**District Dispatch**

I recently had the pleasure of spending the morning with our Rough Sleeper team and Everyone Active to find out more about a unique initiative, which has been helping rough sleepers and those who are at risk of homelessness to access support.

The scheme, which is delivered from a variety of locations, has been using physical exercise — from walk and talk sessions; gym sessions; and even swimming — to help clients boost their wellbeing, confidence and self-esteem. These sessions have also provided clients with the opportunity to have conversations about other parts of their lives where they may want support.

We’ve been able to pay for this fantastic scheme through funding from the Department of Levelling Up, and in just over the past year I’m pleased to say that over 50 people have benefitted from this. We currently have funding to deliver this until April 2025.

As an athletics coach for young people, I know first-hand the positive effects that access to exercise can have on an individual’s general wellbeing. What’s fantastic is that through this initiative, we have seen people go from being totally inactive, to participating in activities throughout the week. As a result, it has provided those benefitting from the scheme with more confidence; helped to boost their self-esteem; and improved their general wellbeing.

It’s also helped people to better integrate into the community, meet new people and feel more empowered to engage with other services — not just from our council, but also from a variety of other agencies and organisations. We know that not everyone will want to engage with our services straight away, and so this is a great way of building relationships with a variety of organisations who can offer support.

Due to the success of the scheme, we have also been able to extend it to those who may be at risk of homelessness or who are struggling with the current cost of living crisis. We know how challenging the current climate is for many people and so supporting people in this way is a key priority for us. This can also be seen through our Supporting You team — [www.chichester.gov.uk/supportingyouteam](http://www.chichester.gov.uk/supportingyouteam) — who are there to help people identify and access the range of support that is available to them, and our Social Prescribing team — [www.chichester.gov.uk/socialprescribing](http://www.chichester.gov.uk/socialprescribing) — who help people access a range of local non-clinical services to help meet their social and emotional needs. What is fantastic is to see the positive impact that all of these schemes are having, especially on those who need our help the most.

We are in a very strong position to continue to offer this level of support and to invest in our communities because the council has always managed its finances very well. What you may not be aware of is that we work incredibly hard to make sure that everyone has a roof over their heads. Not only do our rough sleeper team go out each day, making sure that rough sleepers know about the support that is available, but we are also committed to increasing the temporary accommodation that we own.

You may remember, two years ago, the council expanded its existing temporary accommodation by adding an additional building to provide a further 17 flats. Planning ahead in this way has meant that we have been better able to assist people and provide the most cost-effective way of delivering this support. One of our key aims is to expand our temporary accommodation even further to meet the growing demand that we are seeing. You can find out more about our housing services at: [www.chichester.gov.uk/housing](http://www.chichester.gov.uk/housing)

Best Wishes

Cllr David Betts

Cabinet Member for Housing and Revenues and Benefits at Chichester District Council

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