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To: The Chair and Members of the Health and  
Adult Care Scrutiny Committee

County Hall  
Topsham Road  
Exeter  
Devon  
EX2 4QD

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Date: 19 July 2023

Contact: Gerry Rufolo 01392 382299

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## **HEALTH AND ADULT CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Thursday, 27th July, 2023

A meeting of the Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee is to be held on the above date at 2.15 pm at Committee Suite - Daw, County Hall, Exeter to consider the following matters.

Donna Manson  
Chief Executive

### **A G E N D A**

#### **PART 1 - OPEN COMMITTEE**

- 1 Apologies
- 2 Items Requiring Urgent Attention

Items which in the opinion of the Chairman should be considered at the meeting as matters of urgency.

- 3 Public Participation

Members of the public may make representations/presentations on any substantive matter listed in the published agenda, as set out hereunder, relating to a specific matter or an examination of services or facilities provided or to be provided.

#### **MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION OR REVIEW**

4 8+ Homelessness Prevention Contribution and Contract, and Proposal for the future Council contribution to the Wellbeing Exeter Partnership Fund (Pages 1 - 26)

(a) Covering paper for reports on Proposal for the future of the Integrated Adult Social Care 18+ Homelessness Prevention Contribution and Contract, and Proposal for the future Council contribution to the Wellbeing Exeter Partnership Fund

Report of the Director of Integrated Adult Social Care (ACH/23/176), attached, (Page 1).

(b) Proposal for the future of the Integrated Adult Social Care 18+ Homelessness Prevention Contribution and Contract

Report of the Director Integrated Adult Social Care (ACH/23/177), attached (Page 5).

(c) Proposal for the future Council contribution to the Wellbeing Exeter Partnership Fund

Report of the Director of Integrated Adult Social Care (ACH/23/178), attached (Page 19).

**PART II - ITEMS WHICH MAY BE TAKEN IN THE ABSENCE OF PRESS AND PUBLIC ON THE GROUNDS THAT EXEMPT INFORMATION MAY BE DISCLOSED**

Nil

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**Induction Loop available**



ACH/23/176  
Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee  
27 July 2023

## Covering paper for reports on Proposal for the future of the Integrated Adult Social Care 18+ Homelessness Prevention Contribution and Contract, and Proposal for the future Council contribution to the Wellbeing Exeter Partnership Fund

### Report of the Director of Integrated Adult Social Care

1. On the 13 June the Council's Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee passed a recommendation that the Committee holds a Special Scrutiny Committee Meeting in July, taking place on 27 July, to provide a further opportunity for committee members to understand how the recommendations, post public consultation, are developing on the consultations that concluded. These consultations are:
  - Proposal for the future of the Integrated Adult Social Care 18+ Homelessness Prevention Contribution and Contract
  - Proposal for the future Council contribution to the Wellbeing Exeter Partnership Fund
  - Proposed closure of North Devon Link Mental Health and Wellbeing Service in Barnstaple, Bideford and Ilfracombe (NDLS)
2. The intention was that once the recommendations have been developed on the back of the above consultations and following additional input from the Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee, they would be presented to Cabinet for decision at a Special Cabinet Meeting on the 23 August.
3. Committee Members will be aware of the three halted consultations:
  - Proposals for Learning Disability day centres
  - Proposals for Learning Disability respite centres
  - Proposals for changes to Carers Services
4. We are currently developing a new approach in these areas, re-evaluating our proposals and undertaking additional engagement in identifying next steps, following which further updates will be provided.

### **Proposals for Future of the integrated Adult Social Care 18 + Homelessness Prevention Contribution and Contracts**

5. Following conclusion of consultation proposals have been formed for the future of the service. A draft report is attached which provides the background, consultation responses and options in detail.

# Agenda Item 4

6. During the consultation the Council received responses and challenge regarding the proposals including suggestions that it had a legal/ statutory duty to continue to provide these services. The Council has investigated this matter thoroughly and has established that it does not have a duty as the respondents have suggested.
7. Both the Housing Act 1996 and the Care Act 2014 impose a mutual obligation to co-operate in the exercise of the respective functions of the Local Housing Authority and the Council, as the relevant social services authority, concerning its responsibilities relating to adults with needs for care and support and the obligation to have regard to the homelessness strategies. The Council's position is that where it is asked by a District or City to assist the housing authority with the exercise of its functions under the Housing Act 1996, it will offer such co-operation and assistance where it is deemed reasonable to do so and, it does not result in the Council doing anything which another local authority is required to do under the Housing Act 1996.
8. The Council has been and will continue to work closely with all partners including the NHS, Districts and City Councils.
9. The Council continues to carry out its adult social care responsibilities in accordance with the Care Act 2014, including S.2, and relevant regulations. It conducts its assessment of need for care and support and prevention functions with regard to the homelessness strategies of districts and the 'duty to refer' responsibilities placed on the Council by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
10. The proposals will still ensure that the Council will exercise its duties to ensure those who need an assessment under the Care Act receive one and to consider how care and support needs can be met. The Council will work closely with the District and City Councils to develop and support transitional plans to meet the needs of individuals.

## **Proposal for the future Council contribution to the Wellbeing Exeter Partnership Fund**

11. Following the close of consultation, a draft report has been produced detailing the proposal to cease the Council's contribution to the Exeter Wellbeing Partnership Fund. The report details the proposal in full.
12. The Council does not receive any grant funding from government to fund Exeter Wellbeing partnership fund and the partnership is not delivering value for money in terms of performance and outcomes for our Residents.
13. There is no statutory duty to continue funding the wellbeing Exeter Partnership Fund.
14. Consultation responses have been fully considered.

## **Proposed closure of North Devon Link Mental Health and Wellbeing Service in Barnstaple, Bideford, and Ilfracombe (NDLS)**

15. We have taken legal advice through our proposals in relation NDLS. The consultation process to date has been lawful. The responses received have requested that further

# Agenda Item 4

detail is provided on information contained within the impact assessment, consultation documentation and details of alternative offers within each area.

16. In light of this we have decided to [extend the NDLS consultation](#) so that we can fully [explore this](#) and allow consultees additional time in which to respond to the requested detail. The Special Scrutiny Committee Meeting on the 27 July will therefore not discuss the NDLS consultation as per the initial intention.
17. This approach will also enable us to contain within the updated documentation the additional risks that have been identified through the consultation process and highlight any mitigation activity that might need to be considered.
18. Communications have been sent to all NDLS stakeholders, including staff and people accessing the services. The consultation extension will commence on the 1 August and will run until 31 August. The consultation documents can be found on the Council Have Your Say pages. We intend to bring a paper to the 21 September Scrutiny Committee and the recommendation to Cabinet 12 November.
19. When the Council comes to make a decision following the extended consultation, it will take into consideration all feedback and responses already provided from the existing consultation.

## **Name**

Director of Integrated Adult Social Care: Tandra Forster

**Electoral Divisions:** All Exeter Divisions

Cabinet Member for Integrated Adult Social Care and Health: Councillor James McInnes

## **Local Government Act 1972: List of background papers**

Nil

## **Contact for enquiries:**

Name: Solveig Wright

Telephone: 01392 38 3000





## Proposal for the future of the Integrated Adult Social Care 18+ Homelessness Prevention Contribution and Contract

### Report of the Director Integrated Adult Social Care

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Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Cabinet (and confirmation under the provisions of the Council's Constitution) before taking effect.

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#### **1) Recommendation**

##### 1.1 That the Cabinet:

- a) agree to cease the Council's 18+ homelessness prevention contribution and contract on its expiry on the 30 September 2023 as per option 1 in section 4 of this report.

#### **2) Context**

- 2.1 In common with other local authorities the Council is working hard to achieve financial sustainability. This is mirrored across the country and in District and City Councils across Devon. Collectively we are having to think about how we can make our budgets go further by focussing on the things we must do.
- 2.2 The recommendation within this paper is part of a wider Council savings strategy that includes other difficult decisions that will result in changes for people in the Council, in other partner Councils and in our communities.
- 2.3 In developing the saving strategy, the Council has tried wherever possible to reduce investment that limits the impact on our residents, communities and partners. However, even with this work the Council is still in a position where it must make some difficult choices. Where difficult proposals are made, the Council has acted as a system partner and engaged with those potentially impacted, including all District and City authorities across Devon and being active in conversations that seek solutions.
- 2.4 The Council has listened to the feedback received and worked hard to understand the impact of its proposals. In response to concerns heard, the Council has been engaging with District and City Council including through actions set out in paragraphs 3.9 and 3.10 and contributing to identifying alternative funding sources.
- 2.5 The Council values and is committed to the key relationships it has with District and City Councils and the collective serving of the people of Devon. That makes recommendation like this all the more difficult, but the Council believes that this is the right course of action at this time. The alternative options set out in this paper do not

contribute sufficiently enough to the Council’s saving strategy and the financial challenges of the years ahead.

### 3) Funding to prevent homelessness

3.1 District and City Councils, as housing authorities, have statutory responsibilities for preventing and relieving homelessness. They receive funding from central government and are best placed to align this to local strategic plans to improve the approach to preventing homelessness, reduce reliance on hostels and meet local needs. The Council (Devon County Council) does not receive any funding from Government for homelessness prevention, and other County Councils in two tier areas do not directly contribute funding in this area. Those who do are reducing their contribution.

3.2 As part of the corporate budget setting process for 2023/24, the Council consulted on the proposal to cease funding the 18+ homelessness prevention contribution and contract. The Council has a Best Value Duty; the requirement is set out in the Local Government Act 1999 to “secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.”

3.3 In April 2014, the Council commissioned the 18+ homelessness prevention contribution and contract to support adults whose homelessness is inextricably linked to complex and chaotic life experiences. The £1,454,478.48 annual cost is met through the Adult Social Care budget and is a discretionary service. It purchases support hours for people across multiple areas of their lives that are directly relevant to the prevention of and recovery from homelessness. Support hours are delivered through floating support and multi-occupancy ‘hostel’ settings across the Council geographic boundary by five providers - Alabaré, Bournemouth Churches Housing Association, Sanctuary Supported Living, Westward Housing and YMCA Exeter. It is important to note that the Council does not fund the hostels, only the support hours.

<b>District/City Council</b>	<b>Managed multi-occupancy ‘hostel’ settings and cost per annum</b>	<b>‘Floating’ Support</b>
East Devon District Council	Alexandra House £107,929	County wide service delivered by Sanctuary Supported Living: £711,377
Exeter City Council	Gabriel House £262,544 Exeter YMCA £157,166	
Torrige District Council	Charris House £103,460	
North Devon District Council	The Maples £112,000	
Mid Devon District Council	Contracted support hours are not delivered in a specific hostel building in Mid Devon, South Hams, West Devon or Teignbridge, but these areas may benefit from	
South Hams District Council		
West Devon Borough Council		

Teignbridge District Council	support hours delivered in building-based service/s in other Districts.	
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3.4 In 2019, the Council and District and City Council officers discussed devolving the 18+ homelessness prevention contribution to District and City Councils on the shared principle that Districts are best placed to align funding to local strategic plans to prevent homelessness, in line with their statutory duties. Progress was hampered during the Covid response and in Spring 2022, District and City Council officers raised concerns about devolving the funding, seeking a commitment for long term funding. The Council confirmed the pausing of devolution plans in July 2022. The contract was varied in February 2023, pending the outcome of the consultation, and expires on 30 September 2023.

3.5 Since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, Local Housing Authorities have been awarded a Homelessness Prevention Grant from central government each year to support them to deliver their homelessness statutory duties. All Housing Authorities in Devon (which DCC is not) receive an allocation of this grant, which is a multi-year grant for 2023 to 2025 and totals £5,376,112 across the County. The detail for Devon’s District and City Councils is set out in Appendix A.

3.6 In addition, central government provides Rough Sleeper Initiative funding to Local Housing Authorities to support those sleeping rough or at risk of homelessness. Local Housing Authorities bid for the funding, and in Devon the Local Housing Authorities have been awarded a total of £7,100,579.00 across the last three years. The detail of this for Devon’s District and City Councils is set out in Appendix A.

3.7 The Government strategy, ‘[Ending Rough Sleeping for Good](#)’, published in September 2022, sets out central government funding available to support the prevention, intervention and recovery of homelessness, across a range of government departments. It includes, but is not limited to:

- Affordable Homes Programme – to increase affordable and security of housing;
- Staying Put and Staying Close funding to support young people leaving care to secure and maintain suitable accommodation;
- Night Shelter Transformation Fund;
- Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme (SHAP) with funding for rough sleeper accommodation;
- Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP) to improve the quality of supported housing;
- Housing Benefit, including Enhanced Housing Benefit;
- Drug and alcohol treatment;
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021;
- Charitable funds and grants brought in by organisations, including volunteer workforce;
- NHS commissioned initiatives; and

- Support to voluntary, community and faith sector workforce.

3.8 The Council is committed to supporting the prevention of homelessness and invests in support for people across multiple areas of their lives, including substance, drug and alcohol misuse, to prevent, reduce and delay the escalation of need and aid recovery. The Council contributes towards the prevention, intervention, and recovery of homelessness through other contracts and statutory duties including the Domestic Abuse Act, and Statutory Guidance, Substance Misuse and Housing Taskforce.

3.9 The Council remains committed to working with Devon's District Councils to bring more funding into Devon to support them to deliver their housing and homelessness statutory duties. Most recently the Council worked in partnership with South Hams and West Devon District Councils to successfully bid for Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP) funding. The Council is currently working with Exeter City Council on their bid for funding under the Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme (SHAP).

3.10 The Council has established District Housing Forums, a dedicated space to share concerns and plans for better outcomes in relation to homelessness and housing. The Council meets with each district authority six times a year.

3.11 Should District and City Councils not develop any alternative mitigation plans, the recommendation may increase demand for other services across the health, care and housing system, the Council is working collaboratively to address these system risks.

3.12 The Council will exercise its duties to ensure those who need an assessment under the Care Act receive one, and to consider how care and support needs can be met, if identified. The Council will need to ensure that partners understand how people can access the Council self-help tool, and how to contact adult social care for an assessment of needs [Assessments - Adult Social Care | Devon County Council](#)

3.13 Key risks have been identified and mitigations have been developed across the Council and with system partners. The Equalities Impact Assessment has been updated to take account of the consultation responses and recommendation and is attached at Appendix B.

## 4) Options

4.1 The table below sets out the options and analysis for the future funding by the Council of the 18+ homelessness prevention contribution and contract. The analysis is based on the consultation responses and a range of impacts, including promoting people's independence, partnership working, Care Act responsibilities and financial sustainability (shown as costs to the Council).

<b>Option 1: Cease the 18+ homelessness prevention contribution and contract on its expiry – 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023 – as per consultation proposal.</b> Work with District and City Councils and providers to find alternative funding sources to discharge their statutory homelessness duties.						
Service provision for people with Care Act 2014 eligibility	Partnership Working	Promoting Independence	Listening to consultation feedback	Financial Impact		
				23/24	24/25	25/26
<p>Council Adult Social Care funding can be targeted to those with Care Act eligible needs in line with the Council statutory duties.</p> <p>Supports financial sustainability of the Council. The Council does not receive any funding from Government for homelessness prevention.</p> <p>The consultation highlighted a potential increase in demand for services across the health, care and housing system, which we are working collaboratively to address.</p>	<p>Housing and Homelessness is a statutory duty of Housing Authorities, not the Council.</p> <p>Districts have access to central government funding and are best placed to align this funding to local strategic plans to improve the approach to preventing homelessness.</p> <p>Brings the Council in line with most other local authorities who do not directly fund homelessness prevention.</p> <p>The Council will continue working with Districts to secure more funding into Devon to enable them to fulfil their statutory duties to prevent and relieve homelessness.</p>	<p>Supports intent that the prevention of homelessness is best determined locally, tailored to local need and allows for the pooling of available resources.</p> <p>There is a risk that the multi-occupancy hostels may close because of insufficient staffing levels. Mitigations include ensuring there are planned moves for individuals.</p> <p>The Council will continue to invest in support for people across multiple areas of their lives to prevent, reduce and/or delay the escalation of need and enable recovery.</p>	<p>The majority of consultation responses advocated for the continuation of funding.</p> <p>Providers asked for the contract to be varied to at least the end of the financial year 23/24 to allow time to mitigate risks.</p>	<p><b>Cost:</b> £727,000 (part year effect)</p> <p>See financial considerations section 7</p>	<p><b>Cost:</b> £0.00</p>	<p><b>Cost:</b> £0.00</p>
<b>Option 2: Reverse the proposal and continue funding £1.45m annually.</b>						
Service provision for people with Care Act 2014 eligibility	Partnership Working	Promoting Independence	Listening to consultation feedback	Financial Impact		
				23/24	24/25	25/26

<p>The contribution will continue to be a service for people irrespective of Care Act 2014 eligibility.</p> <p>Limits the ability of Council Adult Social Care funding to be targeted to those with Care Act eligible needs in line with DCC’s statutory duties.</p> <p>Does not support financial sustainability of the Council.</p>	<p>District/City Councils may ask for a long-term commitment to funding from the Council.</p> <p>Governance and performance management arrangements would need to be established and would require ongoing Council staff resource.</p> <p>Likely to require re-commissioning as outside of the permitted contract duration and extensions, requiring Council staff resource.</p> <p>The Council would be an outlier in directly funding homelessness prevention.</p>	<p>Consultation responses give examples of how people have been supported to be as independent as possible through local homelessness support, of which the Council contribution forms part.</p> <p>Current arrangements are not enabling District Councils to find more creative ways of preventing homelessness, aligned to Government ‘Ending Rough Sleeping for Good strategy’ and supporting funding.</p> <p>Districts are best placed to align the funding they receive in line with their statutory duties, to local strategic plans to prevent homelessness.</p>	<p>The majority of consultation responses advocated for the continuation of funding.</p>	<p><b>Cost:</b> £1.454m</p> <p>See financial considerations section 7</p>	<p><b>Cost:</b> £1.454m</p> <p>See financial considerations section 7</p>	<p><b>Cost:</b> £1.454m</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>See financial considerations section 7</p>
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**Option 3: Extend the funding for the remaining 2023/24 financial year and cease on 31/3/2024.**

Service provision for people with Care Act 2014 eligibility	Partnership Working	Promoting Independence	Listening to consultation feedback	Financial Impact		
				23/24	24/25	25/26
<p>Limits the ability of Adult Social Care funding to be targeted to those with Care Act eligible needs in</p>	<p>Allows Districts and Providers more time to explore options to manage the change.</p>	<p>Consultation responses received from people give examples of how they have been supported to be as</p>	<p>The majority of consultation responses advocated for the</p>	<p><b>Cost:</b> £1.454m</p>	<p><b>Cost:</b> £0.00</p>	<p><b>Cost:</b> £0.00</p>

<p>line with the Councils' statutory duties this financial year. Resources redirected to eligible needs thereafter.</p> <p>The consultation highlighted a potential increase in demand for health, care and housing services, which we are working collaboratively to address.</p> <p>Does not support financial sustainability of the Council this year.</p>	<p>The Council will continue working with Districts to secure more funding into Devon to enable them to fulfil their statutory duties to prevent and relieve homelessness.</p> <p>As we are outside of the permitted contract duration and extension period any subsequent extension period would need to be at a length agreed by <u>both parties</u>, requiring Council staff resource.</p>	<p>independent as possible through local homelessness support, of which the Council contribution forms part.</p> <p>Current arrangements are not enabling District Councils to find more creative ways of preventing homelessness, aligned to Government 'Ending Rough Sleeping for Good strategy' and supporting funding.</p>	<p>continuation of funding.</p> <p>Providers asked for the contract to be varied to at least the end of 23/24 to allow for a managed change.</p>	<p>See financial considerations section 7</p>		
<p><b>Option 4: Taper the funding over a period of time before ceasing.</b> The financial impact outlined is indicative only as the development of a taper plan would be developed with Devon's District Councils and Providers.</p>						
Service provision for people with Care Act 2014 eligibility	Partnership Working	Promoting Independence	Listening to consultation feedback	Financial Impact		
				23/24	24/25	25/26
<p>The contribution will continue to be a service for people irrespective of Care Act 2014 eligibility.</p> <p>Limits the ability of Adult Social Care funding to be targeted to those with Care Act eligible needs in line with the Council's statutory duties.</p>	<p>Gives time for Providers and District Councils to support a managed change to new arrangements.</p> <p>The Council would be an outlier in directly funding homelessness prevention over the next few years.</p> <p>The consultation highlighted a potential increase in demand for health, care and housing services,</p>	<p>Current arrangements are not enabling District Councils to find more creative ways of preventing homelessness, aligned to Government 'Ending Rough Sleeping for Good strategy' and supporting funding.</p> <p>Consultation responses received from people give examples of how they have been supported to be as</p>	<p>The majority of consultation responses advocated for the continuation of funding.</p> <p>Providers and District/City partners have asked that the funding be extended and to</p>	<p>Indicative Cost: £1.454m</p> <p>See financial considerations section 7</p>	<p>Indicative Cost: £727,000</p> <p>See financial considerations section 7</p>	<p>Indicative Cost: £0.00</p>

Does not support financial sustainability of the Council.	which we are working collaboratively to address.	independent as possible through local homelessness support, of which the Council contribution forms part.	work in partnership on a proposed way forward.			
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**Option 5: Re-establish proposal to devolve funding to District/City Councils, rather than directly to the Providers (and continue to fund).**

Service provision for people with Care Act 2014 eligibility	Partnership Working	Promoting Independence	Listening to consultation feedback	Financial Impact		
				23/24	24/25	25/26
<p>The contribution will continue to be a service for people irrespective of Care Act 2014 eligibility.</p> <p>Limits the ability of Adult Social Care funding to be targeted to those with Care Act eligible needs in line with the Council's statutory duties.</p> <p>Does not support financial sustainability of the Council.</p>	<p>Discussions to devolve the funding took place between 2019-22 with no agreed way forward around funding split, and future delivery of support.</p> <p>District/City Councils may ask for a long-term commitment to funding from DCC.</p> <p>Governance and performance management arrangements would need to be established and would require ongoing County Council staff resource.</p> <p>The Council would be an outlier in directly funding homelessness prevention.</p>	<p>Consultation responses received from people give examples of how they have been supported to be as independent as possible through local homelessness support, of which the Council contribution forms part.</p> <p>Supports intent that the prevention of homelessness is best determined locally, tailored to local need and allows for the pooling of available resources.</p>	<p>The majority of consultation responses advocated for the continuation of funding.</p> <p>Some Provider and District Councils requested this option through their response.</p>	<p><b>Cost:</b> £1.454m</p> <p>See financial considerations section 7</p>	<p><b>Cost:</b> £1.454m</p> <p>See financial considerations section 7</p>	<p><b>Cost:</b> £1.454m</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>See financial considerations section 7</p>



## 5 Consultation feedback

- 5.1 The public consultation began on 22 February 2023 and ended on 19 April 2023 (8 weeks). The consultation was hosted online, via the Council's ['Have Your Say'](#) webpage. Devon's District/City Council CEOs and providers were notified simultaneously, via email, on 22 February 2023.
- 5.2 Whilst the consultation took place online, one provider requested a meeting, and the offer was extended to all providers, the Council met with all providers. Notes from the provider meetings have formed part of the consultation responses.
- 5.3 Officers have considered every response to the consultation, which has informed a refreshed equalities impact assessment, analysis of options and recommendation to Cabinet. A [report to the DCC Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee](#) in June 2023 provided an overview of the public consultation process, the level of engagement and the themes of the feedback received. These themes are summarised below:
- 5.3.1 The responses to the consultation were almost entirely against the proposal (925), with 3 responses identified as neutral, with respondents stating that there would be an impact should the Council's contract come to an end. The consultation did not ask respondents to identify the capacity in which they responded, however from the responses received we can ascertain that at least 27 came from service users, 47 came from providers of support hours, and 42 from the VCSE.
- 5.3.2 Devon's District and City Councils responses outline the negative impact the proposal would have on homelessness in Devon, and their ability to deliver statutory homelessness duties. Alongside increasing demand for homelessness, people are presenting with multiple complex needs and in crisis. A decision to cease the contract and contribution would result in increased pressure on the District and City Councils' temporary accommodation budget. This is compounded by the lack of suitable and affordable housing options and lack of move on options which would see people remain in temporary accommodation for longer.
- 5.3.3 District and City Councils recognised the financial pressure facing the Council. More time is requested to explore and implement mitigations to the proposal as successfully as possible to prevent further increasing levels of homelessness and rough sleeping, and potential increased demand on other statutory services, including adult social care.
- 5.3.4 The proposal would result in an increased demand and cost to other public bodies and partners including the NHS, police, Devon's District and City Councils, as well as to DCC statutory services; indicating DCC would end up paying more.
- 5.3.5 The increase in demand and cost was attributed, in part, to the ending of the countywide floating support service and closure of hostel building, as there isn't sufficient time for planning or management of the proposed change.
- 5.3.6 The possibility of poorer outcomes and risk of harm to people, including risk to life.

- 5.3.7 Potential loss of skilled workers should the services cease.
- 5.3.8 There would be an increase in levels of safeguarding, homelessness and rough sleeping, homeless people being impacted by anti-social behaviour, crime and exploitation, mental health issues, including suicide ideation, drug, and alcohol dependence.
- 5.3.9 The services provide good value for money, and they limit health and care need, and give people a chance to contribute to society.
- 5.3.10 Respondents did not understand the rationale for the proposal, or what would replace the current services funded by the Council contract.
- 5.3.11 There wasn't sufficient information to submit an informed response and, the consultation lacked alternative options.
- 5.3.12 Acknowledged the financial challenge facing the Council and recognised that the Homelessness is not one of its statutory duties
- 5.3.13 The Council re-consider the proposal and maintain the funding, suggesting working in partnership with Devon's District and City councils in consideration of the negative impacts on other public bodies and individuals who are at risk of homelessness.
- 5.3.14 The timing of the proposal was questioned due the housing crisis in Devon which makes it harder for Providers to support people to move onto their own accommodation, alongside the cost-of-living crisis.
- 5.3.15 Other alternative funding source may be available for providers.
- 5.4 Redacted consultation responses have been published in response to a [Freedom of Information request](#).

## **6 Strategic Plan**

- 6.1 Our '[Promoting Independence](#)' vision describes what we are trying to achieve for people who need adult social care services in Devon now or may do in the future.
- 6.2 Our Vision and strategies seeks to align to the [government's vision for adult social care](#), One [Devon health and care system strategy](#), and the [Devon County Council strategic plan](#) whilst articulating the distinctive role and objectives of adult social care.
- 6.3 Our '[Promoting Independence](#)' policy sets the policy framework by which we operate including how we apply statutory guidance in Devon and the '[Commitment to Carers](#)' underpins our approach to unpaid carers.
- 6.4 Our '[Living Well](#)', '[Ageing Well](#)' and '[Caring Well](#)' strategies describe how we apply this vision and policy to people aged 18-64, people aged 65+, and unpaid carers.

6.5 Our '[Annual Report](#)' or 'Local Account' assesses our delivery against our vision, strategies and plans each year, using national surveys, performance information, and activity/cost/spend data to compare with others.

## **7 Financial Considerations**

7.1 The Council's contribution to 18+ homelessness prevention is £1,454 million per year. A breakdown of the financial impact of the options (including the recommended option) is set out in section 4.

7.2 The budget for 2023/24 does not include funding for options 2 to 5 inclusive. If it is decided to proceed with one of these options, the additional costs as set out in the table in section 4 will need to be funded on a one-off basis from Reserves in 2023/24 and from ongoing savings in future years.

7.3 Option 1, as recommended will cause a financial pressure of £727,000 in the current year – this will be monitored closely as part of the overall budget throughout the year and if it cannot be mitigated a recommendation to use Reserves will be brought to Cabinet as part of the Outturn recommendations in May of next year.

## **8 Legal Considerations**

8.1 The current framework contract ends on 30 September 2023.

8.2 During the consultation the Council received responses and challenge regarding the proposals including suggestions that it had a legal/ statutory duty to continue to provide these services. The Council has investigated this matter thoroughly and has established that it does not have a duty as the respondents have suggested. Such challenges often form part of the consultation process.

8.3 The Council is of the view that both the Housing Act 1996 and the Care Act 2014 impose a mutual obligation to co-operate in the exercise of the respective functions of the Local Housing Authority and the Council, as the relevant social services authority, concerning its responsibilities relating to adults with needs for care and support and the obligation to have regard to the homelessness strategies. The Council's position is that where it is asked by a district or City to assist the housing authority with the exercise of its functions under the Housing Act 1996, it will offer such co-operation and assistance where it is deemed reasonable to do so and, it does not result in the Council doing anything which another local authority is required to do under the Housing Act 1996.

8.4 The Council continues to carry out its adult social care responsibilities in accordance with the Care Act 2014, including S.2, and relevant regulations. It conducts its assessment of need for care and support and prevention functions with regard to the homelessness strategies of districts and the 'duty to refer' responsibilities placed on the Council by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

8.5 The Council will ensure it exercises its duties to ensure those who need an assessment under the Care Act receive one and to consider how care and support needs can be

met. The Council will work closely with the District and City councils to develop and support transitional plans to meet the needs of individuals.

## **9 Environmental Impact Considerations**

- 9.1 We want people to lead meaningful lives within their communities. Environment impact considerations have been looked at as part of the impact assessment.
- 9.2 This report has no specific environmental impact implications that are not already covered by or subsumed within the detailed policies or actions referred to therein.

## **10 Equality Considerations**

- 10.1 Where relevant, in coming to a decision the Equality Act 2010 Public Sector Equality Duty requires decision makers to give due regard to the need to:
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct;
  - advance equality by encouraging participation, removing disadvantage, taking account of disabilities and meeting people's needs; and
  - foster good relations between people by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding in relation to the protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership (for employment), pregnancy and maternity, race/ethnicity, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation).
- 10.2 A decision maker may also consider other relevant factors such as caring responsibilities, rural isolation or socio-economic disadvantage.
- 10.3 An Equalities [Impact Assessment](#) has been prepared and is attached with this report. It is also available on the [Council's website](#). Members will need to consider the Impact Assessment for the purposes of this item.

## **11 Risk Management Considerations**

- 11.1 This proposal has been assessed and all necessary safeguards or action have been taken to safeguard the Council's position
- 11.2 The Council's proposal to cease the 18+ homelessness prevention contribution and contract was accompanied by an equalities [impact assessment](#), published at the start of the consultation. The impact has been updated to take account the consultation responses, including risks and mitigations.

## **12 Summary**

- 12.1 The financial challenge facing the Council means that difficult decisions need to be taken. The long standing and key relationships the Council has with the District and City Councils makes this decision all the more difficult.

- 12.2 The Council has heard the consultation feedback and committed to working with District and City Councils to limit the impact of the recommendation.
- 12.3 The ending of our contribution to the fund will not mean that people will now have unmet adult social care needs. Through our own statutory duties, we ensure that any adult with the appearances of adult social care needs will be offered a needs assessment, and should it be required, care and support planning, and access to the services they need. However, we are committed to working in partnership and will continue to work with District and City Council colleagues to ensure that referral pathways are understood.
- 12.4 The Council remains committed to working with District and City Councils to bring more funding into Devon to support them to deliver their housing and homelessness statutory duties. The Council has established District Housing Forums, a dedicated space to share concerns and plans for better outcomes in relation to homelessness and housing. The Council meets with each district authority six times a year.
- 12.5 The Council is committed to supporting the prevention of homelessness and invests in support for people across multiple areas of their lives, including substance, drug and alcohol misuse, to prevent, reduce and delay the escalation of need and recovery.
- 12.6 Cabinet is asked to agree to cease the Council's 18+ homelessness prevention contribution and contract on its expiry on the 30 September 2023 as per option 1 in section 4 of this report.

**Name:** Director of Integrated Adult Social Care: Tandra Forster

**Cabinet Member for Integrated Adult Social Care and Health:** Councillor James McInnes

**Electoral Divisions:** All

### **Local Government Act 1972: List of background papers**

Nil

#### **Contact for enquiries:**

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## Appendix A: Homelessness Prevention Funding

Since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, Local Housing Authorities have been awarded a **Homelessness Prevention Grant** each year to support them to deliver their homelessness statutory duties. All Housing Authorities in Devon receive an allocation of this grant, which is a multi-year grant for 2023 to 2025 and totals £5,376,112.00 across the county. The table below sets out the allocations for each District Council.



Department for Levelling Up,  
Housing & Communities

Code	Local Authority	Homelessness Prevention Grant - total allocation for 2023-24 (£322.8m)	Homelessness Prevention Grant - total allocation for 2024-25 (£331.3m)	Homelessness Prevention Grant - allocation before application of transitional arrangements (£310m)*
E07000040	East Devon	£281,722	£296,353	£459,171
E07000041	Exeter	£631,716	£660,591	£796,735
E07000042	Mid Devon	£210,228	£220,124	£260,198
E07000043	North Devon	£420,700	£439,960	£643,903
E07000044	South Hams	£181,050	£189,931	£221,811
E07000045	Teignbridge	£465,500	£486,778	£572,266
E07000046	Torridge	£259,668	£270,746	£283,555
E07000047	West Devon	£179,442	£181,603	£133,835
		<b>£2,630,026</b>	<b>£2,746,086</b>	<b>£3,371,474</b>

\* This column shows the allocation before transitional arrangements are applied. It has been published in the interest of transparency and does not reflect actual allocations to LAs.

In addition, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has awarded **Rough Sleeper Initiative funding** to Local Housing Authorities to support those sleeping rough or at risk of homelessness. Local Housing Authorities bid for the funding and have been awarded a total of £7,100,579.00 across the 3 years.

Local Authority Name	Total RSI 22- 25 Allocation
East Devon District Council	£568,074
Exeter City Council	£3,739,774
Mid Devon District Council	£345,976
North Devon District Council	£1,162,792
Teignbridge District Council	£916,792
Torridge District Council	£367,171

## Proposal for the future Council contribution to the Wellbeing Exeter Partnership Fund

### Report of the Director of Integrated Adult Social Care

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Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Cabinet (and confirmation under the provisions of the Council's Constitution) before taking effect.

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## 1) Recommendation

That the Cabinet:

- a) Agree to cease the Council contributions to the Wellbeing Exeter Partnership Fund as per option 1 in section 4 of this report

## 2) Context

- 2.1 In common with other local authorities the Council is working hard to achieve financial sustainability. This is mirrored across the country and in District and City Councils across Devon. Collectively we are having to think about how we can make our budgets go further by focussing on the things we must do.
- 2.2 The recommendation within this paper is part of a wider Council savings strategy that includes other difficult decisions that will result in changes for people in the Council, in other partner councils and in our communities.
- 2.3 In developing the saving strategy, the Council has tried wherever possible to reduce investment that limits the impact on our residents, communities and partners. However, even with this work the Council is still in a position where it must make some difficult choices. Where difficult proposals are made, the Council has acted as a system partner and engaged with those potentially impacted, including all District and City authorities across Devon and being active in conversations that seek solutions.
- 2.4 The Council has listened to the feedback received and worked hard to understand the impact of its proposals. In response to concerns heard, the Council has been engaging with Exeter City Council and the VCSE.
- 2.5 Although this paper recommends the Council withdraws funding from Wellbeing Exeter, it is not a recommendation of a withdrawal from working in partnership with the VCSE, or indeed Exeter City Council.

- 2.6 The Council values and is committed to the special relationships it has with Exeter City Council and the collective serving of the people of Devon. That makes recommendation like this all the more difficult, but the Council believes that this is the right course of action at this time. The alternative options set out in this paper do not contribute sufficiently enough to the Council's saving strategy and the financial challenges of the years ahead.
- 2.7 The Council is also committed to working with the VCSE across the whole of Devon, recognising it plays a leading role in supporting the development of community resilience and providing opportunities for people to live the lives they want to live.
- 2.8 The Council has a Best Value Duty; the requirement is set out in the Local Government Act 1999 to "secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness."

### **3) The development of Wellbeing Exeter**

- 3.1 Wellbeing Exeter was established through the Integrated Care Exeter (ICE) Project (2012 to 2017). Under the leadership of the ICE Director, Wellbeing Exeter was established as a proof of concept in 2013, working within one GP practice in Exeter and a range of voluntary and community sector organisations.
- 3.2 By 2015 Wellbeing Exeter expanded to cover several GP practices across the city and key partners agreed to extend funding to continue to develop the programme.
- 3.3 The Council initially funded the early pilot of Wellbeing Exeter through the ICE (Integrated Care Exeter) programme. The Council secured funding of over £1.5 million from the Department for Communities and Local Government in 2015-16 on behalf of the then Integrated Care for Exeter partnership, which went on to develop the Wellbeing Exeter model.
- 3.4 Subsequent years funding from the Council has been through the Integrated Adult Social Care budget, with the intention that future and on-going funding would be identified by the programme. On-going funding of £395,000 per year has continued from 2018 by the Council from the Adult Social Care budget. For 2023/24, Exeter City Council has reduced the requested sum to £270,000.
- 3.5 As part of the exit strategy for ICE, Exeter City Council was invited to take over the management and leadership of Wellbeing Exeter when it appointed the ICE Director to its Strategic Management Board in July 2017.
- 3.6 Wellbeing Exeter is now an established partnership of public, voluntary and community sector organisations working together providing foundations for individuals and communities to promote and improve their own health and wellbeing. Wellbeing Exeter offers three main services:
- 3.6.1 Resilient People: social prescribing
  - 3.6.2 Resilient Communities: community building and supporting active lifestyles



### 3.6.3 Resilient System: network support and co-ordination

3.7 Funding from government to the NHS for social prescribing in Primary Care was initially pooled by local practices into Wellbeing Exeter but this funding was withdrawn in 2022/2023. The four Exeter Primary Care Networks have now set up their own in-house health and wellbeing teams to deliver social prescribing, this approach gives them more oversight and accountability for the work. It is understood that funding from other partner is under review.

3.8 The Council's current funding commitments to Wellbeing Exeter are coming to an end, and in February this year Wellbeing Exeter's commissioning organisations came together to make decisions about its future role in the city and the wider health and care system. At that point the Council advised the programme lead that it was developing consultation proposals on the future of its funding contribution to Wellbeing Exeter.

3.9 The Council is committed to working with the VCSE across the whole of Devon, recognising it plays a leading role in supporting the development of community resilience and providing opportunities for people to live the lives they want to live.

3.10 The Council has a Best Value Duty; the requirement is set out in the Local Government Act 1999 to "secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness."

3.11 Exeter City Council is preparing a funding prospectus with the aim of recruiting additional philanthropic investors and a new organisational form such as a Community Interest Company for April 2024 and beyond. Part of this will need to include how the services provided through Wellbeing Exeter can continue to be sustainable. The Council commits to working with Wellbeing Exeter to do this.

3.12 The recommendation within this report means that people with [eligible needs as defined within the Care Act](#) will continue to have their eligible needs met.

3.13 A [report to the DCC Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee](#) provided an overview of the public consultation process, the level of engagement and the themes of the feedback received

3.14 The recommendation within this report means that people with [eligible needs as defined within the Care Act](#) will continue to have their eligible needs met.

3.15 A [report to the DCC Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee](#) provided an overview of the public consultation process, the level of engagement and the themes of the feedback received

## 4) Options / Alternatives

4.1 The table below sets out the analysis of options for the future DCC contribution towards the Wellbeing Exeter Fund.

4.2 With every option, Devon County Council remains committed to working with partners to bring more funding into Devon to support them to deliver their statutory duties.

Option	Detail	Impact	Financial Implication
1. Cease funding	To cease on 30/9, prior to 1 month notice period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribution to the DCC savings plans</li> <li>• DCC refocus on its statutory duties</li> <li>• Reduced contribution to preventative working</li> <li>• Reduced DCC influence on preventative services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £135,000 cost in 2023/24</li> </ul>
2. Do nothing	Continue existing arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribution to prevention activity maintained</li> <li>• No contribution to DCC savings plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued in year, and on-going annual spend of £270,000</li> </ul>
3. Find alternative funding source	Wellbeing Exeter Partnership to seek additional funding from elsewhere beyond 2023/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribution to the DCC savings plans</li> <li>• Continued and sustainable funded</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £270,000 continued contribution in 23/24</li> <li>• Halted DCC IASC spend beyond 23/24</li> </ul>

## 5) Consultation

5.1 A consultation was launched on 9 March 2023 on the [‘Have Your Say’](#) public consultations page of the Council website, closing on 22 April 2023. Local Elected Members were briefed and Exeter City Council engagement and contributed to the impact assessment.

5.2 Through this public consultation the Council sought views on a set of initial proposals. Having done that and listened to the feedback, proposals are now the recommended to Cabinet.

5.3 A [report to the DCC Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee](#) provided an overview of the public consultation process, the level of engagement and the themes of the feedback received. The themes of the feedback received is summarised below:

5.3.1 The consultation received 136 responses to the Have your Say questionnaire, and a letter was received from Wellbeing Exeter Commissioning Board Members.

5.3.2 Positive feedback on Wellbeing Exeter as a highly valued service that effectively supports people during the pandemic.

- 5.3.3 Importance of continuing Wellbeing Exeter's vital work during the cost-of-living crisis to build resilient communities and protect vulnerable people.
- 5.3.4 Wellbeing Exeter is heavily used, preventing visits to GP or emergency departments, and reducing service waiting times.
- 5.3.5 Concerns about the impact of ceasing funding on already stretched services, compromising people's health and wellbeing, and putting them at risk of needing more intensive support in the future.
- 5.3.6 Challenges to the rationale behind the proposal, suggesting that removing this service would put vulnerable people at risk and questioning why alternative provision has not been secured before.
- 5.3.7 Wellbeing Exeter is not cost-effective and does not add value to the community.
- 5.3.8 Negative experiences with Community Builders, who may not organise activities suitable for everyone and spend too much money.
- 5.3.9 Issues with the effectiveness of the partnership, and equality of outcomes, and workers not having enough experience working with vulnerable people.
- 5.3.10 Report of other providers who offer this service without funding from DCC, suggesting that Wellbeing Exeter may not be required.

## 6) Strategic Plan

- 6.1 Our '[Promoting Independence](#)' vision describes what we are trying to achieve for people who need adult social care services in Devon now or may do in the future.
- 6.2 It seeks to align to the [government's vision for adult social care](#), One [Devon health and care system strategy](#), and the [Devon County Council strategic plan](#) whilst articulating the distinctive role and objectives of adult social care.
- 6.3 Our '[Promoting Independence](#)' policy sets the policy framework by which we operate including how we apply statutory guidance in Devon and the '[Commitment to Carers](#)' underpins our approach to unpaid carers.
- 6.4 Our '[Living Well](#)', '[Ageing Well](#)' and '[Caring Well](#)' strategies describe how we apply this vision and policy to people aged 18-64, people aged 65+, and unpaid carers.
- 6.5 Our '[Annual Report](#)' or 'Local Account' assesses our delivery against our vision, strategies and plans each year, using national surveys, performance information, and activity/cost/spend data to compare with others.

## 7) Financial Considerations

7.1 The cost of Devon County Council's contribution to the Wellbeing Exeter Partnership fund has been £395,000 per year, reducing in 2023-24 to £270,000.

7.2 Subject to the recommended action, including the reduction in the contributions from April 2023 to September 2023 (£125,00), the ceasing of funding on 30 September (£135,000), the in-year savings achieved will be £260,000.

7.3 The budget for 2023/24 does not include funding for options 2 and 3. If it is decided to proceed with one of these options, the additional costs as set out in the table in section 4 will need to be funded on a one-off basis from Reserves in 2023/24 and from ongoing savings in future years.

7.4 If option 1, is not recommended it will cause a financial pressure of £270,000 in the current year – this will be monitored closely as part of the overall budget throughout the year and if it cannot be mitigated a recommendation to use Reserves will be brought to Cabinet as part of the Outturn recommendations in May of next year.

7.5

## 8) Legal Considerations

8.1 The lawful implications of the proposal have been considered and taken into account in the preparation of this report on the proposal set out above.

8.2 Legal challenges will always form part of any consultation that seeks views on proposals for change, this has been the case during the course of the public consultation. The recommendations within this report mean that people with [eligible needs as defined within the Care Act](#) will continue to have their eligible needs met.

## 9) Environmental Impact Considerations

9.1 This report has no specific environmental impact implications that are not already covered by or subsumed within the detailed policies or actions referred to therein

## 10) Equality Considerations

10.1 Where relevant, in coming to a decision the Equality Act 2010 Public Sector Equality Duty requires decision makers to give due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct;
- advance equality by encouraging participation, removing disadvantage, taking account of disabilities and meeting people's needs; and
- foster good relations between people by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding in relation to the protected characteristics (age, disability, gender

reassignment, marriage and civil partnership (for employment), pregnancy and maternity, race/ethnicity, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation).

- 10.2 A decision maker may also consider other relevant factors such as caring responsibilities, rural isolation or socio-economic disadvantage.
- 10.3 In progressing this particular proposal, an [Impact Assessment](#) has been prepared which has been circulated separately to Cabinet Members and also is available on the [Council's website](#)
- 10.4 Members will need to consider the Impact Assessment for the purposes of this item.

## **11) Risk Management Considerations**

- 11.1 This proposal has been assessed and all necessary safeguards or action have been taken to safeguard the Council's position.
- 11.2 Devon's proposal to cease the Wellbeing Exeter contribution was accompanied by an [impact assessment](#), published at the start of the consultation. The impact has been updated to take account the consultation responses, including risks and mitigations.

## **12) Summary**

- 12.1 The financial challenge facing the Council means that difficult decisions need to be taken. The long standing and key relationship the Council has with Exeter City Council makes this decision all the more difficult.
- 12.2 The Council has heard the consultation feedback and committed to working with Exeter City Council and the VCSE to limit the impact of the recommendation.
- 12.3 Although the Council has contributed to the Wellbeing Exeter Partnership Fund since its inception, through the Integrated Adult Social Care budget, the service does not directly contribute to the meeting of our adult social care statutory duty to meet eligible needs.
- 12.4 The funding is primarily used to support social prescribing that connects people to opportunities to support their broader and less complex needs than set out in adult social care legislation.
- 12.5 Funding from government to the NHS for social prescribing in Primary Care was initially pooled by local practices into Wellbeing Exeter but this funding was withdrawn in 2022/2023. The four Exeter Primary Care Networks have now set up their own in-house health and wellbeing teams to deliver social prescribing, this approach gives them more oversight and accountability for the work. It is understood that funding from other partner is under review.

- 12.6 Since the consultation was launched Exeter City Council has been working with others to seek additional funding to replace the Council contribution.
- 12.7 Cabinet is asked to agree to cease the Council contributions to the Wellbeing Exeter Partnership Fund as per option 1 in section 4 of this report.

**Name**

Director of Integrated Adult Social Care: Tandra Forster

**Electoral Divisions:** All Exeter Divisions

Cabinet Member for Integrated Adult Social Care and Health: Councillor James McInnes

**Local Government Act 1972: List of background papers**

Nil

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