

PFH Housing and Community Involvement
Cllr Rob Hannaford – reporting to Scrutiny COMMUNITY
29 May 2012

Build communities where everyone has a home

- Continue to offer a professional and flexible approach to developers seeking to build new homes in the City and to negotiate the provision of affordable housing that meets the identified housing needs of local residents.
- Provide new affordable homes across the city and in the urban extensions at Newcourt , Monkerton and Alphington.
- Seek to deliver at least 5% of all new affordable housing stock to meet the Council's wheelchair design standards and we shall produce a wheelchair housing strategy for the city.
- Continue to assist in the facilitation and development of 150 Extra-Care homes across the City.

Use a range of measures to solve housing problems

- Accessing funding and land for more social, shared ownership, affordable and shared equity housing after massive government cuts to grant funding and the abolition of the SWRDA and regional spatial strategy.
- Review and monitor the pressures on the council's existing housing stock and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) from the new discounted Right To Buy proposals.
- Ensure that we make best and prudent use of any funding that becomes available through the new HRA, to maintain existing stock and build new units.
- Maintain and enhance our existing good work through the Tenants and Leaseholders Committee, Exeter Homes Partnership and Performance Review Committee.
- Manage additional pressures and work loads from the cuts and changes to housing benefit, government imposed reductions in council tax benefits, and the Coalitions back to work agenda.
- Work with the Environmental Health staff to monitor and drive up standards in private sector properties, especially for vulnerable groups and young people.
- Look at establishing a scoring system for private sector properties to encourage landlords to improve their stock using energy saving grants etc.
- Make further representations and support the private members bill to give greater rights and protection to park home owners.
- Make the best use of the new funding streams from the revised planning systems for both housing and community initiatives.
- We will also commit to Exeter being a city where no-one needs to sleep out on the streets for a second night.

- o Ensure that a hotline number is available on behalf of all Devon districts and ensure appropriate provision is made to cope with extreme cold weather periods
- o Continue to grow the Private Sector Leasing and EXtralet schemes to provide a wider pool of affordable accommodation in conjunction with the private sector
- o Maintain our Council properties well and continue to meet the Decent Homes Standard or similar standards
- o Provide up to £400,000 in renovation grants to those most in need to make private sector homes fit for habitation
- o We will build upon recent work to cut down the time it takes to install Disabled Facility Grant adaptations in private dwellings by use of approved builders lists and modular pricing of standard works.
- o We will work to strengthen to Protocol all the Devon Councils have with Registered Providers (Housing Associations) through which they undertake to contribute to the cost of disabled adaptations to their homes.
- o We will continue to work in partnership with Wessex Home Improvement Loans to develop innovative loan products, and improve marketing in order to encourage greater take up. We will also seek to expand the work of Wessex to include debt advice to clients in need.

Provide homes for rent that people can afford

- o Ensure that we continue to take a lead role on the issue of homeless in Exeter and neighbouring areas, and when needed advocate for more funding, resources, and understanding of the often complex issues that are affecting people.
- o Facilitate the reuse of privately owned empty homes and properties ensuring they are fit for habitation
- o Build on our existing good work with the private sector to expand our portfolio of private properties which we manage on behalf of private landlords and use to proactively prevent homelessness.
- o Following the enactment of the Localism Act there will be considerably more flexibility offered to Local Authorities to decide how we allocate affordable housing in Exeter.
- o A group of senior officers and members are looking at how we can use increased flexibilities to adapt the allocations policy to ensure our social housing always goes to those most in need with a strong local connection to Exeter.

Retain current system of setting council rent

- o Set Council rents in line with the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan

Provide 35% of all new build development as social housing

- o Where viable, make 35% of all new homes built across the City affordable
- o Provide advice and a range of affordable housing options designed to help local people solve their housing needs

Introduce a co-operative and mutual model of home ownership where people are given stability and equity while retaining housing stocks

- We are working with the CDS Co-operative to introduce a cooperative and mutual model of home ownership, where people are given stability and equity while retaining housing stocks. This is an imaginative solution to meeting a need, and we are keen to support what would be one of the first scheme of its kind in the country.

Install solar panels on council houses

- Identify and maximise opportunities to increase the Council's own housing stock to high energy sustainability standards. Install 249 solar panels this year.
- We will continue to work in partnership with E.on to deliver energy efficiency grants and loans to ensure a smooth transition into the Green Deal and Energy Commitment Obligation (ECO).

Empower residents to have a greater say

- Build upon the new community grants system that has been recently set up and ensure new homes bonus funding empowers community groups.
- Work to support more joined up cost effective work between the city and county councils through the new Exeter Board on community and housing issues , where there is over lap , such as supporting people funding , community facilities etc.
- Work within the localism agenda in terms of community consultations and neighbourhood plans.
- Continue to support existing joint work with community groups, the voluntary sector, charities, community associations and faith groups across the city. .
- Ensure through the councils community strategy that we continue to support and encourage with other partner organisations social inclusion, tolerance and diversity in Exeter, and also work to tackle poverty.
- Working to develop the new scrutiny role for our existing TALC committee in line with new government legislation.
- We will further develop the Residential Park Forum in order to support those many Exeter householders who have additional housing challenges to deal with as park home residents.

**Cllr Rob Hannaford
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