

Agenda

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Housing Panel (Panel of the Scrutiny Committee)

Date: **Thursday 5 December 2013**

Time: **5.00 pm**

Place: **St Aldate's Room, Town Hall**

For any further information please contact:

Pat Jones, Principle Scrutiny Officer

Telephone: 01865 252191

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Housing Panel (Panel of the Scrutiny Committee)

Membership

Chair **Councillor Val Smith**

Vice Chair

Councillor Gill Sanders

Councillor Stuart McCready

Councillor Sam Hollick

Linda Hill

Co-optee

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AGENDA

Pages

1 WORK PROGRAMME AND REPORT BACK ON RECOMMENDATIONS

1 - 2

Officer: Pat Jones Principal Scrutiny Officer will support the Panel with this debate.

Telephone: 01865 252191

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This item presents for discussion by The Panel the forward work programme and the results of recommendations made.

In particular:

- Mathew Metcalfe will report on the progress of scoping the Estate Regeneration line of inquiry.
- No recommendations were made to the City Executive Board at the last meeting but Members did ask Officers for further details on several performance Indicators, some of these appear on this agenda. The outstanding ones; no second night out and satisfaction with Parks will be included on the January 2014 agenda.
- The item raised by Councillor Hollick on “a lettings agency for the Council” will be discussed via a briefing paper at the January 2014 meeting.

2 HOUSING STRATEGY ACTION PLAN - REFRESH

3 - 20

Officer: Dave Scholes, Housing Strategy and Needs Manager

Tel: 01865 252626

Email: dscholes@oxford.gov.uk

Panel members called this item from the Forward Plan for pre-decision scrutiny. The report will be considered by the City Executive Board at their meeting on the 11th December 2013.

3 COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY FOR ALLOCATIONS

21 - 24

Officer: Dave Scholes, Housing Strategy and Needs Manager

Tel: 01865 252626

Email: dscholes@oxford.gov.uk

The Panel considered the Revised Allocations Scheme at their meeting on the 3rd. September. City Executive Board agreed with a Panel recommendation on the communication of this strategy and this item presents that strategy.

Housing Panel Agreed Recommendation:

A Communication Strategy should be in place to explain the scheme as agreed, what it means for applicants alongside some general information on the likelihood of being housed. Communication should include the opportunity for feedback on the scheme itself and the understandability of it.

4 STAR SURVEY BENCHMARKS AND METHODOLOGY

25 - 30

Officer: Stephen Clarke, Head of Housing and Property

Tel: 01865 252447

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The Panel considered several performance indicators the results for which had been gained through the STAR survey:

- HC017 – Tenant satisfaction with their estates – result 83%.
- HC001 – The % of Council tenants satisfied with Landlord Services – result 88%.
- HC022 – Percentage of tenants satisfied that Oxford City Council listens to their views and acts on them – result 64%.
- HC024 – Percentage of tenants satisfied with Estate Services – 78%.

The Panel asked to see more details on these results in particular:

- How these results benchmark against other public sector providers.
- The methodology for consultation in particular the number of returns and their geographical and household type spread.

5 PROGRAMME DETAILS PRODUCING RESULTS FOR PERFORMANCE INDICATORS HC016, NI154 AND NI155

31 - 32

Officers: Stephen Clarke, Head of Housing and Property

Tel: 01865 252447

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Michael Crofton-Briggs, Head of City Development

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Email: mcroftonbriggs@oxford.gov.uk

The Panel considered several performance indicators related to increasing housing supply:

- HC016 – Number of affordable homes for rent delivered – Target 4/ Result 0.
- NI154 – Net additional homes provided – Target 108/Result 36.
- NI155 – Number of affordable homes delivered (gross) – Target 4/Result 0.

To better understand performance the Panel asked to see the programmes that underpinned these results.

6 CURRENT RENT ARREARS PROFILES

Officer: Helen Bishop Head of Customer Services will support the Panel with this debate.

Tel: 01865 252233

Email: hbishop@oxford.gov.uk

At the last meeting Panel members asked to see more details on Council Tenant rent arrears.

Further information was requested on the profile of the rent arrears figures. In particular:

- The number of tenants in arrears who are affected by any of the benefit changes.
- Or are in the direct payments pilot.
- Alongside this the profile of the debt by number of weeks in arrears.

This information was not available when the agenda was published and will be circulated separately prior to the meeting.

7 NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Notes of the meeting held on 4th November 2013.

DECLARING INTERESTS

General duty

You must declare any disclosable pecuniary interests when the meeting reaches the item on the agenda headed "Declarations of Interest" or as soon as it becomes apparent to you.

What is a disclosable pecuniary interest?

Disclosable pecuniary interests relate to your* employment; sponsorship (ie payment for expenses incurred by you in carrying out your duties as a councillor or towards your election expenses); contracts; land in the Council's area; licenses for land in the Council's area; corporate tenancies; and securities. These declarations must be recorded in each councillor's Register of Interests which is publicly available on the Council's website.

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Where any matter disclosed in your Register of Interests is being considered at a meeting, you must declare that you have an interest. You should also disclose the nature as well as the existence of the interest.

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*Disclosable pecuniary interests that must be declared are not only those of the member her or himself but also those member's spouse, civil partner or person they are living with as husband or wife or as if they were civil partners.

Agenda Item 1

Housing Scrutiny Panel Work Programme 2013 - 2014

Dates	Agenda Items
3 rd . September 5.00pm.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Housing Strategy Action Plan. 2. Long term affordable housing for homelessness prevention. 3. Allocations review and changes to the Allocations Policy. 4. Performance monitoring – Housing Measures – Qtr. 1. 5. Allocation Policies and how we communicate, give advice and take account of feedback. 6. Panel work programme.
3 rd . October 5.00pm.	Provisional – not used.
4 th . November at 5.00pm.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Performance monitoring – Housing Measures- Qtr. 2. Item to include a report back on performance against CS002 and CS005 2. Follow up on benefits performance indicators.
5 th . December at 5.00pm.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Housing Strategy refresh. 2. Estate Regeneration – Scope 3. Management arrangements – Temporary Accommodation? 4. Communications Strategy for the Allocations Scheme 5. . 6. STAR survey benchmarks and methodology. 7. Programme details producing results for PIs HC016, NI154 and NI155. 8. Current rent arrears profiles.
15 th . January 2014 at 5.00pm.	Provisional <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Possible Asset Management Strategy – Oxford Standard. 2. Management arrangements – Temporary Accommodation?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Outcome from review of the Mutual Exchange process 4. No second night out detailed performance information. (confirmed) 5. Improving quality in the private rent sector – a City Council Letting Agency. 6. Satisfaction with Parks details of survey results.
7 th . February at 5.00pm.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Performance monitoring – Housing Measures – Qtr. 3. 2. Possible Asset Management Strategy – Oxford Standard
6 th . March at 5.00pm.	Provisional
3 rd . April at 5.00pm.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tenants and Residents Involvement Strategy – Implementation and opportunities for influence for tenants.

DRAFT

To: City Executive Board

Date: 11th December 2013

Item No:

Report of: Head of Housing and Property

Title of Report: Housing Strategy Action Plan – Refresh

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To provide the City Executive Board with a refresh of the Action Plan for the second term of the Housing Strategy.

Key decision: Yes

Executive lead member: Councillor Scott Seamons

Policy Framework: Housing Strategy 2012-15

Recommendation(s): The City Executive Board is asked:

(1) To note the report on consultation

(2) To approve the updated Housing Strategy Action Plan targets in Appendix A.

Appendices

A - Housing Strategy Action Plan (as updated)

B - Risk Register

C - Equality Impact Assessment

Introduction

- 1 The Housing Strategy approved in April 2012 stated that the Housing Strategy Action Plan will be reviewed with partners and actions refreshed in September 2013 – the mid-point of the Strategy. A report was presented to CEB on 11th September 2013 following which consultation was carried out with stakeholders inviting comments and suggestions for additional measures. This report gives the updated position following consultation.
- 2 Officers have reviewed priorities and actions and conclude that the Housing Strategy Action Plan targets remain highly relevant. However, there is a need to re-schedule or make minor amendments to targets in some cases. Details of the proposed revisions are contained in Appendix A. Further measures have been added following consultation (see overview of additional measures below)
- 3 The targets are distributed between the five Housing Strategy priorities which remain as:
 - Provide more affordable housing
 - Prevent Homelessness
 - Address Housing Needs of Vulnerable People and Communities
 - Improve Housing Conditions
 - Improve quality and effectiveness of housing services

Progress to date

- 4 Following consideration by City Executive Board, consultation was undertaken with stakeholders on the proposed amendments during late September and October 2013, to obtain comments and refresh the Strategy Action Plan for the remainder of the period. The Action Plan has been updated to include new measures for Objectives 1, 3 and 4 as detailed.
- 5 Stakeholder consultation was carried out from late September to mid October 2013 with the following groups; Oxford Strategic Partnership, Registered Providers, Council Members, Single Homelessness Group, and Policy Officer Group. No comments were received from external stakeholders during the consultation period. All stakeholders consulted received a copy of the Revised Housing Strategy Action Plan and a copy of the Housing Strategy evidence base.
- 6 A brief overview of additional measures as proposed against each priority is outlined below:

Objective One: Provide More Affordable Housing

- Consideration of further development schemes and a bid for HCA funding in the AHP programme round 2015-18

- Sheltered Housing review- due to start January 2014 with completion in April 2015

Objective Two: Prevent Homelessness

There are no additional measures for this objective, however new approaches are being looked at for access to suitable PRS accommodation in out-of-Oxfordshire locations, which is covered in the Homelessness Strategy 2013-2018.

Objective Three: Address Housing Needs of Vulnerable People

- Review Disabled Facilities Grant provision and services following changes to Central Government grant.

Objective Four: Improve Housing Conditions

- Review approach to regulation of the Private Rented Sector - Develop evidence base and consider existing approaches to regulating PRS
- Extend insulation upgrade for OX3 and OX4 under the 'Warming Oxford' pilot
- Complete the Asset Management Strategy
 - Complete stock condition survey (of OCC owned housing)
 - Resident Engagement
 - Analysis of condition survey and resident comments
 - Completion of Asset Management Strategy
 - Revised Stock Investment Plan
- Deliver the Annual Investment Programme in Council Housing and Estates
 - Deliver the 13/14 and 14/15 Greater Estates Programme
 - Deliver the Tower Block refurbishment and improvements to project plan

Objective Five: Improve quality, cost effectiveness and efficiency

There are no additional measures under this objective.

Level of Risk

- 7 A risk register is attached as Appendix B. It should be noted that risks associated with specific projects and work programmes identified in the action plan are identified and addressed in the relevant project documentation for those projects /programmes.

Environmental Impact

- 8 The Housing Strategy 2012 to 2015 does not have any explicit environmental impacts in itself. Specific projects identified in the Housing Strategy Action Plan will have environmental impacts, specifically the provision of additional housing to meet housing needs. These environmental impacts associated with specific projects and work

programmes identified in the action plan are identified and addressed in the relevant project documentation for those projects / programmes.

Equality Impact Assessment

- 9 The original EIA is attached as Appendix C and is still current. The Housing Strategy and Action Plan are very specifically targeted at meeting the housing needs of the most vulnerable people in Oxford and as such no adverse impacts on any equalities group are expected as a result of this Housing Strategy Action Plan refresh

Financial Implications

- 10 Any financial implications for specific projects and work programmes identified in the action plan are identified and addressed in the relevant project documentation for those projects /programmes.

- 11 In February 2013 the Council approved its General Fund Medium Term Financial Plan and Housing Business Plan for the medium term. Included within both plans were the financial implications of meeting all actions within the Housing Strategy. Provision has specifically been made within the HRA Business Plan for :

- Delivery of new housing at Barton
- The delivery of 112 new dwellings over the coming two years, part funded by HCA grant
- On-going repairs, maintenance and refurbishment to its stock of council dwellings, including the tower blocks
- Management related costs in providing all landlord services to our tenants

- 12 In the General Fund Budget there is provision for the costs of homelessness and providing other private sector housing advice. No new financial implications are brought forward by this report.

- 13 There are financial pressures both on the HRA and the General Fund but so far these have been containable, through prudent estimating and the use of contingencies and the transfer of assets from the HRA to the General Fund (as agreed by CEB in Sept 13). However there are risks around homelessness levels increasing, due to reducing supply of available accommodation and increasing demand arising from welfare reforms, which have the potential of causing some concern. Officers are currently examining a number of options to address these issues.

- 14 Officers will continue to robustly monitor the Councils budgetary position and an update of this position will be presented to Members during the financial year.

Legal Implications

- 15 The Local Government Act 2003 requires local housing authorities to have in place a Housing Strategy for the district.
- 16 Meeting the Council's statutory housing obligations is reflected in the objectives of the Housing Strategy, including statutory homelessness duties; provision of housing advice; and landlord responsibilities.

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List of background papers:

None

Version number:

0.5

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Appendix A- Housing Strategy Action Plan - Revised Programme (December 2013 CEB)

Ref	Key Action	Outcomes	Milestone	Revised Due Date	Revised RAG	Comments
Strategic Objective One: Provide More Affordable Housing in the City to Meet Housing Needs						
1	Bring forward new housing schemes and develop a post 2015 programme.	New developments and a post 2015 programme are brought forward.	Working with developers and landowners, identify and bring forward potential sites as funding and economic circumstances allow	Mar 2015	G	Planning in discussion with landowners on major DPD sites
			Bring forward new affordable housing opportunities in any new transformational projects in the City	Sep 2014	G	Ongoing discussion with RPs on redeveloping outdated housing stock
			Development of a post 2015 affordable housing programme	Sep 2014	G	To identify new sites to deliver from 2015/16 budget on
2	Deliver 3 year affordable housing programme: A) provided by Oxford City Council.	112 new Council homes.	20 homes at Barton by March 2015 46 homes at Bradlands 46 homes on miscellaneous City sites	Mar 2015	G	Bradlands scheme approved by Planning Committee. Planning applications submitted on all other programme sites. CEB approval to let build contract
3	Deliver 3 year affordable housing programme: B) through partnership with Housing Associations.	184 affordable homes by March 2015.	New homes at Shotover View (55), Lake St (8) , Lamarsh Road (4), Manor Ground (27), Lanham Way (8), Balfour Rd (9), Luther Court (42), Butler House (14), Lawn Upton House (8), Leiden Rd (9)	Mar 2015	G	94 units completed 2012/13 4 units on site - expected to complete August 2013
4	Deliver 3 year affordable housing programme: C) through physical regeneration projects at Cowley Northway, to deliver new housing and jobs.	75 affordable homes by March 2015.	20 affordable units at Barns Road; 21 at Westlands Drive; & 34 at Dora Carr Close	Dec 2015	G	Planning consent secured. Some completions in 14/15. All due to complete by end of 2015.
5	Develop physical regeneration projects at Blackbird Leys to deliver new housing and jobs.	New physical regeneration projects developed at Blackbird Leys.	BBL: Undertake feasibility analysis and develop schemes	July 2014	G	Preparation of a neighbourhood wide regeneration programme by Dec 2013. Programme plan is now underway due to be completed in draft by end Dec 13.
6	Ensure understanding of current and future housing needs is kept up to date and is fit for purpose.	Up to date housing needs and market information.	Explore opportunities for commissioning research, including joint commissioning to improve housing needs and market information	Dec 2013	G	GL Hearn appointed to carry out SHMA for Oxfordshire SPIP (Lead authority West Oxon DC). Interim report under consideration.
7	Preparation for delivery of the new housing development at Barton.	Delivery programme and agreements in place to develop c.800 new homes, including 320 new affordable.	Barton: Outline planning permission	Dec 2013	G	Planning application submitted in May 2013. On target for determination in Sept 2013. Phase 1 marketing now underway and working towards a preferred bidder by
			Barton: Commence on-site in early 2014	May 2014	G	
8	Review intermediate housing products including those for First Time Buyers and those on lower and middle incomes.	Housing opportunities for low to mid income households, key workers and first time buyers are explored and brought forward where feasible.	Complete a review with RSL Partners and other key strategic partners, which will enable the Council to update the housing choices we provide.	April 2014	G	

9	AHP Programme (Round 2)	Consideration of further development schemes and a bid for HCA funding in the AHP programme round 2015 - 2018	Consider possible bids for HCA funding under this programme	Mar-14	G	Existing board picking this up now and compiling potential development list
10	Sheltered Review	Ensuring best use and fitness for purpose of Council housing stock	Review remaining council owned sheltered housing schemes	Apr-15	G	To start work planning for project January 2014

Strategic Objective Two: Prevent Homelessness

11	Develop the role of private rented sector housing in meeting housing needs including homeless households or those threatened with homelessness	Undertake landlord/lettings agencies consultations Undertake consultations with current and prospective private tenants Homelessness Policy reviewed	Develop information/ education for current and prospective tenants and Investigate the use of Tenant Ready Schemes	Jan 2014	G	On going work -Appointed three temp workers to procure lets outside the county. Countywide multi-channel campaign started October 2013 seeking landlords - 20+ potential leads Tenant Ready scheme pilot in partnership with Crisis/Connections. Starts Jan 2014
12	Reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation	Households in temporary accommodation reduced to 120 or less in 13/14, 14/15 & 15/16	Prepare planning and implementation of new forms of temporary accommodation	Feb 14	G	Target for the number of households in temporary accommodation was achieved (120 as at 31 Mar 2013). Corporate Targets revised to 120 for 3 yrs due to potential pressures on h'lessness. On track to achieve target for 2013/14.
13	Review of allocations policy	New Allocations Policy approved and implemented	New Allocations Policy completed	Dec 2013	G	Draft Allocations Scheme approved for consultation at CEB in Feb 2013. Consultation completed due to go live in Dec 2013.

Strategic Objective Three: Address the Housing Needs of Vulnerable People and Communities

14	Develop housing strategies for specific vulnerable groups.	New Housing Strategy incorporates needs of young people, older people, BME households and families in difficulty.	Develop evidence base and housing strategy objectives for specialist needs groups - BME	Sep 2014	G	A draft evidence base is in progress to inform the development of the new Housing Strategy.
			Develop evidence base and housing strategy objectives for specialist needs groups – Older people	Sep 2014	G	This is being re-scheduled to ensure co-ordination and synergy within wider specific strategies being developed across Oxfordshire and City Councils. A draft evidence base is in progress.
15	Ensure commissioning of services for vulnerable people is co-ordinated across agencies and partnerships to ensure the	Retain or remodel hostel accommodation that provides sufficient bedspaces to meet needs	Engage in County Council review for SP services – Single homelessness	Mar 2014	G	Oxford City Council have worked in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council to meet financial targets.

	preservation and most effective use of resources and meets identified need.	and meaningful activity for clients. Successful re-commissioned services.	Engage in re-commissioning of SP funded services	Dec 2013	G	Re-commissioning of services underway
			Engage in re-commissioning of SP funded services – Supported independent living	Mar 2015	G	Re-commissioning of services due next year
16	Ensure hospital discharge is facilitated to reduce 'bed blocking'.	Effective hospital discharge mechanisms in place.	Review existing hospital discharge protocols, systems and promote awareness – including early warning	Mar 2015	G	#####
17	Ensure supply of wheelchair adapted housing to meet needs.	Wheelchair accessible housing is available for households that need it.	Improved knowledge, analysis of need for and provision of fully wheelchair adapted social housing	Dec 2013	G	A report presented to Housing Strategy Delivery Board in June 13. Further assessment of current stock information underway and will be reported on later in 2013
			Develop plan to meet any shortfall or gaps in provision of wheelchair accessible housing	Sep 2014	G	Will follow the task above
18	Produce housing guide for older people.	Older persons housing guides published.	Review existing Older persons guide with service users and partners	Dec 2013	G	Item progressing following reorganisation of project. New guide expected in Autumn 2013
19	Ensure government grant of £447k towards disabled facilities grant (DFG) budget is protected during transition from direct DCLG payments to County controlled Integrated Transformation Fund.	DFG budget allocated to council remains the same or is increased	Gather support across district councils and put case forward for DFG allocation to Oxford to be protected. Health and Wellbeing Board due to sign off countywide budgets to district councils in March 2014	Mar-14	G	Briefing and action plan currently being formulated.
20	Re-model hostel to incorporate assessment centre, new referral and move on pathways.	New pathways for rough sleepers implemented.	Work with Supporting People Team to review existing provision with providers with the aim of remodelling services within diminished budgets whilst retaining sufficient bedspaces to meet needs and meaningful activity for clients	Mar 2015	G	On track. Needs analysis completed. Pathway framework developed and being populated. Districts at officer and member level consulted. A significant project, so new contract start date negotiated (after re-commissioning/ re-modelling) of March 2015
Strategic Objective Four: Improve Housing Conditions						
21	Ensure knowledge of private housing stock and conditions is fit for purpose, enabling strategies and investment to be effective.	Fit for Purpose knowledge of housing stock and standards.	Recommend methodology to improve knowledge of private housing stock and condition	Dec 2013	G	Feasibility study for second stage of BRE stock modelling complete. Over 150,000 lines of data to be included in improved data set to inform strategy changes.
22	Improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions in homes in Oxford and address fuel poverty for households.	Develop integrated Home energy/Fuel Poverty/Retro-fitting Strategy/ies.	Fuel Poverty Strategy: Consult with partners, residents, energy companies etc.	Apr-14	G	Sign posting information on Affordable Warmth being produced for staff and public on internet. This is in conjunction with relevant partners and is the first stage in getting necessary liaison

Improved energy ratings, lower carbon emissions in housing in the City. Retro-fitting strategy and implementation for council housing stock. Including external cladding for 5 tower blocks. Zero carbon new build council homes.	Develop a strategy to cover issues of home energy, carbon emissions, fuel poverty and retro-fitting homes.	Jun-14	G	A financial inclusion strategy is being drafted- the fuel poverty element of this will include overarching themes for fuel poverty and possible basis of the main strategy,. The Asset Management strategy will also include targets for council house retrofit, boiler replacement etc and renewable technologies and will be aligned with fuel poverty aims and objectives.
	Develop specific retro fitting element and programmes for Council stock including external cladding for 5 tower blocks (400 homes)	Apr-14	G	This will form of the Housing Asset Management Strategy to be adopted in April 2014. Project managers for the tower block cladding were recomisioned in March 2013. (due date ammended as per September CEB)
	Publicity and awareness - Promote Green Deal	Mar-15	G	The Green Deal Plus approach links in with the new requirement on the Authority under the Home Energy Conservation Act, and its intentions around fuel poverty reduction across the city, as declared by the council signing up to the End Fuel Poverty Coalition. For more detail see Oxford's HECA report from March 2013. Information has been produced to signpost residents struggling to pay energy bills and is available at www.oxford.gov.uk/affordablewarmth
	Extend insulation upgrade for OX3 and OX4 under the 'Warming Oxford' pilot		G	Pilot in PRS inspection based on EPC certificates revealed that the data was poor therefore thermal imaging is being used to identify poorly insulated homes. Information and findings presented at Landlords' forum.
Delivery of the Annual Investment Programme in Council Housing and Estates	Delivery of 2013/2014 Great Estates Programme	Mar-14	G	

			Delivery of 2014/2015 Great Estates Programme	Mar-15	G	
			Delivery of the Tower Block refurbishment and improvements project plan	Mar-18	G	
23	Improve the quality of individual private rented properties including those used via the Homechoice scheme.	Improvements are made to the quality and management of individual private rented properties.	Implement new landlord and lettings agencies accreditation schemes	March 2014	G	Due to proposed changes in HMO fees a further review of accreditation is required to align the better landlords and fee reductions
24	Increase the number of individual HMOs subject to agreed licence provisions Baseline = 1100 (2011/12).	Every HMO in the City is inspected and accredited.	2950 Licensed HMOs in 2013/14	Apr 2014	G	2880 licensed so far in 13/14. Target on track to be achieved.
			3540 licensed HMOs in 2014/15	Apr 2015	G	
25	Review approach to regulation across the whole private rented sector	Decision made, based on evidence, on whether further regulation of PRS is necessary and justifiable and if so which areas require regulating.	Develop evidence base and consider existing approaches to regulating PRS across UK.	Apr 2015	G	Evidence collection commenced in April 2014. To review every 6 months.
26	Maximise take up and impact of Home Improvement Loans.	Home Improvement Loans made available to improve standards in private housing.	Ongoing publicity and promotion of Home Improvement Loans including partner organisations e.g. social services, health	Mar 2015	G	Publicity agreed for Health Watch Guide.
27	Sustain improvements in the condition of council homes.	Condition of council housing is continually improved.	Consider setting a Local Oxford Standard for Council homes	Apr 2014	G	To form part of Housing Asset Management Strategy to be adopted in April 2014.
28	Development of the Asset Management Strategy	Validation of 30 year Finance Plan based on robust data following independent assessment	1. Complete stock condition survey (of OCC owned housing) and associated energy performance data.	Feb-14	G	Independent consultancy to carry out survey and validate 30year Financial Plan.
		To ensure transparency in achieving a tenant mandate on the plan.	2. Resident Engagement - via core groups led by the Asset Management team and facilitated by the Resident Involvement team	Mar-14	G	To ensure tenants are 'Placed at the heart of service development'.
		Focussed annual spend to give best VFM and programme delivery	3. Analysis of condition survey and resident comments - to form spend hierarchy of Capital Budget	Apr-14	G	
		Long term strategic agenda to inform the Local Offer in partnership with residents.	4. Completion of Asset Management Strategy	May-14	G	

		Prioritised spend profile within Council resources in the longterm (30year Finance Plan) based on robust database to ensure resident contribution and understanding and provide BEST VALUE to the Council.	5. Revised stock investment plan	Sep-14	G	
29	Work with owners and communities to bring long term empty homes back into use.	New Empty Homes Strategy adopted. 10 longterm empty homes returned to use annually	Investigate procedures and if necessary implement the use of Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs)	Jun-14	G	Working with Planning, Corporate Assets, Legal and Environmental Health to assess potential to CPO a property with a view to partnering and RSL throughout the process. (dues date as ammended Sept CEB)
Strategic Objective Five: Improve Quality, Cost Effectiveness and Efficiency of Housing Services.						
30	Deliver the Demonstration Project for direct payment of benefits to council tenants.	Direct payment of housing benefit to council tenants project successfully completed and lessons learnt.	Direct payments: Tenants contacted and supported with information and assistance	Mar 2015	G	We continue to derive learning from the project. In particular the arrears process and support provided to tenants is being further developed. Project extended to remaining tenants on HB subject to suitability assessment.
			Direct payments: Completion of project	Mar 2015	G	See above - project to be extended
			Direct payments: Roll out to all tenants	Mar 2015	G	See above
31	Develop and improve opportunities for tenants and leaseholders to get involved in managing the delivery of the council's housing services.	Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement Strategy adopted. Local Offer agreed and implemented. Co-regulation with tenants implemented.	Detailed implementation of co-regulation including role of member and tenant scrutiny	Oct 2013	G	Tenant Scrutiny Steering group has been set up & is meeting regularly. The final recruitment & selection of tenants for the panel was completd in Aug 2013 with the first meetings to be held end Sept/early Oct 13.
32	Improve performance in tenancy services.	Improve rent and income collection performance. Reduce rent arrears. Achieve greater VFM for repairs (cost and quality).	Undertake fundamental review of repairs service	Dec 2013	G	The review is under way - 4 out of 5 workstreams are complete. Final workstream to be delivered in 2013.
33	Improve the percentage of council tenants satisfied with our landlord services.	82% tenants satisfied 2012/13. 84% tenants satisfied 2013/14. 86% tenants satisfied 2014/15.	Undertake annual tenant satisfaction survey	Apr 2015	G	Next STAR survey process to begin April 2014
34	Manage council housing to ensure it best meets the needs of individual households and tenants and the community as a whole.	Reduce underoccupation freeing up homes for larger households. Overcrowding is reduced in council homes. Actions to tackle and minimise Tenancy Fraud are up to date and effective.	Review use of extensions to provide enlarged homes for larger households for tenants and prospective tenants	Apr 2014	G	#####

			Review the implications of new Government guidance or legislation on the policies and work of Tenancy Fraud Team within 4 months of release Publicise	Mar 2015	G	#####
35	Review policies and services to reduce administration to secure VFM efficiency savings in housing services.	Lower administration costs for low priority housing applications.	Online housing applications	Dec 2014	G	Project cannot proceed until after the upgrade of the Housing ICT application. Awaiting prioritisation of this upgrade in the City ICT Strategy.
36	Review, update and improve housing communications provided by the council.	Housing Communications Plan in place. High quality and relevant housing information is available. New style tenants newsletters produced annually. New Tenants Handbook is produced. Information and on-line reporting of repairs is reviewed.	Tenants Handbooks reviewed with tenants and new version/s published	Jun 2014	G	#####
			Review use and production of Repairs Handbook, information on website and on line reporting of repairs following fundamental review of repairs	Jun 2014	G	Review will follow on from the Fundamental Review of Repairs.

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Appendix B: Housing Strategy Risk Register – City Executive Board – 11th December 2013

No.	Risk Description Link to Corporate Obj	Gross Risk		Cause of Risk	Mitigation	Net Risk		Further Management of Risk: Transfer/Accept/Reduce/Avoid	Monitoring Effectiveness	Current Risk					
Risk Score Impact Score: 1 =Insignificant; 2 = Minor; 3 = Moderate; 4 = Major; 5 = Catastrophic Almost Certain						Probability Score: 1 = Rare; 2 = Unlikely; 3 = Possible; 4 = Likely; 5 =									
		I	P		Mitigating Control: Level of Effectiveness: (HML)	I	P	Action: Action Owner: Mitigating Control: Control Owner:	Outcome required: Milestone Date:	Q 1 ⊗	Q 2 ⊗	Q 3 ⊗	Q 4 ⊗	I I	P P
1.	Failure to meet the objectives of the Housing Strategy and Action Plan 2012 to 2015	4	3	Ineffective monitoring of the strategic objective action plans.	Establish clear monitoring process within the Council's structure through relevant Board, Scrutiny and Tenant Involvement Structures	3	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Tenant Scrutiny Panel now established •Local offer and Annual report for tenants •Housing Panel (sub-group of Scrutiny Committee) operating well •Internal governance and review from Housing Strategy Delivery Board and Housing Programme Board meetings 							
2	Changes to housing policy or context and, local, regional and national, making objectives invalid or inappropriate.	3	3	Economic circumstances, government policy and legislation, political changes.	In addition to regular monitoring, review of the strategy and objectives in 2013 to ensure it remains relevant to current circumstances.	3	3	Establish regular and robust monitoring arrangements for policy, context and legislative changes Housing Strategy and Enabling Manager	Mid point review completed by September 2013						

17

No.	Risk Description Link to Corporate Obj	Gross Risk	Cause of Risk	Mitigation	Net Risk	Further Management of Risk: Transfer/Accept/Reduce/Avoid	Monitoring Effectiveness	Current Risk	
Risk Score Impact Score: 1 =Insignificant; 2 = Minor; 3 = Moderate; 4 = Major; 5 = Catastrophic Almost Certain					Probability Score: 1 = Rare; 2 = Unlikely; 3 = Possible; 4 = Likely; 5 =				
3	Negative public understanding/perceptions of Housing Strategy Objectives		Failure to communicate objectives and impacts on housing in Oxford.	Establish clear communication strategy for the housing strategy when it is adopted	2	3	On going communication and engagement of housing strategy objectives and in particular of individual projects and programmes. Strategy and Enabling manager.		

Appendix C: Equality Impact Assessment – CEB – 11th December 2013

1. Which group (s) of people has been identified as being disadvantaged by your proposals? What are the equality impacts?

No groups have been identified as being disadvantaged by the Housing Strategy 2012 – 2015 and Action Plan. The strategy and action plan are very specifically targeted at meeting the housing needs of those most vulnerable in Oxford.

2. In brief, what changes are you planning to make to your current or proposed new or changed policy, strategy, procedure, project or service to minimise or eliminate the adverse equality impacts?

Please provide further details of the proposed actions, timetable for making the changes and the person(s) responsible for making the changes on the resultant action plan

As no negative impacts are predicated no changes are being proposed.

3. Please provide details of whom you will consult on the proposed changes and if you do not plan to consult, please provide the rationale behind that decision.

Please note that you are required to involve disabled people in decisions that impact on them

As no changes are proposed because no negative impacts are predicted, no additional consultation relevant to such changes is required.

4. Can the adverse impacts you identified during the initial screening be justified without making any adjustments to the existing or new policy, strategy, procedure, project or service?

Please set out the basis on which you justify making no adjustments

Not applicable as no adverse impacts are predicated.

5. You are legally required to monitor and review the proposed changes after implementation to check they work as planned and to screen for unexpected equality impacts.

Please provide details of how you will monitor/evaluate or review your proposals and when the review will take place

Not applicable

Lead officer responsible for signing off the EqIA: Dave Scholes
Role: Housing Strategy & Needs Manager
Date: August 2013

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Summary of the Communications Plan for the New Allocations Scheme for the Housing Panel December 2013

Introduction

The Allocations Scheme is the policy the Council uses to allocate social housing in Oxford and to prioritise those in housing need on the Oxford Register for Affordable Housing for offers of housing.

A new Allocations Scheme was approved by the Council in September 2013, following changes in legislation, guidance and best practice. The new Allocations Scheme will be introduced on 12th December 2013. The Allocations Scheme seeks to make the best use of the very limited social housing available, balanced with local needs and aspirations. A public consultation took place as part of this process. The policy seeks to ensure there is a consistent approach to the allocation of housing across the City.

The new scheme has introduced a number of changes, in particular, a new local connection eligibility requirement. Applicants will usually now be expected to have a local connection to Oxford through residence, work, or family connections. The Council has also adopted increased powers in relation to excluding applicants from the housing register for anti-social behaviour, by themselves or household members, or for significant rent arrears.

Property size eligibility rules have also been amended to bring the bedroom sharing rules for children into line with the new housing benefit rules introduced under welfare reform. This ensures that the full rent of the property allocated, is eligible for housing benefit, should the household require this financial support to sustain the tenancy.

The Housing Panel have requested to see a summary of the Communications Plan for the new Allocations Scheme.

The Communications Plan

Customers, both internal and external, and other stakeholders will be informed of the changes to the Allocations Scheme.

A range of communication methods will be used seeking to ensure:

- Customers and stakeholders are aware of the changes to the Allocations Scheme in Oxford
- Customers are aware of how the changes affect them
- Customers are realistic about their chances of receiving an offer of housing and information is available to help manage their expectations

The Website

Information will be available on the Council website for customers and stakeholders about the Allocations Scheme and the other housing options.

The new Allocations Scheme and a summary of the Allocations Scheme will be available on the Council website. The summary of the Allocations Scheme will include a breakdown of letting statistics for the last 3 years by property size and type to help manage customer expectations. Customers without a PC will continue to be able to use the self-service PCs in Council offices or the Library. Customer Service Officers will be available to assist if required. Alternatively, customers will be able to request a copy of the summary of the Allocations Scheme to be sent to them.

The new Choice-Based Lettings (CBL) website will have a downloadable CBL guide for customers to use. Customers will be able to view previous lettings outcomes to check the band of the person who finished first for properties advertised via CBL. This will enable housing applicants to make an informed decision on whether to continue to bid for properties becoming available or to consider other housing options instead to resolve their housing situation – such as securing their own accommodation in the private rented sector.

Letter

Every housing applicant on the Housing Register was written earlier this year as part of the consultation on the proposed changes to the Allocations Scheme. The letter advised customers the Allocations Scheme would be changing and gave them the opportunity to respond to the consultation. The responses were taken into account in the drafting of the final version of the Allocations Scheme. There are currently over 4000 households on the Housing Register. A letter will be sent to each to notify them that the Allocations Scheme has changed and advising them to contact the Housing Needs Team or to check the website if they have any queries.

Housing Applicants on the General Register without a Local Connection

Households on the General Register List without a local connection (around 350) will be sent a letter to notify them that they no longer qualify for inclusion on the Housing Register and their application has been cancelled. If a housing applicant considers they do have a local connection through residence, family or work (or if they consider they have exceptional circumstances for seeking to move to Oxford) they will be able to appeal against this decision.

Housing Applicants on the Homeless List

Households on the Homeless List to whom the Council has accepted a statutory homeless duty (around 70) and placed in temporary accommodation will be sent a letter advising them of the changes and how they will be affected.

Housing Applicants on the General Register & Transfer Lists

Households on the General Register and Transfer Lists (around 3600) will be sent a letter advising them of their Housing Need Priority Band and the size of property they are now eligible to apply for. Households will be notified that many are unlikely to receive an offer of housing and they should consider other housing options to resolve their housing situation to help manage their expectations. There will be around 400 households where their band has changed (most will have gone down to a lower priority band).

Individual households with serious rent arrears and/or anti-social behaviour will also be notified they no longer qualify for inclusion on the Housing Register. These will be done on an on-going and case by case basis and will be a low number.

Press

A press release will be done to notify the general public the Council has introduced a new Allocations Scheme and to also highlight the numbers on the housing register currently compared to the low number of properties becoming available to let each year to help manage expectations.

Training

Staff training will be completed to ensure staff are aware of the changes and able to assist customers with any queries.

The training will include:

- Staff training for the Housing & Property Team
- Team briefings for the Customer Services Team and other departments
- Briefings for staff working for Oxford Register for Affordable Housing partners in Oxford, Shelter and other key stakeholders including floating support staff and voluntary agencies
- A Members briefing schedule to take place on 18/12/13

The Future

Following the introduction of the Allocations Scheme, feedback from customers and stakeholders will be monitored on an on-going basis to ensure we are providing the information and service our customers expect. Further planned changes such as the introduction of an on-line application form will help manage customer expectations by providing instant feedback on an applicant's chances of being made an offer of housing.

Tom Porter
Allocations Manager
tporter@oxford.gov.uk

26/11/13

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Note for Scrutiny Panel 5thDecember 2013.

1. STAR - Methodology

- i. STAR is a standard survey used to measure tenant and leaseholder satisfaction with housing services across a number of areas. STAR replaced the previous statutory satisfaction survey STATUS which was abolished by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in November 2010.
- ii. HouseMark offers a benchmarking service for the survey results. Social Housing providers submit their data voluntarily and do not all use the same questions. Providers are able to add or remove questions to suit their local requirements. The published results are for those core questions that everyone submits.
- iii. The survey is anonymous. We use an external agency to manage the process for us. The agency provides us with a final report and data tables for us to work with. The agency has confirmed that the level of responses received means that the results are statistically valid.
- iv. A sample of 1500 tenants and leaseholders is selected at random by the agency. The selected households receive a paper survey, along with an individual reference number (Found on you invitation letter) that allows access to a web version of the survey.
- v. The results for 2013 have not yet been validated so this report includes results from 2012 at section 4.

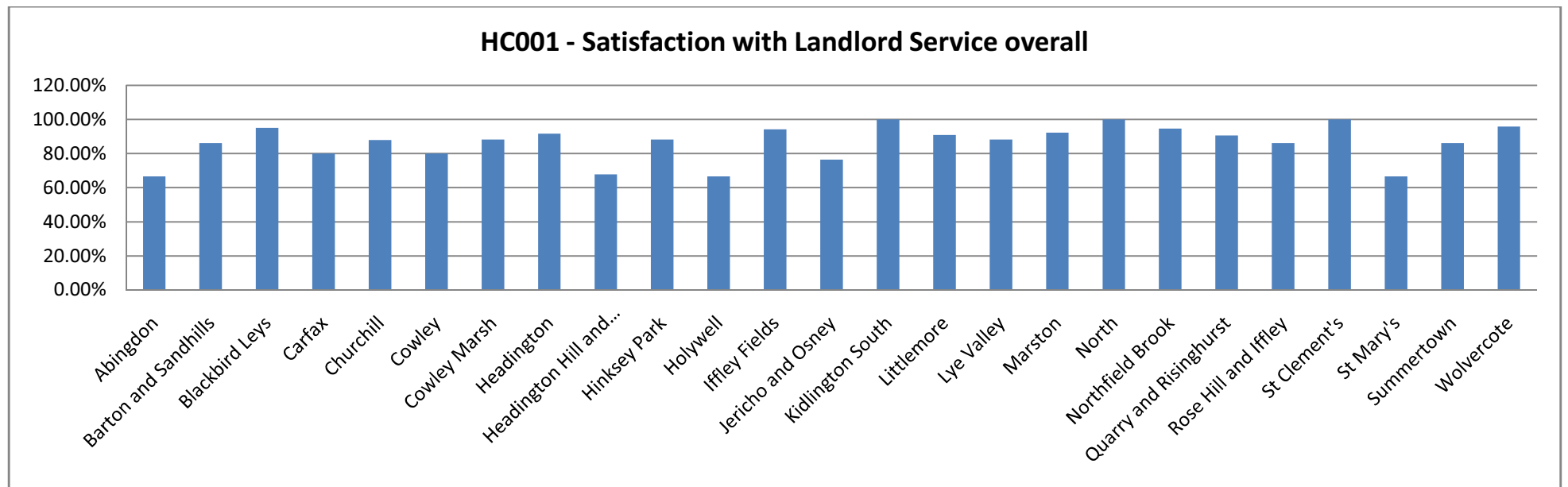
2. STAR – response data table

	Abingdon	Barton and Sandhills	Blackbird Leys	Carfax	Churchill	Cowley	Cowley Marsh	Headington	Headington Hill and Northway	Hinksey Park	Iffley Fields	Jericho and Osney	Kidlington	Littlemore	Lye Valley	Marston	North	Northfield Brook	Quarry and Risinghurst	Rose Hill and Iffley	St Clement's	Summertown	Wolvercote	Total
Total respondents	9	65	81	15	75	20	17	12	28	34	35	17	8	66	17	26	1	37	32	65	14	29	24	726

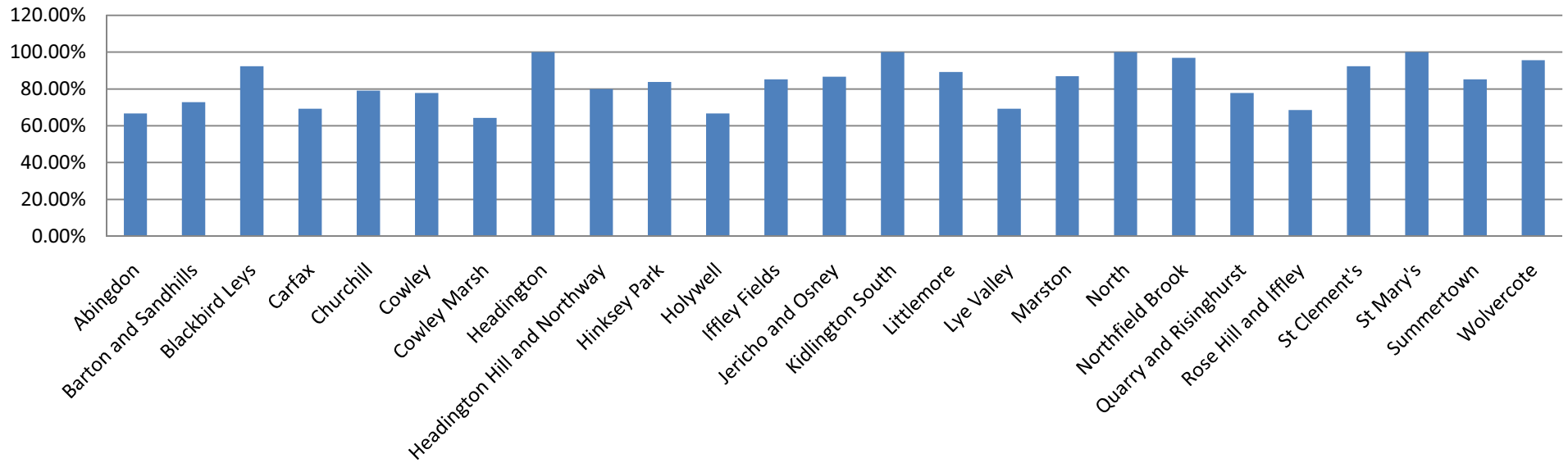
25

3. Key Performance Indicators and related STAR tables 2013 for Oxford City Council

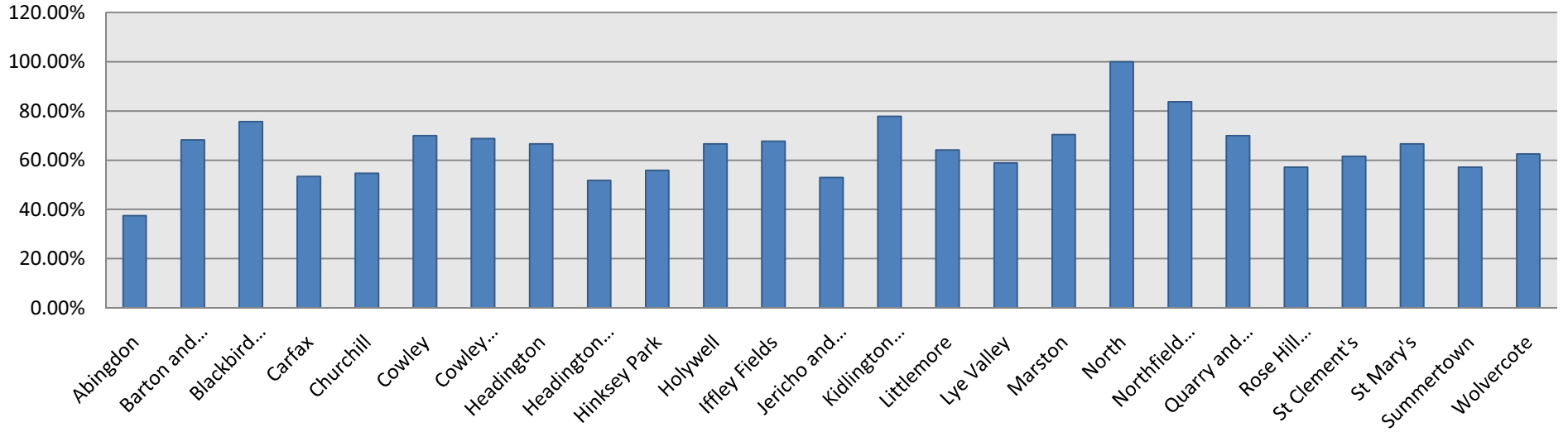
- HC001 –Tenants satisfied with Landlord Services – Overall result 88%.
- HC017 –Tenant satisfaction with their estates – Overall result 83%.
- HC022 –Tenants satisfied that Oxford City Council listens to their views and acts on them – Overall result 64%.
- HC024 –Tenants satisfied with Estate Services – Overall result 78%.

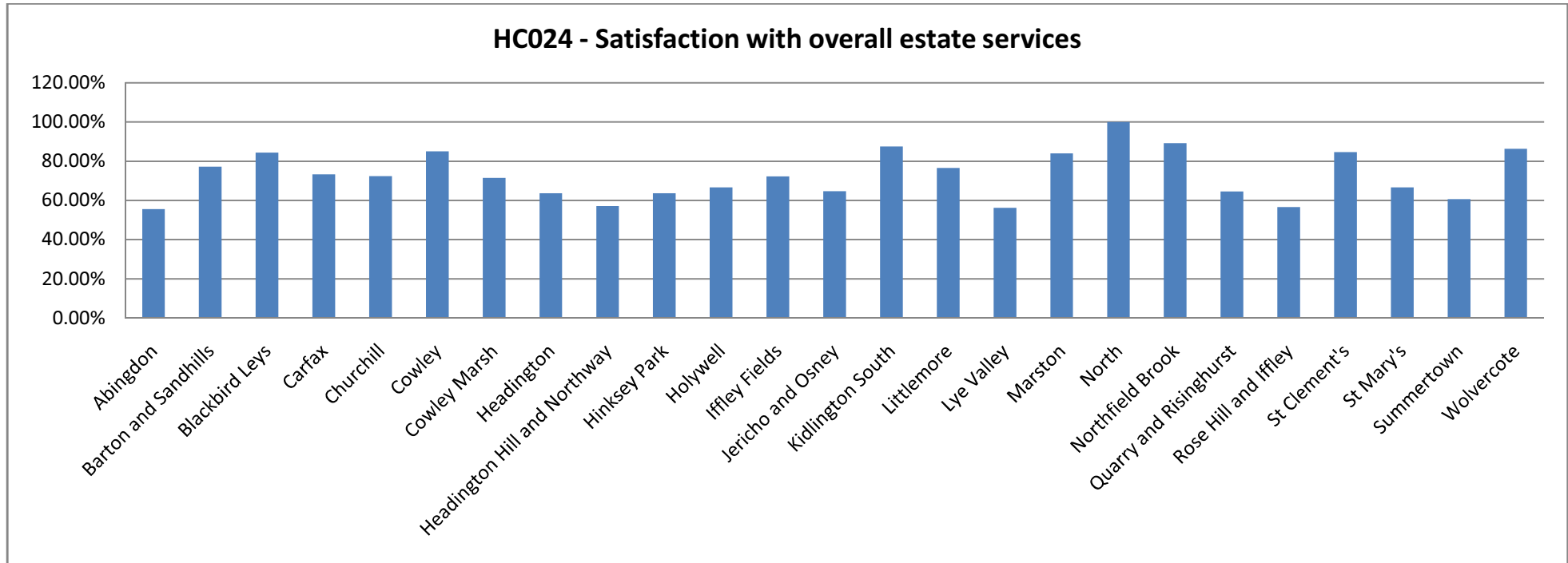


HC017 - Satisfied with Estate as a place to live



HC022 - Satisfaction with listening to views and acting on them





4. We have extracted the following benchmark data from the HouseMark reports for 2012. **The data for 2013 has not yet been validated.**

HC001 - Overall satisfaction					
Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the service provided by your Landlord?					
	Upper quartile %	Median %	Lower quartile %	<i>Oxford</i>	
Combined positive score					
General needs	88	85	80	86	<i>median</i>
Housing for older people	95	92	89	90	<i>median</i>

HC017 - Neighbourhood

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your neighbourhood as a place to live?

	Upper quartile %	Median %	Lower quartile %	<i>Oxford</i>	
Combined positive score					
General needs	86	83	79	78	<i>lower</i>
Housing for older people	94	93	91	91	<i>lower</i>

HC022 - Responding to residents' views

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that your social housing provider listens to your views and acts upon them?

	Upper quartile %	Median %	Lower quartile %	<i>Oxford</i>	
Combined positive score					
General needs	73	67	61	60	<i>lower</i>
Housing for older people	82	76	70	69	<i>lower</i>

29

NB – the results for HC024 are not recorded in HouseMark.

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Affordable Housing Supply

5 Year Targets and Indicative Supply

Year	Target	Supply
14/15	200	282
15/16	100	322
16/17	150	402
17/18	TBC	441
18/19	TBC	103
Total	450*	1550^

* Targets are currently being reviewed for 14/15 – 16/17 and 17/18 – 18/19 need to be set

^ Indicative supply based on the known sites within the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)



Tenures and Bed Sizes

32

Year	Tenures			Sizes											
				Cat 2		Flats				Houses					
	SR	SO	AR	1b2 p	2b 3p	1b 2p	2b 3p	2b 4p	3b 5p	2b 4p	3b 5p	3b 6p	4b 6p	4b 7p	5b 7p+
14/15	194	45	43	44	5	55	27	45	4	27	61	-	18	-	-
15/16	265	57	-	-	-	56	18	-	1	71	128	-	48	-	-
Total	459	102	43	44	5	111	45	45	5	98	189	0	66	0	0

Cat 2 – Sheltered Housing
 SO – Shared Ownership; SR – Social Rent; AR – Affordable Rent



HOUSING PANEL (PANEL OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE)

Monday 4 November 2013

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillors Smith (Chair), Sanders, McCready, Hollick, and Brown. Linda Hill (Tenant Representative).

26. WORK PROGRAMME AND REPORT BACK ON RECOMMENDATIONS

The Panel considered the forward work programme and noted up and coming items. In particular:

- Estate Regeneration – The Panel agreed to take Blackbird Leys as a case study and consider the regeneration proposals that are underway. Councillor Smith and Linda Hill agreed to meet with officers to scope this work for the Panel and noted that members were particularly interested in how residents in the area were engaged and given influence over proposals and outcomes. To report to the December meeting if possible. A suggestion was made by Councillor Hollick to consider resident voting as a way of engagement and expressing opinions.
- Tenant and Resident Involvement Strategy – Agreed to consider how this has been implemented and the outcomes being achieved for tenants. Add to the programme in March or April 2014.
- Councillor Hollick asked the Panel to consider the possibilities of the Council setting a lettings agency in an effort to drive up standards in the private rented sector. Officers outlined that this had been considered by Housing as a method of increasing the supply of affordable rents in the private rented sector. The local housing allowance had made this not worthwhile. The Councils focus on improving quality in this sector is focused in HMO licensing. The Panel asked that officers produce a briefing paper for the Panel on the pros, cons and risks of this suggestion for the Council. To report to the December or January meeting.
-

27. PERFORMANCE MONITORING - HOUSING MEASURES, QUARTER 2.

The Panel considered the performance data for Qtr.2 and asked for the following information:

- The STAR survey results are all above the targets we set. Based on these what is our benchmarked position against other public sector providers.
- Details on the methodology used to conduct the STAR survey in particular how many tenants responded and what was the geographical and tenant profile of respondents.
- Satisfaction with parks is disappointingly down (LP013). To provide more detailed information on the survey that produced this result including the methodology used numbers and location of respondents, questions asked and insight from this on reasons for dissatisfaction.

- A number of targets relate to housing supply HC016 – affordable housing for rent delivered/N154 – net additional homes provided/N155 – Number of affordable homes delivered (gross). These targets all show red with explanations that they are likely to be back on target shortly. The Panel would like to see the back ground programme data that produces these figures to better understand delivery.
- The Panel discussed Rough Sleeper in particular trends and the effects of the “no second night out scheme”. Officers reported that the number of rough sleepers is cyclical and largely stable. The no second night out policy seemed to be working and a few tweaks have been made in the policy to counteract criticism that a focus in this area has reduced services and support for those being released from prison and hospital. People in this category are now considered within the scheme if they had previously been a rough sleeper. More work is now being done with entrenched rough sleepers. The Panel wanted to know more detail behind these figures and asked for a briefing showing: the numbers of people helped by the no second night out policy; a breakdown of the figures showing the trends for new and entrenched rough sleepers; the profile of rough sleepers and the current and trend for wait times for hostels. The Panel went on to discuss the future for the no second night out policy should hostel funding reduce during the County budget review. This is problematic and the City is focused on keeping hostel places stable. At the moment there is no contingency should a hostel close.
- Rent collection CS010, CS011,CS013, CS014. Concern was expressed on the rising nature of rent arrears. Officers said that the level of arrears is currently £1.2m (2.4%) which is a rise from £1m (2.3%). We have recently placed another 400 tenants on the direct payments as part of the pilot and we are seeing a spike of arrears which is expected to settle as it did with phase 1 of this pilot. The Panel asked to see more information on the profile of the rent arrears figures. In particular the number of tenants in arrears who are affected by any of the benefit changes and or in the direct payments pilot.

28. FOLLOW UP ON BENEFITS PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Panel were introduced to the new Revenues and Benefits Manager Tanya Bandekar.

The briefing note showed an improving performance but still off target. This information was updated for October which showed performance for:

- Changes in circumstances as 9 ish days which gives a YTD performance of 11.3 days
- New Claims as 13.2 days which gives a YTD performance of 20.5 days.

There has been a drive in the last few weeks to chase claimants for outstanding information so that their claims can be processed more quickly rather than wait for information to come in. This has had a marked effect on performance. This will take a while to significantly improve the YTD performance result because of the poor start to the year.

In response to a question around the length of time to process new claims and the effects this might have on securing tenancies, officers said they were very aware of this and were trying to be more proactive and work with landlords to try to avoid this.

Coming on stream soon will be e-forms and this along with risk based verification will allow forms to go straight to the "back office" and these have the potential to speed things considerably.

The e-forms will allow claimants to submit claims and changes in circumstances on line. We will be making this known very widely and support will be offered to claimants. The system has been successful in other Councils.

By way of note the Board Member outlined some of the difficulties facing the benefits team and particularly highlighted ATLAS (automated transfer to local authorities system) this is newly introduced and allows the DWP to inform local authorities automatically of changes in circumstances of claimants. The problem is that the old system for doing this has not been switched off so some changes are still arriving through this method. The Council has to check both flows of information to determine what is a duplicate and what is new. If something was missed it would be considered local authority error and would adversely affect our grant claim.

29. NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING

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