

APPENDIX

Points 1-2-7 are linked so I will expand on them collectively.

First I wish to thank Nicola and the team, Anne Marie and all members of the task and finish group for all their input into the strategy. It has been time well spent over the last few months.

Outside of the meetings I have continued to build relationships and links with organisations.

Nicola and I attended a networking day at the Armed Forces Hub in December, at the invite of the Transitions Coordinator at St Loyes Foundation, and through this we now have links with the Royal British Legion and SAFFA (the Armed Forces Charity) to ensure that we continue to honour and fulfil our responsibilities under the Armed Forces Covenant. We have also invited them to the customer service centre to meet front line staff and have discussed with them how we can help support veterans.

I also had an informal meeting with Jacinta Wainwright Chief Executive of SAFE, again, to build relationships and links between ECC and organisations who provide assistance to those who are homeless or are in danger of becoming homeless. Key to the success of the strategy is partnership working.

It's essential that we listen to them and work with them.

The strategy does state that the action plan will be reviewed twice a year and whilst we don't know what will happen at the elections in May, I do hope there will be some continuity with regards to who sits on the steering group, and that we will continue to ask for input from organisations so as to ensure the plan remains current, effective and serves its purpose.

Some homeless people living on the streets, have complex needs and are in need of assistance from i.e. mental health services. The well-being hub, and the MEAM coordinator is key to being able to help vulnerable people most in need.

Also ICE will be a vital key to ensuring that vulnerable people receive the help they need as its aim is to work together to design and deliver new and better ways of working.

The targeted families programme continues and enters phase two. We will be more engaged with phase two and a report back will be given to Executive as to the effectiveness of the programme later in the year.

Priority 3

We are continuing to identify properties that need to be licensed due to additional licensing measures introduced earlier in 2015. We are doing this through adverts in the media and by officers actively seeking properties. The private rented forum is a very useful forum for engaging with letting agents, individual landlords as well as the CAB and individual tenants.

The landlord's handbook has been developed, some copies have been printed and it's available on line through the Council's website. Work is currently underway to develop a tenant's handbook. Both handbooks will help provide information on tenants/ landlords rights but also responsibilities.

Councillor Bull and I both attended the forums tenant information day in Princesshay which was successful.

We are also discussing the possibility of introducing an Exeter rental standard designed to assist tenants in finding good quality, well managed accommodation. The concept is for us to set a minimum standard that we say we would expect from landlords and letting agents.

This would fit together with another initiative that the forum discussed which is Homefinder. Homefinder is a software programme that can assist tenants with finding suitable properties. The idea is that landlords advertise via homefinder, which is a programme we would monitor and be responsible for, and anyone looking to rent in Exeter could access the site via a link on our website. Tenants would then know that all properties advertised have met a certain standard, as we would be able to set the criteria in order to rate the properties.

This is currently being discussed via the forum and is a very interesting concept.

Priority 4

Because a review of the council tax support scheme is being undertaken by DCLG it was agreed by Executive and Subsequently Full Council to retain the current scheme as it is for this year. However before making a decision on next year, I would suggest members seek information and figures on how residents are managing with contributing towards council tax where previously they have not been required to do so.

Priority 5

I am very pleased the CAB have been successful in obtaining funding so the excellent work of the money advice partnership has been able to continue.

Priority 6

This policy was agreed several months ago, no further update required.

Kind regards

Heather

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