



Director of Integrated Adult Social Care

Councillor James McInnes
County Hall
Topsham Road
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Tandra Forster
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Letter sent by email

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2 October 2023

Dear Councillor McInnes

Re: Community Safety Funding Agreement between Devon County Council and HM Prison and Probation Service (formally Devon and Cornwall Probation Trust).

I am writing to ask if you will make a decision in accordance with Paragraph 11 of the County Council's Scheme of Delegation by approving:

The proposal to not extend or renew the Community Safety Funding Agreement between Devon County Council and HM Prison and Probation Service (formally Devon and Cornwall Probation Trust) when it expires on 31st March 2024.

Devon County Council entered into a 10-year funding agreement on 1st April 2014, which is used by Devon and Cornwall Probation Trust to commission a specialist accommodation service in Exeter (Howell Road) to support a range of offenders, aged 18+. The value of the Funding Agreement is £223,181 per annum and comes from the Integrated Adult Social Care budget.

Much has changed over the ten years since this Funding Agreement was put in place. The Government's 'Ending Rough Sleeping for Good' strategy (September 2022) sets out its ambition that 'no-one is released from a public institution to the streets' with actions to roll out transitional accommodation upon release, and the expansion of Approved Premises to be led by the Ministry of Justice. Funding for this element of community safety is not a statutory responsibility of the Council - it is best delivered by the Ministry of Justice and its Agencies.

Devon County Council has engaged with the Ministry of Justice and the local Probation Service since January 2022, knowing that the current 10-year agreement was nearing its end. Discussions have been positive and have covered

the historical nature of the arrangement, statutory responsibilities of probation accommodation services, and the financial challenge of Devon County Council.

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) is aware of Devon County Council's position. The MoJ is undertaking an impact assessment and will take a policy decision on the future of the service.

Exeter City Council Housing Officers were made aware in December 2022 that the Funding Agreement expires on 31st March 2024. Further conversations have taken place with Exeter City Council in recent weeks to share our proposals for this Funding Agreement.

Should the decision be made to implement this proposal, officers will continue to work with the Ministry of Justice and let them, the Probation Service and Exeter City Council formally know of the decision and rationale. Devon County Council will publish an Impact Assessment on the proposal.

Please find appended to this letter a copy of the Cabinet Member Decision form, to enable you to formally advise me of your decision and in so doing confirm that the entry in the 'interests' box is accurate or amend it accordingly. I would be pleased if you could advise me of your decision as soon as possible by returning the decision form to me.

If you require any further information, please contact Solveig Wright, solveig.wright@devon.gov.uk

In accordance with procedures a copy of this letter has been sent to Councillor Sara Randall Johnson, Chair of Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee.

No action will be taken until all Members of the County Council have been advised of your decision and five working days have elapsed to enable Members to request that the decision be referred to the full Cabinet for consideration or called in by a Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

Yours sincerely

Tandra Forster (signed)

Tandra Forster
Director of Integrated Adult Social Care

cc Councillor Sara Randall Johnson, Chair of Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee