

Portfolio Holder Priorities 2013/14
Cllr Robert Hannaford
Housing

Help me find somewhere suitable to live	
Build communities where everyone has a home	UPDATE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 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. 	<p>Since 1 April 2013, 101 new affordable homes have been delivered (69 social rent, 8 shared ownership and 24 affordable rent). Throughout the year negotiations have been ongoing for future new home delivery across the city. There are 1,069 new affordable homes in the pipeline to be delivered in the future.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Provide new affordable homes across the city and in the urban extensions at Newcourt, Monkerton and Alphington. 	<p>Since 1 April 2013, 19 new affordable homes have been delivered at Newcourt. 33 affordable homes are currently onsite at Monkerton, and 79 affordable homes are currently onsite at Newcourt.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 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. 	<p>There are 18 wheelchair accessible currently under construction onsite, exceeding the 5% target</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Continue to assist in the facilitation and development of 150 Extra-Care homes across the City. 	<p>£1.4million grant secured from the Department of Health to facilitate delivery of St Loyes Extra Care.</p>
Use a range of measures to solve housing problems	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Continue to investigate and encourage innovative schemes to deliver affordable housing without public subsidy 	<p>The Housing Development Team continually examines and tests different methods of delivering affordable housing without public subsidy, including utilising HRA surpluses and Section 106 commuted sum contributions as well as other private finance</p>

	opportunities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 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. 	<p>So far in 2013/14 we have completed sales on 24 properties through the Right to Buy (RTB) with a number more in the pipeline. This is in line with forecasts made following the changes to the discounts available to tenants in order to purchase their homes under RTB.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Ensure that we make best and prudent use of any funding that becomes available through the new HRA, to maintain existing stock and build and acquire new units. 	<p>The Council is in the second year of a major 3 year programme of refurbishing kitchens and bathrooms. So far this programme has delivered over 700 new kitchens and 500 bathrooms through the total delivery project. We are currently on budget for the remainder of this financial year and in 2014/15 we plan to deliver a further approx 400 kitchens and 300 bathrooms.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Maintain and enhance our existing good work through the Tenants and Leaseholders Committee, Exeter Homes Partnership and Performance Review Committee. 	<p>Revised model of resident involvement agreed by committee in December 2013.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 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. 	<p>Our systems thinking work has helped to mitigate the impact of the increase in workload of the changes as a result of Welfare Reform. We worked proactively with those residents who were liable for Council Tax for the first time for make them aware of the change and offer advice and support in agreeing a suitable repayment schedule to ensure that the council was able to collect the amounts due, but in a way that minimised financial hardship for individuals. The workload did cause a negative impact on the backlog for processing claims for Benefit and dealing with claimant's changes of circumstances but this has been brought under control through a temporary reallocation and refocus of staff resources.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Work with the Environmental Health staff to monitor and drive up standards in private sector properties, especially for vulnerable groups and young people. 	<p>As a result of enforcement activity undertaken by the Environmental Health Residential Team, prosecutions are being considered in respect of two landlords for their failing to comply with legal requirements and three HMO properties are currently the subject of emergency enforcement action as a result of their very hazardous condition. These notices are likely to become the subject of works in default and prosecution.</p> <p>The majority (approx. 600 of 850) of the larger licensable HMOs, have been re-licensed and scheduled inspections have followed on a priority basis.</p> <p>The Private Sector Housing function will be transferring to Housing with effect from 1 February 2014, and the Council will be looking to implement a licensing scheme for private sector landlords to drive up standards of accommodation in this sector.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o A partnership has been developed with the National Landlord's Association to provide accreditation training to Exeter Landlords. Training sessions will be run up to 4 times per year. The first 15 landlords were accredited in April 2013. 	<p>28 private sector landlords have completed the NLA Foundation Accreditation Course, with a further session scheduled in for February 2014 for a new group of landlords.</p> <p>A further NLA course specifically dealing with tenancies and possession proceedings is also scheduled for February 2014.</p> <p>In addition the Council is closely supporting the University and Student Guild with the expansion of the Universities accreditation scheme for student HMOs that they are running in partnership with UNIPOL AFS, which is a nationally recognised accreditation body.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o The private members bill to give greater rights and protection to park home owners has now been enacted as the Mobile Homes Act 2013. 	<p>Commencement dates for all parts of the Act are still awaited - policy is being shaped in line with the anticipated commencement dates to deal with such new powers as the 'fit and proper person' test for site licensees.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Make the best use of the new funding streams from the revised planning systems for both housing and community initiatives. 	<p>The Council introduced a Community Infrastructure Levy from 1 December that will generate significant funding for new development related infrastructure including community facilities. Local communities will be consulted on 15% of CIL expenditure. Negotiations on Section 106 agreement requirements will now focus on site related infrastructure and affordable housing. Requirements for affordable housing were reinstated at the higher 35% and 3 threshold level required by the Core Strategy in September to reflect the findings of the CIL examiner on development viability.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<p>Growth of the Private Sector Leasing scheme and EXtraLet scheme has been limited due to staff resources and service priorities. Since April 2013, 6 new PSLs and 3 new ExtraLets have been procured. It is anticipated that from April 2014 a new system of procurement will be in place. This will improve the speed and scale of PSL and EXtraLet procurement.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Develop our approach to reducing street begging including the introduction of an alternative giving scheme, improved access to accommodation and treatment services and more robust enforcement 	<p>An alternative giving scheme to dissuade people from giving money to street beggars is being developed in association with other partners, with a prospective launch in Feb/March 2014.</p> <p>A poster campaign has been created to help educate on the dangers of giving cash to beggars on the streets, who collectively could be taking up to £1000 a day. The posters will direct people to give donations via an alternative giving scheme (website and or text messaging). Agreement is being sought from the police that they are committed to working with us in addressing the number of beggars and using enforcement powers to deal with them. Our car parks now have signs informing the public that drug taking, sleeping and begging is not allowed in our car parks and that legal action could be taken against anyone seen doing so. The first trespass injunction is being prepared for an aggressive beggar who is persistently found in Mary Arches Car</p>

	<p>Park. A survey has also been carried out on all ECC car parks to identify entry points and a costing has been sought to completely shut down all access points to the car parks at night. A full report on the problems in the car park, and options to resolve these, will be made available for SMT in February.</p> <p>A 'Recovery & Fast Tracked' services procedure (RAFT) was developed in 2013, in association with Devon Drugs & Alcohol Service and Addaction, but further joint working is needed with agencies such as the Police in order for this procedure to be implemented successfully, and take-up assured.</p> <p>A comprehensive enforcement policy, together with procedural tools is being developed, in preparation for consultation with external partners in February 2014.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Transform how the council maintain its properties and provide a better service with improved value for money 	<p>Work on empty homes and kitchen and bathrooms programme ongoing. Significant pressures on voids budget have become apparent during the course of the financial year and a new voids team has been established with effect from December 2013, to begin to tackle these.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Provide up to £400,000 in renovation grants to those most in need to make private sector homes fit for habitation (this was cut some time ago) 	<p>Financial assistance primarily in the form of loans administered through the Council's partner Wessex Reinvestment Trust. From April – December there have been 39 referrals and 30 applications with £117,000 committed plus £84,000 drawn down.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<p>This work has been completed with an agreed builders list formed and an agreed modular price structure used on standard non-complex jobs. This has resulted in DFG end to end times being halved from an average of 60 working days to around 30 working days for non-complex DFGs such as stair-lifts and level access showers.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o We will continue to 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. New governance arrangements have been put in place to maximise sign up. 	<p>The protocol is in place with all the active Registered Providers in Exeter signed up, with the exception of one big provider. The result is that many Registered Providers have funded or part funded adaptations to their properties that they hadn't done before. However, more recently it is becoming clear that some Providers are reconsidering their financial position in relation to such funding.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Wessex Home Improvement Loans have employed a marketing manager 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. 	<p>Our partner Wessex Improvement Loans, launched a successful marketing drive in 2013, which resulted in an uplift in enquiries, from 14 for the whole of 2012/13 to 39 by the third quarter of 2013/14.</p> <p>In terms of debt advice, Wessex have liaised with the Council's own debt advice agencies, such as CAB, to offer support and work with them where appropriate.</p>
Provide homes for rent that people can afford	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Implement the recently approved Empty Homes Enforcement Policy to return privately owned empty homes to use and ensure they are fit for habitation 	<p>22 long term empty homes have been brought back into use through the threat of enforcement. 20 further cases are in hand.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<p>Since April 2013, 6 new PSLs and 3 new ExtraLets have been procured. It is anticipated that from April 2014 a new system of procurement will be in place. This will improve the speed and scale of PSL and EXtraLet procurement.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Use increased flexibilities with allocations policies to ensure our social housing always goes to those most in need with a strong local connection to Exeter. 	<p>We continue to be flexible on the lettings of ECC properties ensuring best use of stock to meet customer needs. Through systems thinking we are trialling a number of methods of allocating homes. A Scrutiny Community Task & Finish Work Group has been established to look into the working of the Devon Home Choice System.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Introduce flexible tenancies in our own stock to optimize the potential for council-owned homes to be available for people in most housing need 	Flexible Tenancies introduced from Oct 2013.
Retain current system of setting council rent	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Set Council rents in line with the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 	Ongoing and report to Executive in January on 2014/15 rent increase. Headline rent increase of 3.7% being recommended to Executive. Full report to Scrutiny Community to be presented later on the agenda.
Provide 25% of all new build development as social housing	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Where viable, make 25% of all new homes built across the City affordable 	25% achieved; 35% now adopted from 1 December 2013 following the outcome of the Community Infrastructure Levy Examination where the Planning Inspector advised that 35% of affordable housing was feasible.
Introduce a co-operative and mutual model of home ownership where people are given stability and equity while retaining housing stocks	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Continue to explore opportunities for introducing cooperative and mutual models of home ownership. 	Ongoing discussions held with Exeter Eco Housing, who are presently undertaking development viability work to ascertain the potential to bring forward council land for a co-operative housing scheme.
Install solar panels on council houses	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Identify and maximise opportunities to increase the Council's own housing stock to high energy sustainability standards. 	Work is due to be completed in February on the 3 Laings properties which we are currently being refurbished and made more thermally efficient. There are a further 2 Laing properties

	<p>becoming vacant where similar works will be completed. An additional 38 homes had PV panels installed this year as part of a re-roofing programme. Whilst rendering works are being carried out at Whipton Barton Road new glazing is being fitted which is category A which category C previously. This is more thermally efficient.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Install solar panels on up to 55 council-owned homes in Hawthorn Road 	<p>Due to capacity of local sub station we were only to fit 38 roofs with PV panels but this is now complete.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o We will continue to work in partnership with E.on to deliver energy efficiency grants and loans schemes to maximise take up of Green Deal and Energy Commitment Obligation (ECO).measures. 	<p>A pilot ECO scheme was launched, in the 6 most deprived wards, in July 2013 to October 2013, and 3,030 residential addresses written to. This resulted in 192 responses, a disappointing 6% return. Of this 192, only 140 would have qualified for free insulation, and only 27 went forward because of the complex criteria for the Government's ECO scheme. This demonstrates that the new replacement energy efficiency schemes need to be very carefully marketed and well-managed in order to persuade people to take it up.</p> <p>In addition, the Council in partnership with 9 other Devon authorities (excluding Plymouth) has engaged Eon as a provider funder for a pan-Devon ECO scheme under the well-known brand of Cosy Devon. This is due to launched in April, with the lessons from the ECO pilot informing the Cosy Devon/ECO project.</p>

Enable me to have my say and be heard

Empower residents to have a greater say

o 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

The forum is proving to be a success and has assisted with the introduction of revised licence conditions and other issues. The revised conditions based upon the Model Standards, for the three sites with outdated conditions will come into force in April 2014.

o Develop a new Housing Strategy in consultation with our residents, communities, tenants and wider stakeholders.

Housing Strategy for 2013-2017 drafted and consulted on. Final version ready by summer 2014

**Cllr Robert Hannaford
Jan 2014**