

# Agenda

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## Housing Panel (Panel of the Scrutiny Committee)

Date: **Thursday 3 April 2014**

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Time: **5.00 pm**

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

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For any further information please contact:

**Pat Jones, Principal Scrutiny Officer**

Telephone: 01865 252191

Email: [phjones@oxford.gov.uk](mailto:phjones@oxford.gov.uk)

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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

The quorum for this Committee is 3, substitutes are permitted.

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# AGENDA

## Pages

### 1 APOLOGIES

The Quorum for this Panel is three and substitutes are allowed.

### 2 WORK PROGRAMME AND REPORT BACK ON RECOMMENDATIONS

7 - 10

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

Telephone: 01865 252191

Email: [phjones@oxford.gov.uk](mailto:phjones@oxford.gov.uk)

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

The Head of Housing has provided a brief update on the outcome of the County Council budget setting process with regard to the Adult Homeless Pathway.

### 3 ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN - OXFORD STANDARD SCOPE

11 - 14

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

Telephone: 01865 252191

Email: [phjones@oxford.gov.uk](mailto:phjones@oxford.gov.uk)

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Attached is a draft scope for this Partnership Review for setting an Oxford Standard for Council housing.

### 4 PARKS SATISFACTION LEVELS

Councillor Mark Lygo, Board Member for Park and Sport will attend the Panel meeting to discuss further the issues around the satisfaction levels with parks and what is being undertaken to increase these satisfaction levels.

### 5 HOUSING SERVICE IMPROVEMENT - PROPOSED PANEL VISIT

Following the results of the STAR Survey into housing satisfaction, the Panel agreed at a previous meeting that a visit to one of the benchmark authorities would be beneficial. Arrangements for this visit will be discussed further at this meeting.

**6 RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY UPDATE**

15 - 22

Officer: Bill Graves, Landlord Services Manager will support the Panel with this debate.

Telephone: 01865 252428

Email: [bgraves@oxford.gov.uk](mailto:bgraves@oxford.gov.uk)

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The Panel will receive an update on the delivery of the Resident Involvement Strategy objectives.

**7 NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

23 - 26

Notes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2014.

**8 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Panel will hold a special meeting on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> April 2014 at 5.00pm to consider a report on the De-designation of Stock Programme.

## **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.

### **Declaring an interest**

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.

If you have a disclosable pecuniary interest, after having declared it at the meeting you must not participate in discussion or voting on the item and must withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is discussed.

### **Members' Code of Conduct and public perception**

Even if you do not have a disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter, the Members' Code of Conduct says that a member "must serve only the public interest and must never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person including yourself" and that "you must not place yourself in situations where your honesty and integrity may be questioned". What this means is that the matter of interests must be viewed within the context of the Code as a whole and regard should continue to be paid to the perception of the public.

\*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.

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# Agenda Item 2

## Housing Standing Panel

### Outline –issues still to be developed by Panel

The Scrutiny Committee has asked that this Panel also take issues from the Forward Plan related to the Housing theme. Additional dates have been reserved to allow this to happen if necessary, these are:

- 3<sup>rd</sup> October.
- 5<sup>th</sup> December (used).
- 15<sup>th</sup> January 2014.
- 6<sup>th</sup> March 2014.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2014.

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

	7. Current rent arrears profiles.
15 <sup>th</sup> . January 2014 at 5.00pm.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. No second night out detailed performance information. (confirmed)</li> <li>2. Improving quality in the private rent sector – a City Council Letting Agency.</li> <li>3. Satisfaction with Parks details of survey results.</li> <li>4. Current rent arrears profiles.</li> </ol>
7 <sup>th</sup> . February at 5.00pm.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Performance monitoring – Housing Measures – Qtr. 3.</li> <li>2. Outcome of the interviews with tenants who had been through the mutual exchange process.</li> <li>3. Possible Asset Management Strategy – Oxford Standard</li> <li>4. STAR survey validated benchmark results with demographic breakdowns.</li> </ol>
6 <sup>th</sup> . March at 5.00pm.  Meeting cancelled.	<p>Provisional</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Temporary Accommodation Management Arrangements – Dave Scholes</li> <li>2. Oxfordshire County Council – Supporting People budget issues – Dave Scholes and Nerys Parry</li> </ol>
3 <sup>rd</sup> . April at 5.00pm.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tenants and Residents Involvement Strategy – Implementation and opportunities for influence for tenants.</li> <li>2. Councillor Lygo on the satisfaction measure used for Parks.</li> <li>3. Housing Service Improvements – proposed Panel visits.</li> </ol>
29 <sup>th</sup> April at 5.00pm	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Year 4 review stock de-designation</li> </ol>

#### Items for the 2014/15 Council Year

- (1) May/June - Rents arrears – continued monitoring with 6 monthly reports.
- (2) Continued monitoring of satisfaction with Parks Services.
- (3) Temporary Accommodation Management Arrangements.
- (4) The effects of Supporting People budget reductions on hostel accommodation and the homelessness pathway.
- (5) Continuation of the Asset Management Plan – The Oxford Standard.



**To: The Scrutiny Housing Panel**

**Date: 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2014**

**Report of: Head of Housing and Property**

**Title of Report: Adult Homeless Pathway – Update following County Council budget process for 2014/15**

### **Summary and Recommendations**

**Purpose of report:** To report provides the Panel with an update on the Adult Homeless Pathway budget following the setting of the 2014/15 County Council budget.

**Scrutiny Lead Member:** Councillor Mark Mills

**Executive Lead Members:** Councillor Scott Seamons

**Recommendation:** To note the update and that a further detailed update would be given at a future meeting of the Panel.

### **Introduction**

- (1) This report updates the Panel on the initial outcomes of the County Council budget setting with regard to the Adult Homeless Pathway service provision.

### **Adult Homeless Pathway service**

- (2) The Adult Homeless Pathway budget of £3.8m purchases 186,600 hours of support per year, to approximately 900 people at any one time, in the following ways:
  - Accommodation based support (including the three large homeless hostels in Oxford City) - £2,157,072
  - Floating support - £1,211,311
  - Support for people fleeing domestic abuse - helpline, outreach, refuges and resettlement - £332,594
  - Treatment for substance misuse - £147,421

### **Budget decision and next steps**

- (3) The County Council agreed to cut the budget for the Adult Homeless Pathway by £1.5m at meetings in February. This reduces the budget to £2,854,302 in 15/16, and £2,354,302 in 16/17.
- (4) A paper setting out some options for the reduction of funding for these housing related support services in Oxfordshire, was been prepared by the County, for a meeting of the Oxfordshire Chief Executives on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2014. The options were developed in collaboration with stakeholders from each of the key agencies at two workshops. The agencies involved were the County Council, City and District Councils, Public Health, Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group, Thames Valley Police, Thames Valley Probation and the Community Safety Partnership. This paper is requesting that the Chief Executives provide a steer, in advance of a closed discussion at the Health Improvement Board on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2014. It is hoped that wider consultation, not least with providers, can commence after that.
- (5) City Council officers and lead members are engaged in this process, and are seeking to ensure sufficient services are provided to meet the current and future needs of these vulnerable groups. Additional work is also being undertaken in the City to pilot new innovative approaches to providing support, and to review options for change that could attract funds from other sources.

<p><b>Name and contact details of author:-</b></p> <p>Name: Dave Scholes Job title: Housing Strategy and Needs Manager Service Area: Housing and Property Tel: 01865 252636 Email: dscholes@oxford.gov.uk</p>
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**List of background papers:** None

**Version number:** 1

## Project Scope

### Draft

<b>Review Topic</b>	Setting the Oxford Standard for Council Housing
<b>Lead Member Review Group</b>	<p>This is a joint project between the Tenant’s Scrutiny Panel and the Scrutiny Housing Panel.</p> <p>Joint Chairs Councillor Val Smith and Celia Matthews.</p>
<b>Officer Support and allocate hours – for office use only</b>	
<p><b>Rationale</b> (key issues and/ or reason for doing the Review)</p>	<p>Oxford City Council owns, lets and manages about 7,800 houses. All income and expenditure related to these properties is managed within the Housing Business Plan created when the Council withdrew from the national subsidy scheme.</p> <p>In order to effectively maintain this significant asset for the benefit of current and future residents a stock condition survey has been undertaken with the aim of informing the production of an Asset Management Strategy.</p> <p>The Asset Management Strategy will be broad ranging but will have at its heart the standard to which properties are maintained and how this standard is implemented over time. This might be badged as “The Oxford Standard”.</p> <p>What is achieved within this Standard and by when will depend on many factors including current levels of repair and maintenance, available funds and competing priorities.</p> <p>Current council tenants and elected members are key stakeholders in this process and this review aims to allow them to work with officers and decision makers to consider information, conduct consultation and through this advice on what the “Oxford Standard” should be and how it should be delivered.</p>

<p><b>Purpose of Review/Objective</b> (specify exactly what the Review should achieve)</p>	<p>To give advice to the City Executive Board on the content and definition of the Oxford Standard for all Council properties.</p> <p>Based on available data to outline the timeframe within which it would be reasonable to deliver this standard.</p> <p>To use the experience and views of tenants and members when delivering the decent homes standard to comment on the process of this delivery.</p>
<p><b>Indicators of Success</b> (what factors would tell you what a good Review should look like)</p>	<p>Members and engaged tenants steering the project as equal partners.</p> <p>Good Quality engagement with stakeholders that delivers a broad range of opinion.</p> <p>Clear presentation of data leading to understanding.</p> <p>Good relationship building with the Board Member engendering a partnership.</p> <p>Broad agreement on recommendations.</p> <p>A standard that can be delivered within 5 years that addresses the contemporary concerns and ambitions of both tenants and the Council.</p>
<p><b>Methodology/ Approach</b> (what types of enquiry will be used to gather evidence and why)</p>	<p>Joint Review Panel acting as a steering group to consider data and form recommendations.</p> <p>Desk top review of data and outcomes from the stock condition survey.</p> <p>Commissioned broader engagement with tenants.</p> <p>Evidence sessions with officers.</p>
<p><b>Specify Witnesses/ Experts</b> (who to see and when)</p>	<p>Tenants both engaged and more broadly. Elected Members representing Council Estates. Direct Services Officers. Housing Management Officers. Housing Property Officers. Board Member Housing. Head of Housing and Property.</p>

<b>Specify Evidence Sources for Documents</b> (which to look at)		Stock Condition Survey. Housing Revenue Account Bussiness Plan. Project data from the delivery of Decent Homes Standard. Current Planned Maintenance programmes. Agreed Standards from other providers.	
<b>Specify Site Visits</b> (where and when)		TBA	
<b>Projected start date</b>	April 2014	<b>Draft Report Deadline</b>	30 <sup>th</sup> . Sept. 2014
<b>Meeting Frequency</b>	TBA	<b>Projected completion date</b>	Oct. 2014

**Draft outline of meetings (Not in necessarily in chronological order)**

Meeting one
Meeting two
Meeting three
Meeting four



**To: Housing Panel (Panel of the Scrutiny Committee)**

**Date: 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2014**

**Report of: Acting Resident Involvement Manager (Housing & Property)**

**Title of Report: Resident Involvement Strategy Update**

## **Summary and Recommendations**

**Purpose of report:** The report sets out progress on the delivery of the Resident Involvement Strategy objectives.

**Scrutiny Lead Member:** Councillor Scott Seamons

**Executive Lead Member:** Councillor Scott Seamons

### **Recommendations:**

1. That the contents of this report are noted
2. To note that a final update will be provided in autumn 2014

## **Introduction**

The City Executive Board approved the Resident Involvement Strategy at its meeting of 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2012.

<http://mycouncilpages.oxford.gov.uk/documents/s11591/Tenant%20and%20Resident%20Involvement%20Strategy%202012.pdf>

This report is to update on progress against the Strategy.

## **Background**

The Tenant Services Authority Regulatory Framework for Registered Providers of Social Housing came into effect in April 2010 with the requirement for a process of co-regulation with Oxford City Council tenants supported by a meaningful scrutiny of the services provided.

## **Involvement Strategy Aims**

The Tenant Involvement Strategy has five specific aims to be achieved within the lifetime of the strategy, which are as follows:

- Ensure that there is a strategic commitment to involvement & empowerment.
- Ensure that there are a wide range of opportunities to be involved and influence what happens.
- Better use of Resident Intelligence.
- Deliver a resident-led scrutiny and involvement model that can demonstrate Value for Money for both the resident and the organisation.
- Provide training opportunities that will empower residents to be involved in improving communities, neighbourhoods and homes.



## **Project Deliverables**

- Establish a tenant-led, Local Offer Group (LOG) to identify and monitor transparent and easily understood standards for services provided by Oxford City Council. The LOG will hold providers to account for service standards.
- Establish a Tenants Scrutiny Panel to carry out a structure of reviews which examines the effectiveness of the scrutiny process, that the tenant body involved is representative of the wider Oxford City demographic and produce an annual report.
- Establish a Tenant Involvement & Empowerment Standard Task Team (TI&E STT). This team will support and develop existing Tenants & Residents Associations (TRAs) across Oxford City, such as to develop new TRAs where none exist or to look at specific policies or areas which are being reviewed on developed.
- Establish a Youth Panel to review the local offer from a young tenant's perspective and ensure young persons have opportunities to influence services provided by Oxford City Council.
- Provision of support, training and performance information in an appropriate format for tenants involved in the scrutiny process.
- Produce a map of existing TRAs and identify where gaps occur on priority areas.
- Produce a plan to develop TRAs on the priority/regeneration areas where none exist.
- Produce a start-up pack for new TRAs including draft documentation and information regarding funding streams.
- Produce an internal briefing program with supporting information package for new employees of Oxford and existing teams. The briefings will include analysis of the 3Cs service improvement process, staff performance objects relating to tenant involvement and opportunities to volunteer support.

## **Current Position**

A project plan is in place to deliver the key strategic objectives.

### ***Local Offer***

The Local Offer Group (LOG), consisting of involved tenants, officers and a Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) representative, was setup in 2013. Negotiation training was provided to tenants and best practice examples of Local Offers were reviewed by the LOG.

The tenants on the LOG were given the option to include in the Local Offer, any of the services being provided by the Council as a landlord. The tenants decided that they would focus the 2013/15 Local Offer on the following key priority areas:

- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Planned Maintenance
- Day to Day Repairs

The tenants decided that they did not wish to include other service areas such as Rents or Customer Services at this time.

The draft Local Offer has been through the review and design phase and the relevant performance measures have been agreed with the three service areas. The Local Offer is undergoing final editorial checks with the Communication Team and the LOG and it is due to be signed off by the City Executive Board in July 2014.

### ***Annual Report***

The Annual Report has been delayed until September so that it includes information on the Local Offer, the activities of the Tenant Scrutiny Panel and other involvement initiatives. The involved tenants are to be the authors of the Annual Report, with advice and assistance being given by officers.

### ***Tenant Scrutiny Panel***

The Tenant Scrutiny Panel (TSP) was formed in 2013, following a detailed recruitment and selection process carried out by tenants. A series of training events for TSP members were delivered to ensure that they had the skills required to undertake the scrutiny role.

The TSP selected Emergency Repairs as the first area to scrutinise. This involved the TSP requesting information from Direct Services (DS), which was delivered to them in their January meeting. The TSP has now written their first scrutiny report, including their recommendation, will be presented to the April Housing Programme Board.

The TSP has already agreed on the second review and will be working jointly with the Housing Panel to review the Asset Management Strategy and the Oxford Standard. This process is due to commence late April 2014.

### ***Standard Task Teams***

Alongside the recruitment process for the TSP we set out to recruit tenants and leaseholders willing to be part of Standard Task Teams (STT) which will help develop and integrate involvement and service improvement priorities.

At recruitment events, tenants completed a brief questionnaire to indicate which areas of the housing service is of most interest to them. These tenants are now being called upon to help to review specific policy or service areas.

So far, in the last six months, the STTs have been involved with the development of the revised Tenancy Agreement, the on-line repairs portal and customer service standards for the contact centre.

### ***Youth Panel***

The Youth Panel recruitment process will begin later this year, once we have recruited into other areas. This will involve linking in with Communities and Neighbourhoods' Youth Engagement Officer who is already working with younger people. The aim is to have a Youth Panel in place by the end of 2014 and sooner if possible.

### ***Training Programme***

A Modular Training Plan has been agreed with the OCVA which includes the subjects identified within the Resident involvement Strategy. The first session of this programme will be Diversity Training, taking place in April

Invitations will be sent to members of the TSP, LOG and TRA's.

Future training sessions scheduled for this year include:

- **Running Effective Meetings - Speak Up, Speak Out**
- **Diversity Training – Consultation –**
- **Monitoring and reviewing a project - Skills for Funding Applications**
- **Identifying Strengths, skills and areas for development – Recruitment**

As more tenants become involved we will introduce additional sessions and re-run the same courses when needed.

We are also looking to re-start the in house Computer training programme which provides free training to our tenants who have little or no computer literacy, as well as courses for more advance users.

Last year saw the start of our first 7 week Gardening Course run by the Parks department. We are looking to repeat it this summer, especially as more tenants become involved in the Oxford Garden Revival programme.

### ***Tenant and Resident Associations***

We current support and fund seven TRA's across the city. There are two more that do not fit within the funding criteria, but we still provide non-financial support.

We are also working to create a virtual TRA of the Sheltered Housing schemes. Currently one of the ten sheltered schemes has a TRA (Cardinal House).

We have mapped the groups and identified that many of the priority or regeneration areas have no TRAs. While there is a wish for more TRA's developing, many tenants are unable to devote the time required or otherwise do not feel comfortable in a meeting environment. It is also worth noting that although some existing TRA are well developed and provide a great benefit, some others are less representative or inclusive of the local community and its needs.

There is also a risk that the wider tenant community who are not able to find time to devote to TRAs would find their views ignored in favour of TRAs. It is therefore essential that non-traditional methods of involvement are promoted, such as virtual groups who can comment on issues electronically or by phone, estate champions and themed interest groups.

Staff in housing continue to work with colleagues in other service areas to promote involvement with tenants on an individual basis, which has worked particularly well as part of the Tower Block consultation work.

### ***Start-up Pack for New Tenant and Resident Associations***

A start-up pack has been created to assist new TRAs and this is being updated to include the new Involvement branding.

### ***Internal Staff Awareness of Involvement***

Ensuring that involvement is embedded in the organisational culture is essential to on-going success. Involvement staff have attended team meetings across the organisation to promote involvement and to stress the benefits both to the tenants and to the service areas. These include:

- Tenancy Management
- Tenancy Sustainment
- Communities & Neighbourhoods
- Customer Services
- Estate Services
- Waste & Recycling

Staff from other service areas were encouraged to promote involvement and as a result, around 100 tenants have come forward to express an interest in being involved.

### ***The Involvement Brand***

Delivering successful involvement requires a recognisable brand that can run with all activities and promotions. This brand has now been launched following consultation with involved tenants.

Publicity for involvement has increased significantly and the Involvement Team and their activities are now a regular feature in Council Matters and the Tenants in Touch magazine.

### ***Tenant's Influencing Change***

There have been several areas of involvement which highlight how tenants are now being empowered to change service delivery.

The TSP has reviewed part of the repairs service and have already made recommendations to Direct Services on service improvements.

Customer Services now choose to call upon our tenant and resident mystery shoppers when reviewing aspects of their services, such as the telephony system and the proposed missed bin collection system. Tenants also helped change the new phone menu to make it more user friendly.

The Tower Block consultation work, one of the largest consultation exercises ever carried out in Oxford, has involved tenants and residents from the outset, influencing design and determining priorities for the project. The Involvement Team, together with colleagues across service areas, have supported tenants and residents through the process. The Involvement Team has also managed to recruit resident "block reps" for each of the tower blocks to ensure that tenants and leaseholders are consistently involved in the decision making process, including elements of the contractor procurement process.

### **Risks**

The greatest risk to the delivery of the strategy on on-going involvement which is meaningful, is the ability to recruit and retain sufficient numbers of involved tenants and to avoid tenant burn-out.

Recruitment events and road-shows have been held on a number of occasions and opportunities to recruit at other events have been taken.

The initiatives with other staff teams are also seen as key to increasing awareness.

Increasingly, fewer and fewer tenants are interested in attending meetings and would prefer a more passive level of involvement i.e. consultation processes and surveys from home as opposed to becoming actively involved.

### ***TPAS Accreditation***

One of the key aims of the Strategy was the achievement of the TPAS Accreditation. As there are some strands of the strategy which remain to be delivered, such as the Annual Report and final sign off of the Local Offer, the assessment process has been delayed until late autumn.

Although there is some disappointment that there have been some delays from the initial project target dates, we are confident that accreditation will be achieved and acknowledge that we may have been over-ambitious on the timeframes when considering that the success of the strategy depends on a relatively small number of tenants volunteers.

### **Recommendation**

3. That the contents of this report are noted
4. To note that a final update will be provided in autumn 2014

Name and contact details of author:-

Name: Simon Warde

Job title: Acting Resident Involvement Manager

Service Area: Housing & Property

Tel: 01865 252839

Email: swarde@oxford.gov.uk

List of background papers: None

Version number: 1

## HOUSING PANEL (PANEL OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE)

**Friday 7 February 2014**

**COUNCILLORS PRESENT:** Councillors Sanders, McCready and Hollick.

**CO-OPTED MEMBERS PRESENT:** Linda Hill (Co-optee)

**OFFICERS PRESENT:** Mathew Metcalfe (Democratic and Electoral Services) and Pat Jones (Principal Scrutiny Officer) and Gary Parsons (Housing and Property)

### **44. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from the Chair (Councillor Val Smith).

### **45. WORK PROGRAMME AND REPORT BACK ON RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Panel received an updated forward work programme and a report detailing responses to comments and recommendations made at its previous meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2014.

The Panel agreed:

- (b) To note the response from Councillors Ed Turner and Scott Seamons, who accepted the Panel's recommendation concerning an Oxford City Council Lettings Agency.
- (a) Regarding the Parks Satisfaction Survey to:
  - (1) Note the responses received from the Head of Leisure, Parks and Communities;
  - (2) To welcome site visits to parks in the City;
  - (3) Request that the Head of Leisure, Parks and communities provide the Panel with the results of the 2013 Parks Satisfaction Survey
  - (4) Note that the Panel Members wished to consider further why despite the additional funding and improvement to the Parks, the satisfaction levels had not increased;
  - (5) Invite Councillor Mark Lygo as the Board Member for Parks to a future meeting of the Panel to discuss the issue of Parks satisfaction further.

### **46. STAR TENANTS' SURVEY - VALIDATED RESULTS**

The Panel received a report of the Head of Housing and Property Services (previously circulated, now appended) which provided information on the outcomes of the STAR survey 2013 and details of how this information would be used to improve the offer to tenants in Oxford.

Gary Parsons, Housing Strategy and Performance Manager attended the meeting and introduced the report. He highlighted that the main area of dissatisfaction was across the younger age groups.

Councillor Gill Sanders felt that the overall response rate was very low and highlighted as an example one area with 951 tenancies had a response rate of only 81. She felt that the true picture of tenant satisfaction was not being seen. She added that more work was needed to make contact with tenants which tended to happen when there were Estate Managers, but now it seemed that the Council was more detached from the tenants.

Linda Hill felt that incentives to encourage tenants to complete surveys should be considered and maybe focussing on a particular area of the City rather than the City as a whole.

Councillor Stuart McCready supported the idea of Estate Managers, but asked by was the survey so unattractive to tenants that they did not complete it.

Councillor Scott Seamons said that made the tenants felt that the questions were not relevant and not engaging and so more thought should be given to ones that related more to the tenants and their everyday experiences.

Councillor Sam Hollick felt that increased tenant participation and a greater Officer presence on the ground would go some way to increasing satisfaction. He added that maybe the age of those that responded should be cross-referenced with the results of the stock condition survey.

Looking at the suggestions on what can be done with the survey results, the Panel liked the idea visiting another organisation that had received a higher satisfaction level.

The Panel agreed:

- (a) To welcome and be part of the planned neighbourhood walkabouts in Oxford;
- (b) To welcome a visit to another organisation with a higher tenant satisfaction result and to ask Officers to look into this in liaison with the Chair.

#### **47. OUTCOME FROM THE REVIEW OF THE MUTUAL EXCHANGE PROCESS**

Pat Jones said that the Panel while looking at the occupancy rate of the housing stock, had also discussed the allocation and transfer process and from this came a more detailed look into the mutual exchange process.

Pat Jones had worked with Linda Hill and together they had:



- Spoken with tenants at the start of the process, in the process and had come through the process
- Attended “speed dating” events
- Spoken with Officers who managed the process

From the above they had found:

- Very few tenants knew of the Home Swapper Scheme used by the Council, and when they did this was only after they had registered for a mutual exchange.
- Tenants found the information inadequate and not kept up to date and the administration seemed very cumbersome.
- Most tenants found an exchange themselves through for example social media.
- Tenants found the communication of milestones on their journey through the process was not very good.
- In the year 2012/13 there had been 93 exchanges and in the current year 2013/14 there had been 115 exchanges so far.
- Compensation for downsizing is only available through the transfer list.

Pat Jones said that a fuller report with recommendations would be submitted to the Panel at a future meeting.

The Panel agreed to thank Linda Hill and Pat Jones for their work and would await the report with recommendations.

#### **48. PERFORMANCE MONITORING - HOUSING MEASURES - QUARTER 3**

The Panel received details (previously circulated, now appended) of the set of performance indicators chosen by the Panel covering:

- Welfare reform and the housing crisis
- Housing supply
- Estate regeneration

Pat Jones drew the Panel’s attention to CS002 (Customer Services – Time to process changes in circumstance) and said that the upward trend gave a reassurance that the process was improving.

The Panel agreed to note the latest performance indicators.

#### **49. ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY - OXFORD STANDARD**

Pat Jones informed the Panel of the current situation with the Stock Condition Survey which was due to be completed in March and form part of the Asset Management Strategy. She said that the Panel may want to:

- See the outcomes of the Stock Condition Survey
- Consider what the results say
- How these results form part of the overall Asset Management Strategy

Pat Jones suggested that the Panel might wish to work with the Tenants Scrutiny Panel on the possibility of an Oxford Standard. The Panel would still those be able to pre-scrutinise the Asset Management Strategy. She added that she had been in discussion with John McKinner who was working with the Tenants Panel.

The Panel agreed:

- (a) To note the update from Pat Jones
- (b) To welcome the opportunity to work with the Tenants Panel on the outcomes of the Stock Condition Survey and the possible establishing of an Oxford Standard.

## **50. NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Panel approved the notes of its meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2014.

**The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.35 pm**