

Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee – 31 March 2022

Task and Finish Group Briefing Paper

Date of Referral – 7 October 2021

Proposer - Cllr Barbara Denning

Nature of the Scrutiny Topic : A review of the current position regarding homelessness in Exeter: to consider the impact of recent changes in Government policy i.e. changes in Universal Benefit entitlements.

Further to review the 'Draft Homelessness Strategy 2022-2025 development plan.

To input into the development of the Exeter Homelessness Strategy 2022-2025 as well as monitoring the development plan for the Strategy to ensure that all relevant stakeholders are appropriately engaged. As part of the development of the Strategy, review the impact of any government changes in policy that lead to a negative impact on people's ability to maintain their accommodation. Ensure that any appropriate mitigations that are within the Council's resource availability are included in the Homelessness Strategy.

Membership -

Chair – Cllr Michael Mitchell plus 6 members – nominated by Party Leaders

Scrutiny Process regarding this Topic

Stage 1 – Briefing Meeting for Task and Finish Group members

To consider the submitted work programme. To agree a Briefing document for each witness. These documents will contain the key issues and questions about which the Task and Finish Group require the person/organisation to provide information and responses. A timescale will be set out for the return of written submissions allowing time for Members to review material prior to any evidence session.

Stage 2 – Evidence Session - (1) Current pattern of homelessness in Exeter and consideration of the impact of recent changes in the benefit system upon the homeless situation in Exeter.

Prior to taking formal evidence the Task and Finish Group will consider the responses received and identify key elements and questions that need to be further explored.

- Gathering evidence regarding the current pattern of homeless in Exeter.
- Consideration of whether the recent Government policy changes have impacted the nature and extent of homelessness in Exeter.

Evidence providers – Exeter City Council, Exeter Well Being, Citizens Advice and Shelter

Stage 3 - Evidence Session - Consider the Draft Homelessness Strategy – 2022-25 development plan

- How Exeter City Council and other voluntary and statutory bodies co-operate in regard to assisting the homeless.
- How the proposed Strategy will assist Exeter City Council in improving its service provision for the homelessness.

Evidence providers – Exeter City Council, Devon County Council, Citizens Advice, Social Housing representative, Shelter spokesperson, potentially some case studies.

Stage 4 – Assessing the evidence

Drafting a report and recommendations to be presented to the Customer Focus Scrutiny Committee.

Public Involvement - the nature of the work of this Task and Finish Group should be promoted on the City Council website and interested bodies or individuals should be invited to submit evidence in person or writing.

Timescale – this is matter to be resolved at a Programme Board meeting. The Proposer and Deputy Chair of Customer Focus envisage the work being carried out over a 3-to-4-month period.