

Portfolio Holder Priorities 2013/14
Cllr Ian Martin

Help Me With My Financial and Housing Problem	
1	<p>One View of Debt</p> <p>Work has started to bring together the services that touch our residents in multiple debt to us; i.e. housing benefit overpayments, council tax arrears and rent arrears.</p>
2	<p>Local Council Tax Support Scheme</p> <p>As the Scheme has only been in place since April, there is little evidence to allow us to determine the impact. Initial data suggests that our recovery rates are positive.</p>
3	<p>Local Welfare Support</p> <p>Two elements of the national social fund (community care grants and crisis loans for living expenses) were abolished. A reduced amount of funding was passed to upper tier and unitary authorities to devise local schemes to provide welfare support. This is a two year interim arrangement. Longer term funding is uncertain.</p>
4	<p>Preparing for the Household Benefit Cap</p> <p>The household benefit cap will introduce a total maximum amount that can be claimed in all benefits for non-working families. The threshold has been set at £500 per week for couple and lone parent households and the lower rate of £350 per week for single adult households.</p>
5	<p>Late Night Opening</p> <p>The late Thursday opening until 7pm will be formally reviewed after 6 months of promotion.</p>
Housing Need Priorities	
1	For Exeter to be a city where no-one needs to sleep out on the streets for a second night.
2	To work in partnership to tackle the underlying causes of homelessness.
3	To make sure we allocate our homes to help those in most need, and make best use of our housing stock.
Run the Council Well	
1	<p>HR</p> <p>The introduction of a negotiating framework to enable the council to introduce greater flexibility into employment contracts and to deal with other emerging priorities such as Exeter's low wage economy.</p> <p>Job roles at the council are being reviewed in light of the development of new systems, with a view to ensuring the effective management of equal pay, the identification of core skills to support the transformation programme and maintain the new ways of working.</p> <p>There are currently 6 apprentices: 1 in RAMM, 2 in Civic Centre Admin, 1 in IT, 2 in Parks, which was our target for 2012 – 2013. We are currently in negotiations for another 2 to join us this September.</p>

2	<p>Customer Access</p> <p>We will support our existing systems reviews by working across the council to develop a robust understanding of how our residents are contacting us in person, by telephone, or electronically (email/web/Twitter/Facebook).</p>
3	<p>IT</p> <p>DELT is a proposal to deliver IT related services to Exeter City Council, Plymouth City Council, East Devon District Council, Teignbridge District Council and the Plymouth Clinical Commissioning Group. A business case is being prepared for Executive. It must also be compliant with the transformation strategy.</p>
4	<p>Legal</p> <p>The Inspector's report rejected the application to register Eastern Fields as a "Village Green".</p> <p>The team is assisting with formulating the council's street enforcement policy which sets out how to deal with rough sleepers and beggars and associated anti-social behaviour.</p>
5	<p>Policy and Communications</p> <p>We are a Fairtrade City. We are an international city supporting communities around the world by encouraging our residents and visitors to buy Fairtrade products.</p> <p>We are ensuring that relevant audiences recognise the council's achievements, policies, activities and events by publishing timely information through appropriate channels, including the Exeter Citizen and increasingly through social media channels (Twitter and Facebook).</p> <p>We are working with staff to ensure that they are aware of initiatives and change across the council and can readily submit opinions, attitudes and feedback.</p> <p>We continue to enhance and promote the council's corporate identity and house style.</p> <p>A briefing session for members on the Public Sector Equality Duty has been timetabled. There are plans to follow this up with more detailed training on equality and diversity in 2014.</p>
6	<p>Corporate and Democratic Support</p> <p>Wifi access is available both in the committee rooms and the Customer Service Centre. We shall now be able to implement the Social Media Protocol as agreed at the Member Development Group.</p> <p>Following the review of the council's scrutiny function, which led to the formation of an Audit and Governance Committee, an officer has been appointed as the council's scrutiny programme officer.</p> <p>Individual Electoral Registration (IER) is being introduced ready for the 2015 General Election.</p> <p>Officers are currently in discussions with a number of key partner organisations about relocation of their services to the Civic Centre.</p> <p>Rowena Whiter is leaving the authority at the end of this month. Sarah Selway is taking on the new role of Democratic Services Manager who will lead us towards more members working electronically.</p>