

REPORT TO CUSTOMER FOCUS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 1st December 2022

PORTFOLIO HOLDER'S REPORT TO SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

Councillor Martin Pearce, Portfolio Holder for Communities and Homelessness Prevention

1. Issues relating to achieving the Council's published priorities
<p>1. Homelessness strategy. Work is continuing to deliver the new strategy required to help reduce homelessness and eradicate rough sleeping in the city. A consultation is ongoing at the moment https://exeter.gov.uk/housing/housing-homelessness-prevention-and-advice/homelessness-and-rough-sleeping-prevention-strategy-consultation/ The current cost of living crisis has changed the landscape and the challenge is now even greater than when this work began.</p>

2. Update or commentary on any major ongoing programmes of work
<p>1. Refugee Schemes: The city continues to host several refugees from various countries. There are many different schemes that have seen people hosted in Exeter. The Homes for Ukraine scheme currently have the highest number of people being hosted in the city of all the schemes. People are still being supported in the city under schemes that were set up to help Syrian, Afghan and Hong Kong nationals flee conflicts in their countries, these schemes do not have the profile of the Ukrainian schemes currently, but they are also very important. Regular meetings with the Home Office will take from now on to help spread information in a more appropriate manner.</p>
<p>2. Community support: the cost-of-living crisis is a priority area. The Community Grants programme refocussed some of the available funds to help support organisations who are opening their doors to residents this winter to provide a warm space, friendly face and a cuppa. The was such a high demand that the fund has now been closed as all the monies have been allocated. Every ward has an organisation which has received support.</p>
<p>3. National Count for Rough sleepers. In what has become customary over the last month, monsoon like rains, the 'count' took place on the</p>

night of the/morning of 15th. This activity was supported by members of ECC staff and partner organisations. It was really heartening to see the care and positivity that all involved showed towards those who were out on a horrendous night. There are regular spot counts, but this national activity only takes place on an annual basis across England.

3. Issues that may impact : services delivery/financial performance/future budget requirements

1. Community grants: the impact of the current recession is an unknown quantity so far, this is a situation that is being constantly monitored as any drop in construction within city would have an impact on future CIL receipts which in turn impacts the size of our grants programme.
2. Again I must mention the cost of living crisis – the potential for impact on council services is huge. Partner agencies are already reporting a surge in the number of residents trying to access support. Potential impact on the Housing team is being monitored. In a time of straightened finances more resource may be needed in this area.

4. Potential changes to services/provisions being considered

1. This work is currently ongoing with Directors and Service Leads.

5. Other matters the Portfolio Holder wishes to raise with the Scrutiny Committee

1. Warm spaces – please share with your networks to help raise awareness