	Origin of Business	Status
30 November 2023	Portfolio Holders Report (Cllr Denning)			Yearly report	
30 November 2023	Council Housing Strategy Update	Director City Development (IC)	Portfolio Holder Council Housing Development and Support Services (Cllr Denning)		
30 November 2023	Tenancy Policy (Ex Jan)	Director City Development (IC)	Portfolio Holder Council Housing Development and Support Services (Cllr Denning)		
1 February 2024	Portfolio Holders Report (Cllr TBC)			Yearly report	
Combined Strategic Scrutiny and Customer Focus 7 February 2024	Budget	Director Finance (DH)		Yearly report	
28 March 2024	Portfolio Holders Report (Cllr TBC)				
28 March 2024	Six monthly update on Homelessness Strategy	Director City Development (IC)	Portfolio Holder Communities & Homelessness Prevention ~(Cllr Pearce)	Proposed by Councillor Denning – half yearly report	September 2021 Homelessness Strategy approved Executive 7 February 2023 and Council 21 February 2023

Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee	Item	Director	Portfolio Holder	Origin of Business	Status
28 March 2024	Update on Street Cleansing and Bin Collection – Recycling and Food Waste Collection TBC	Director Net Zero Exeter & City Management (DB)	Portfolio Holder Place and City Management (Cllr Williams)	Yearly report?	
27 June 2024	Portfolio Holders Report (Cllr TBC)				
3 October 2024	Portfolio Holders Report (Cllr TBC)				
3 October 2024	Update on Street Cleansing and Bin Collection – Recycling and Food Waste Collection TBC	Director Net Zero Exeter & City Management (DB)	Portfolio Holder Place and City Management (Cllr Williams)	Yearly report?	
3 October 2024	Six monthly update on Homelessness Strategy	Director City Development (IC)	Portfolio Holder Communities & Homelessness Prevention ~ (Cllr Pearce)	Proposed by Councillor Denning – half yearly report	September 2021 Homelessness Strategy approved Executive 7 February 2023 and Council 21 February 2023
3 October 2024	Scrutiny Programme Annual Report	Director Corporate Services (BAK)			
27 November 2024?	Portfolio Holders Report (Cllr TBC)				
30 January 2025?	Portfolio Holders Report (Cllr TBC)				
Combined Strategic Scrutiny	Budget	Director Finance (DH)		Yearly report	

and Customer Focus February 2025					
Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee	Item	Director	Portfolio Holder	Origin of Business	Status
27 March 2025?	Portfolio Holders Report (Cllr TBC)				
27 March 2025?	Update on Street Cleansing and Bin Collection – Recycling and Food Waste Collection TBC	Director Net Zero Exeter & City Management (DB)	Portfolio Holder Place and City Management (Cllr Williams)	Yearly report?	
27 March 2025?	Six monthly update on Homelessness Strategy	Director City Development (IC)	Portfolio Holder Communities & Homelessness Prevention ~ (Cllr Pearce)	Proposed by Councillor Denning – half yearly report	September 2021 Homelessness Strategy approved Executive 7 February 2023 and Council 21 February 2023
26 June 2025?	Portfolio Holders Report (Cllr TBC)				

Outstanding Items

Review Allotments - *Report to be progressed following further work Date TBC*

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