

Agenda

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Housing Panel (Panel of the Scrutiny Committee)

Date: **Thursday 3 September 2015**

Time: **5.00 pm**

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

For any further information please contact:

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As a matter of courtesy, if you intend to record the meeting please let the Contact Officer know how you wish to do this before the start of the meeting.

Housing Panel (Panel of the Scrutiny Committee)

Membership

Chair	Councillor Linda Smith	
	Councillor Gill Sanders	
	Councillor Sam Hollick	
	Councillor Elizabeth Wade	
	Councillor Elise Benjamin	
	Councillor David Henwood	
	Geno Humphrey	Co-optee

The quorum for this Committee is three, substitutes are not permitted.

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AGENDA

Pages

1 APOLOGIES (5.00 PM)

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (5.01 PM)

3 PERFORMANCE MONITORING (HOUSING MEASURES) -
QUARTER 1 (5.02 PM)

9 - 12

Contact Officer: Neil Lawrence, Performance Improvement Manager
nlawrence@oxford.gov.uk

Background Information
<p>This report contains outcomes at the end of June 2015 (2015/16 quarter 1) for a set of housing performance indicators grouped according to three themes previously chosen by the Panel:</p> <p>Estate regeneration, Housing supply, Welfare reform and the housing crisis.</p>
Why is it on the agenda?
<p>The Housing Panel is responsible for monitoring Council performance against housing targets.</p> <p>The Panel is asked to note this report and may wish to ask questions or request further information.</p>
Who has been invited to comment?
<p>No officers have been invited specifically for this item but the Scrutiny Officer will follow up on any requests after the meeting, if required.</p>

4 MID-POINT REVIEW OF THE HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2013-18 (5.10 PM)

13 - 66

Contact Officer: Frances Evans, Housing Strategy & Performance Manager
fevans@oxford.gov.uk

Background Information
This report has been provided for scrutiny. It is not going to the City Executive Board for decision.
Why is it on the agenda?
For the Panel to consider the findings of an internal review of the Council's homelessness strategy and action plan for 2013-18. The Panel may wish to propose one or more recommendations to be put to City Executive Board, with the agreement of the Scrutiny Committee.
Who has been invited to comment?
Frances Evans, Housing Strategy and Performance Manager.

5 HOMELESSNESS PROPERTY INVESTMENT (5.40 PM)

67 - 94

Contact Officer: Dave Scholes, Housing Needs Manager Tel: 01865 252636
dscholes@oxford.gov.uk

Background Information
The special City Executive Board on 30 July 2015 agreed to the six officer recommendations set out in this report. Council on 23 September 2015 will be asked to approve changes to the Council's budget, as per officer recommendations 5 and 6.
Why is it on the agenda?
For the Housing Panel to scrutinise the Homelessness Property Investment decision. The Housing Panel may wish to propose one or more recommendations to put to full Council on 23 September, with the agreement of the Scrutiny Committee on 7 September.
Who has been invited to comment?
Dave Scholes, Housing Strategy and Needs Manager.

6 OXFORD GROWTH STRATEGY (6.10 PM)

95 - 126

Contact Officer: Matthew Bates, City Development Tel: 01865 252277
mbates@oxford.gov.uk

Background Information
The City Executive Board on 10 September will be asked to note the contents of this report, in particular the potential need to identify additional resources of £310,000.
Why is it on the agenda?
For the Housing Panel to pre-scrutinise the Oxford Growth Strategy decision. The Panel may wish to propose one or more recommendations to be put to the City Executive Board on 10 September, with the agreement of the Scrutiny Committee on 7 September.
Who has been invited to comment?
Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Board Member for Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services, Matthew Bates, Principle Planning Officer.

7 HOUSING PANEL WORK PROGRAMME (6.40 PM)

127 - 130

Contact Officer: Andrew Brown, Scrutiny Officer Tel: 01865 252230
abrown2@oxford.gov.uk

For the Panel to review and note its work programme for the 2015/16 municipal year.

8 NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (6.44 PM)

131 - 134

For the Panel to note the record of the meeting held on 4 June 2015.

9 DATE OF NEXT MEETING (6.45 PM)

8 October, 9 December and 9 March. All meetings start at 5pm.

Members are also asked to note the dates of two additional informal meetings: 26 October (5pm) and 7 January (5.30pm).

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; licences 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 of the member's spouse, civil partner or person they are living with as husband or wife or as if they were civil partners.

Performance Summary Housing Panel

Green = target met
Amber = within tolerance
Red = outside tolerance

Trends compare relative performance with
Prd: previous month
Prev Year End: previous March
Year on Year: the same period from the previous year

Jun-2015

Measure		Owner	Result 2014/15	Latest Data		Year End Target 2015/16	RAG	Trends			Comments
Ref	Description			Target	Result			Prd	Prev Year End	Year on Year	
Estates Regeneration											
LP013	LP013: Increase satisfaction with parks	Caroline Chanides	84.0%	84.9%	84.0%	90.0%	A	➡	➡	➡	Oxford Residents Survey 2014/15
Housing Supply											
HC016	HC016: Number of affordable homes for rent delivered	Stephen Clarke	13 Number	60 Number	20 Number	67 Number	R	➡	➡	➡	Lawn Upton House (2 units) and Bury Knowle are now completed (10 units). The first 8 units at Minchery Farm have been handed over with the remaining 40 units and Bradlands completing in Qtr 2.
CA001	CA001: Delivering a programme of new homes at Barton	Jane Winfield	3 Milestone	3 Milestone	3 Milestone	3 Milestone	G	➡	➡	➡	
BV064	BV064: Empty homes returned to use	Stephen Clarke	15 Homes	3 Homes	8 Homes	14 Homes	G	➡	➡	➡	

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Jun-2015

Measure		Owner	Result 2014/15	Latest Data		Year End Target 2015/16	RAG	Trends			Comments
Ref	Description			Target	Result			Prd	Prev Year End	Year on Year	
NI154	NI154: Net additional homes provided	Michael Crofton -Briggs	253 Number	51 Number	63 Number	200 Number	G				Housing completions are slightly above the forecast trajectory and are expected to improve this year as construction activity increases, reflecting an improving housing market

Welfare Reform and Housing Crisis













HP003	HP003: The number of people estimated to be sleeping rough	Stephen Clarke	Not Recorded	0 Number	0 Number	45 Number	G				An annual estimate of rough sleepers is done in November, and will be reported for that month.
HP004	HP004: The number of successful interventions with rough sleepers	Stephen Clarke	Not Recorded	62 Number	104 Number	250 Number	G				
NI156	NI 156: The number of households in Oxford in temporary accommodation	Stephen Clarke	107 Number	120 Number	113 Number	120 Number	G				
BV066a	BV066a: Percentage of rent collected	Helen Bishop	97.79%	92.50%	91.77%	98.00%	A				

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Jun-2015

Measure		Owner	Result 2014/15	Latest Data		Year End Target 2015/16	RAG	Trends			Comments
Ref	Description			Target	Result			Prd	Prev Year End	Year on Year	
CS002	CS002: Time to process changes in circumstances	Helen Bishop	10 Days	10 Days	8 Days	9 Days	G				As at the end of June, our year to date result worked out at 7.94 days. This is comfortable within the challenging 2015/16 target of 10 days. In the first three months of the financial year some 17,155 changes had been determined.
CS005	CS005: Time to process new benefits claims	Helen Bishop	12.66 days	14.00 days	15.66 days	13.00 days	A				As at the end of June 1,097 new applications for Housing benefit and Council Tax support had been processed in the current financial year. Average processing time was 15.66 days. This is over the target of 14 days and the situation will be closely monitored over the coming months.
CS010	CS010: Total current tenant arrears	Helen Bishop	£1,042,353.00	£950,000.00	£1,157,311.00	£900,000.00	R				
CS011	CS011: Total former tenant arrears	Helen Bishop	£342,358.00	£450,000.00	£383,009.00	£350,000.00	G				

Performance Summary Housing Panel

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Trends compare relative performance with

Prd: previous month

Prev Year End: previous March

Jun-2015

Year on Year: the same period from the previous year

Measure		Owner	Result 2014/15	Latest Data		Year End Target 2015/16	RAG	Trends			Comments
Ref	Description			Target	Result			Prd	Prev Year End	Year on Year	
CS013	CS013: Total arrears of tenants owing more than 7 weeks rent	Helen Bishop	£437,539.00	£385,000.00	£446,276.00	£370,000.00	R				
CS014	CS014: Number of NSPs served on tenants in arrears YTD	Helen Bishop	917 NSPs	150 NSPs	70 NSPs	600 NSPs	G				
HC003	HC003: Homeless Acceptances	Stephen Clarke	114 Number	36 Number	24 Number	144 Number	G				
HC004	HC004: Homelessness cases prevented	Stephen Clarke	1,147 Number	225 Number	328 Number	900 Number	G				

To: Housing Panel (Panel of the Scrutiny Committee)

Date: 3rd September 2015

Report of: Head of Housing and Property Services

Title of Report: Mid-point review of the Homelessness Strategy 2013-2018

Summary

Purpose of report: To inform the Scrutiny panel of progress made to date in respect of the Homelessness Strategy 2013-2018.

Key decision: No

Executive lead member: Scott Seamons

Report author: Frances Evans

Policy Framework: Corporate Plan 2015-19 Priority: Meeting Housing Needs

Appendix 1 – Homelessness Strategy 2013- 2018

Appendix 2 – Action Plan (Homelessness Strategy 2013-2018)

Appendix 3 – Performance Report – Oxford City Council Housing Needs Performance report 2014/15.

Appendix 4 – Feedback from the Stakeholder Workshop on 8 July 2015.

Background

1. Oxford City Council has a duty to carry out a review of homelessness in the area and to publish a specific Homelessness Strategy to meet needs, including:
 - Addressing the causes of homelessness
 - Introducing initiatives to prevent homelessness wherever possible.
 - Securing sufficient accommodation for homeless people or who may become homeless.
 - Ensuring appropriate support to prevent repeat homelessness.

2. The existing Homelessness Strategy 2013- 2018 (**Appendix 1**) and associated Action Plan (**Appendix 2**) was adopted by Oxford City Council in February 2013. The four strategic objectives are:
 - Preventing and responding to homelessness.
 - Preventing and responding to rough sleeping.
 - Developing partnerships and communications.
 - Deliver excellent homelessness services.
3. A mid-point review of the Homelessness Strategy 2013-18 has been undertaken. This report sets out the findings of the review and next steps.

Performance against the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2013-18

4. The Homelessness Strategy 2013-18 comprises of 4 strategic objectives with 23 key actions proposed to achieve these. The key actions are measured through 61 milestones, of which 45 have already been completed and 11 are on target to be completed within the lifetime of the strategy. Only 5 actions have been delayed and more detail on these has been provided in paragraphs 6-9 below. **Appendix 3** provides a general performance overview report on how the Council's Housing Services performed in 2014/15. This has been published on the Council's website. <http://www.oxford.gov.uk/Library/Documents/Community%20Housing/Housing%20Performance%202014-15.pdf>
5. In addition to the work outlined in Appendix 3, key activities of the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2013-18 are as follows:
6. **Strategic Objective One:** Preventing and responding to homelessness.
 - Maintained levels of households in Temporary Accommodation below 120 per year.
 - Funding has been secured to procure additional temporary accommodation.
 - Youth Ambition Plan has been developed.
 - New pathway implemented from 1st April 2015 to support young people and young parents (County Council and City Council approach).
 - Social enterprise opportunities in education, training and employment have been developed with partners to help meet the needs of single homeless people in the City.
 - Match funding provided to pilot an alternative approach to assisting single homeless households in securing employment and sustainable accommodation – working jointly with May Day Trust.
 - Oxford City Financial Inclusion Strategy developed and adopted.
 - Homelessness reduced through joint working with the Council's Welfare Reform Outreach team who work to address and mitigate the impacts of welfare reform (from a resident and a business standpoint).
 - Oxford Credit Union Service has been advertised to all tenants and Council officers sign-post people toward the Credit Union when customers seek welfare or money management advice.

7. Strategic Objective Two: Preventing and responding to rough sleeping.

- No Second Night Out project has been implemented and processes reviewed. Whilst this action has been completed – the on-going target to reduce the number of new rough sleepers spending a 2nd night out on the streets is currently not being met. This is due to an increase in representations and a lack of suitable ‘move on’ accommodation. Consequently, this has reduced the number of beds being made available in the homeless hub. Currently, the City Council is in a live tender stage with Oxfordshire County Council for the entire homeless pathway. Any changes to the current pathway and ‘Sit-Up’ provision may improve the flow of beds, therefore allowing the No Second Night Out targets to be met. This review and tender process was delayed from the original Homelessness Strategy Action Plan target date. The impact of significant reductions in available funding to partners needed to be considered before the tender process could commence.
- A review of anti-begging campaigns and messages has been undertaken; support provided to organisations who work to get people off the streets.
- Move-On Planning Protocol (MOPP) process has been set up. This is the main way of understanding and managing the flow of customers through the hostel system and helps to identify gaps in service, move-on options or support to individuals.
- A new Oxford Street Population Outreach Team (SPOT) contract is in place to develop services to support entrenched rough sleepers.

8. Strategic Objective Three: Developing partnerships and communications

- A communications plan has been developed and delivered with more targeted information about homelessness and housing options. The Housing Options leaflet has been updated and circulated.
- Data sharing across services (including mental health) has been improved – a joint database has been developed (CHAIN system) and this continues to be refined. A wider data sharing protocol is not yet in place as this requires signed agreement from all in the voluntary sector. Whilst a collective agreement has not yet been achieved, discussions with voluntary sector groups are on-going.
- Work is on-going in partnership with County and Health to develop effective pathways to enable people to turn their lives around and attain settled homes including adequate housing support when needed.
- Work is on-going to develop information and evidence bases for homelessness. The Homelessness Strategy Evidence Base is reviewed on an annual basis and published on the Council’s website.
- A review of existing, and introduction of new, pre-crisis protocols is planned. This includes a review to improve the effectiveness of hospital discharge protocols. A procedure has been drafted however agreement or implementation of any revised protocol requires approval from adult social care and the hospital trusts, and a meeting is to be arranged soon to facilitate this.

9. **Strategic Objective Four:** Deliver excellent homelessness services

- Work is on-going to ensure that homelessness services strive to meet the national Gold Standard. A peer review of Oxford City Council was completed in January 2015. Following the success of the peer review, the next stage is to complete 10 local challenges. Gold Standard Challenge 1 has been submitted for assessment. Submissions for the remaining challenges will be completed in phases with the final challenge being completed by the start of summer 2016.
- A bid for external expertise in developing partnerships in homelessness was successful in June 2013. The MEAM (Making Every Adult Matter) one year pilot, to assist joint working between key commissioning partners, has been completed and will be refreshed in Autumn 2015.
- Officers continue to benchmark service delivery and performance with other Local Authorities and are currently working with HouseMark to obtain additional benchmarking data. Benchmarking assists in identifying good practice and value for money services.

Stakeholder Workshop

10. In addition to the above review of the progress against the strategy action plan, the mid-point refresh also included workshop discussions with stakeholders on 8 July 2015. The stakeholder group comprised officers of the Council and representatives from external partner agencies including Registered Providers, Oxfordshire County Council, Supported Housing Agencies and Homelessness Support Service Providers. The workshop was an opportunity to update stakeholders on progress and discuss current and future challenges in relation to delivering homelessness services. The feedback from the workshop is set out in **Appendix 4**.
11. The stakeholder feedback reinforced the need for the City Council to continue delivery and improve current homelessness and housing services. There was a strong message from stakeholders that in light of emerging Government policy changes and potential financial impact of these, that homelessness support and advice services continue to be funded, with joint commissioning of services where possible. Some suggested actions arising from the feedback, will need to be considered as part of the Council's service and budget planning before they can be agreed.
12. There was also a clear message from stakeholders that the Council needs to continue and improve communications with customers, partners and stakeholders in terms of its service delivery plans and funding opportunities. This is already highlighted in Strategic Objective 3: Delivering Partnerships and Communications, as an on-going action.

Other Strategies and Evidence Base

13. It is important to note that Oxford City Council's Housing Strategy 2015-2018 has recently been approved by the Council. The associated action

plan includes actions to assist in responding to and preventing homelessness and rough sleeping.

14. The evidence base to support the Homelessness Strategy 2013-18 has also been refreshed in November 2014. This refresh did not highlight any significant trends that would support a change in the direction of homelessness services or the strategic objectives outlined in paragraph 2 above.

Next steps

15. The review demonstrates that the Homelessness Strategy and its associated Action Plan 2013-18 has been successful to date, with many of the milestones achieved and work now implemented as part of everyday service delivery. Work will continue to deliver the outstanding actions and make improvements to service delivery as new pathways are implemented and service users consulted.
16. More detail is required in terms of the impact of emerging Government policy changes. The Spending Review in the autumn of 2015 may also have other financial implications for local authorities. In addition, the Council is currently in the process of undertaking the Gold Standard 10 local challenges and aims to complete these by summer 2016. This will provide an opportunity to identify strengths and any weaknesses in the delivery of homelessness services.
17. Taking all these points into account, there is potential for significant change over the next six months. It is recommended that in the circumstances no changes are made to the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan at this stage. However a review should be undertaken in summer 2016 when more information will be available and the impact of any changes will be better understood. At that point, the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2013-18 can be revised, if required, to ensure it continues to be fit for purpose. Depending on the impact of proposed policy and funding changes, a further review of the Homelessness Strategy may result in a recommendation to bring a new and combined Housing and Homelessness Strategy forward in 2017/18.

Name and contact details of author:-

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List of background papers: None

Version number: 0.2

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Homelessness Strategy 2013 -2018





City Executive Board 13 February 2013 Appendix A

Homelessness Strategy for Oxford 2013-18

Introduction from Portfolio holder for Housing Cllr. Scott Seamons

Preventing homelessness is a high priority for Oxford City Council. We recognise that settled housing provides the foundation on which we build our lives.

Our last Homelessness Strategy covered the period 2008-2013. It set out a vision to increase homelessness prevention and reduce the use of temporary accommodation. We have been highly successful in delivering these changes and improvements. However, for all that we have achieved, there are increasing challenges ahead.

The development of our new Homelessness Strategy comes at a time of great change in housing, welfare and social policy. There are continual pressures on housing and an affordability crisis in the City which is likely to increase in future years

Our new Homelessness Strategy is part of a suite of integrated Housing Strategies and Plans that take forward wide ranging housing issues within the City. It is evidence based and has been developed in consultation and partnership with public, partners and stakeholders

The Strategy sets out where we are now and considers the challenges and opportunities that will come forward in the next 5 years.

Above all, it identifies our priorities for future action to ensure we strive towards preventing homelessness as our first priority whilst securing appropriate advice, accommodation and support if crisis occurs.

Our ultimate goal is to ensure people have settled homes which enable them to build settled lives.

Executive summary

Oxford remains one of the least affordable areas of the country for housing. House prices have remained at historical highs in Oxford despite a national trend for a slowdown in the market.

There are continued problems of affordability of housing for many Oxford residents. There has been a marked drop in the level of new housing built in the City to just 200 in 2010/11. The amount of new affordable housing built has decreased - as a consequence just 148 in 2010/11. It has been estimated that just under 2,000 new affordable homes are needed every year in Oxford. Demand for private rented accommodation greatly outstrips supply and rents are rising. Levels of homelessness fell between 2004 and 2008 but there are worrying signs now as the effects of the recession and overall environment begin to become apparent, including mortgage repossessions.

There are vulnerable households who have specific needs for whom specialist housing and/or support is necessary to enable people attain and retain a settled home.

There are considerable challenges for the Council in tackling the ongoing housing crisis, This Strategy identifies our local issues and sets out actions to help address them

In developing this Strategy we consulted with public, partners and local stakeholders to listen to their views and concerns. This has helped us in developing a detailed Action Plan to support the Housing Strategy and respond to local needs.

Our goals are

- *Early intervention to prevent homelessness before a crisis point is reached*
- *Provision of appropriate advice, accommodation and support if crisis occurs*
- *Prevention of repeated homelessness to ensure people have settled homes*

The journey ahead 2012-15

Much has been achieved since the last Housing Strategy to address our aims. However, with continuing demands and challenging circumstances, much more remains to be done.

The magnitude and complexity of the issues that face us in the next 5 years must not be under-estimated. Furthermore, many of the issues facing us are outside the direct control of Oxford City Council

Nonetheless we are planning ahead and will work in partnership with others who can help deliver solutions. We have prioritised issues and proposed actions to build on our past success, mitigate the impacts of changing housing markets, social and welfare reform but, above all, prevent homelessness

Our major challenges include

- *Demand for housing greatly outstrips supply and this is likely to increase in the future*
- *High housing costs – whether for rent or purchase*
- *Increasing pressures on household incomes in the current and future economic climate – including welfare reform and household debt*

- *Difficulty in meeting needs of households with more complex needs*
- *Increasing problems in accessing private rented and temporary accommodation for homeless and potentially homeless households*
- *Developing solutions to meet gaps in future funding including accommodation based services for former rough sleepers*
- *Improving communications, knowledge and managing expectations*

Details about how we will deliver our Homelessness Strategy objectives and respond to these pressures are contained within the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan. This sets out clear tasks and targets within the following areas of work:

During the course of this Homelessness Strategy we plan to:

Prevent and Respond to Homelessness

- *Reduce homelessness caused by parental exclusions*
- *Maximise homelessness preventions through Home Options approach*
- *Introduce Private Sector Offers to meet homelessness duties*
- *Maximise the role of the Home Choice scheme*

- *Increase access to private rented homes*
- *Support and develop services to promote financial inclusion*
- *Develop services for young people*
- *Develop social enterprise opportunities in educations, training and employment*
- *Deliver sufficient, appropriate temporary accommodation or accommodation for homelessness prevention at crisis point*

Prevent and Respond to Rough Sleeping

- *Deliver and review the impact of No Second Night Out*
- *Develop services to tackle the issue of entrenched rough sleepers*
- *Improve pathways through supported specialist accommodation for former rough sleepers*
- *Ensure sufficient specialist accommodation and support to meet the needs of single homeless clients in the City*
- *Review anti begging campaigns and messages and support organisations who work to get people off the streets*

Develop partnerships and communications

- *Improve data sharing across organisations including mental health*
- *Ensure that homelessness is recognised as a priority for action within the Health and Well Being Board*
- *Work in partnership to develop supported accommodation projects for those with complex needs*
- *Support partnerships which develop pathways to enable people to attain settled homes*
- *Develop and deliver a Communications Plan with more targeted information about homelessness and housing options*

- *Increase awareness of realistic housing options for those people working with potentially homeless clients*
- *Develop more listening and learning from homeless people and service providers*
- *Develop information and evidence bases for homelessness*
- *Review existing and introduce new pre-crisis protocols*

Deliver excellent homelessness services

- *Review best practice and seek continuous improvement*
- *Ensure homelessness services strive to meet the national Gold standard (10 local challenges)*
- *Prevent households from becoming homeless*
- *Minimise use of temporary accommodation*
- *Avoid the use of bed and breakfast accommodation – especially for families and 16-17 year olds*
- *Reduce homelessness acceptances*

All of the above are supported by wider actions to deliver the aims of the Homelessness Strategy

- *Use planning powers and housing enabling role to bring forward new social housing*
- *Develop under-occupation schemes in the social sector to free up family homes*
- *Develop a greater supply of family housing through de-designation of social housing for over 55 year olds*
- *Tackle tenancy fraud to recover social housing for those that need it*
- *Develop empty property strategy to bring homes back into use*
- *Ensure the Allocations Scheme and Annual Lettings Plan supports Homelessness Strategy*
- *Review needs of vulnerable groups such as younger people, older people, BME communities and troubled families in the City*

Homelessness

Not all homeless people live on the street. People may have access to some form of shelter, some of the time but lack a stable, long term, settled home

Rough sleeping is the starkest form of homelessness and is a harmful and risky lifestyle. It is linked to wider social and health issues and living on the streets is likely to increase these problems.

Some people who can't access housing live in improvised dwellings – tents, sheds.

For others, there are frequently moves from one temporary accommodation/shelter to another (eg emergency accommodation, refuges, friends homes, 'sofa surfing') – people with no settled home. There are also many households that share accommodation eg with relatives or live in unsatisfactory housing.

Anyone can become homeless. However, it is possible to identify people who are most likely to become homeless. Groups at risk of homelessness includes young people leaving the care of a local authority, those leaving prison, people suffering from domestic violence, those with a mental health problem, substance misuse, those from troubled families, people on low incomes and those who are in debt. There is a strong overlap between homelessness and deep social exclusion.

Preventing homelessness goes further than the keys to the door. Particularly for vulnerable and young people, there is a need to provide support to help build life skills, independence and the ability to attain and retain a settled home. This can reduce both repeated homelessness and admissions to institutional or residential care.

People in Oxford

Just over 150,000 people live in Oxford. There is a relatively young population – it has been estimated that 36% of the population is aged between 15 and 29 years compared to a UK average of 20%. There is a relatively large black and minority ethnic population. Population turnover is high and Oxford is the fourth fastest growing city in the UK.

Oxford is generally a 'well educated city' and there are 32,000 full time students at Universities. However, there are high levels of people without qualifications in some areas – mainly those areas with high levels of deprivation. Attainment levels of Oxford schoolchildren are relatively low. The proportion of young people in Oxford not in education, employment and training is above that of Oxfordshire. The largest groups of people not in education, employment or training are those that have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are teenage parents or care leavers

Median earnings for full time employees resident in Oxford were £26,507 in 2010 – close to the national average.

Unemployment in Oxford is lower than in England and there is a lower level of working age benefit claimants than the national average. However, this figure is depressed by the student population who are not eligible for some benefits.

Just over 11,000 households on lower incomes claim either full or partial housing benefit to help meet rent payments.

Housing in Oxford

There are over 58,000 homes in Oxford

Oxford is one of the most unaffordable places to buy or rent accommodation in the Country. There is a chronic shortage of affordable homes available and accessible for many people in Oxford.

House prices are outside the reach of many people – the mean house price in Oxford in 2010 was £341,296 compared with £240,033 in England as a whole. There are low levels of home ownership in Oxford compared to other areas in South East and England as a whole.

There are high levels of private rented accommodation – 24% of all housing is privately rented in Oxford compared to 12% in England. Private rents are high and increasingly Housing Benefit does not cover the cost of even the lowest rents. Oxford has been identified as the most unaffordable location outside London for private renting

Demand for private rented accommodation is also high – buoyed by a limited supply and high costs of home ownership, and the demand for student accommodation. There were 17,113 full time students with accommodation requirements and 13,862 units of university or college provided accommodation at the University of Oxford and 8,105 students and 4,494 places for accommodation at Oxford Brookes. More student accommodation is being developed now and in future years to help balance the housing market in Oxford.

Oxford City Council owns 7,805 homes and Housing Associations provide a further 3,675 homes in the City. Demand for social rented homes is high – there are over 6,000 people on the housing register. Just 565 properties were let in 2011/12 and less than half of these were family sized accommodation. It is planned that 30% are let to homeless households to whom the Council have accepted a statutory homeless duty. In the social rented sector there is a relative over-supply of accommodation for people over 55 years old and an under supply of 2 bedroomed, and very large (4 bed or larger) family accommodation.

The population of the City is growing. There is little land to develop for new homes in Oxford City. There are relatively few opportunities for developing new homes – including affordable housing - to address the high level of demand for housing.

Oxford City Council uses its planning and housing powers to help rebalance the housing market and develop new affordable housing. This is detailed in the Housing Strategy Action Plan 2012-15. However, the reality is that demand for housing far outstrips supply and this is likely to increase in the future.

Homelessness in Oxford

There can be no doubt that homelessness in Oxford is exacerbated by the lack of supply and access to suitable, settled homes.

Of those being accepted as statutory homeless, the main causes are loss of home due to exclusions from family or friends' homes, relationship breakdown or the loss of a private sector tenancy.

The majority of households accepted as homeless are lone, female parents and young households between 16 and 24 years old. It appears that black and minority ethnic households are over-represented in those accepted as homeless.

The number of people being accepted as homeless has decreased over the last 5 years – from 196 households in 2008 to 120 in 2012. This has been achieved due to more homelessness prevention work by Oxford City Council. 637 households were prevented from becoming homeless in 2011/12. 884 households are supported to gain and retain accommodation in the private rented sector through the Home Choice scheme run by the Council. But new Home Choice tenancies have declined from 200 in 10/11 to 130 in 11/12.

Numbers of homeless people in temporary accommodation have reduced – just 129 households were in temporary accommodation secured by Oxford City Council on 31 March 2012 compared to 496 on 31 March 2008. 83% of households in temporary accommodation on 31 March 2012 were families with dependant children or expected babies. 92% of households in first stage temporary accommodation were in receipt of housing benefits.

Many other groups of people are not deemed to be statutory homeless but still have pressing housing needs and no settled home.

People on low incomes, without regular work, lack of proven track record, previous failed tenancies, mental health or substance misuse are unlikely to meet lettings agents/landlords vetting procedures and so cannot obtain a private tenancy.

Poor discharge planning for ex-offenders and those with mental health needs have been cited as further causes for homelessness amongst these groups. Those with complex needs, addiction, negative behaviour, poor parenting and life skills face particular problems in attaining settled homes and can fall through the net of services and accommodation provided.

Welfare benefit reforms, especially the limiting of Housing Benefit to younger people and effect of benefit cap on larger families will increase risks of homelessness for these groups in the future.

Rough sleeping is a constant issue in Oxford. There are 12 – 15 entrenched rough sleepers on the streets of Oxford on any given night, with 2-3 new people every week. The majority of people sleeping rough are aged between 26 and 49. People on the streets come to Oxford to access homeless services, have family or friends in the area, seek work, may have no access to public resources or are excluded from other accommodation.

More information on statistics quoted in this document and sources can be found in the Evidence Base document available on our website. There may be variations on the information provided during the course of this Homelessness Strategy as new census data becomes available

What we have achieved in last 5 years and where we are now

There have been many successes in the last 5 years in spite of high housing demand in the City. Nationally, homelessness acceptances increased by 16% in the year ended 31 March 2012. In Oxford there was a 2% reduction. Nationally, there has been a 44% increase in use of bed and breakfast accommodation in the same period. On 31 March 2012, there were no homeless households in bed and breakfast accommodation in Oxford. The use of temporary accommodation has also decreased.

This is an outstanding achievement given the intense housing pressures in Oxford. It has been achieved through the high priority placed on preventing homelessness in the City and the continuing work in delivering homelessness solutions – both directly by the City Council and in partnership with others. A strong network of partnerships and services is in place to support homeless people and those threatened with homelessness.

However, we are not complacent. The challenges ahead are enormous and we continue to review and adapt services and provision to prevent homelessness in the most effective way.

Over the last five years, there has been a reduction in the numbers of households who have become statutory homeless.

This has been achieved by changes in the way Oxford City Council has offered a statutory homelessness service. Five years ago the emphasis was on dealing with people who presented themselves as homeless. Now the priority is on preventing homelessness occurring by helping people resolve their housing problems and tackling barriers to obtaining accommodation. The Home Choice scheme has been prominent in securing accommodation in the private rented sector and preventing homelessness. The Lord Mayors Deposit Scheme has also assisted over 150 households in securing accommodation.

The use of temporary accommodation, particularly bed and breakfast, has decreased – improving the quality of life for homeless households and reducing costs to the public purse. In 2012, Oxford City Council began a review of temporary accommodation including seeking new forms of provision with private sector providers and the quality of existing temporary accommodation and support with residents.

An independent review of Oxford City Council homelessness services was undertaken by the Chartered Institute of Housing in 2011 which led to an Action Plan to deliver operational changes to continually improve the homeless service.

Feedback from consultation with the public through the Council's Talkback initiative in 2011 highlighted that there were gaps in general public knowledge and awareness of the work being undertaken in the City to prevent homelessness.

In July 2012, the No Second Night Out initiative was launched in Oxford. Fundamentally, the scheme hopes to prevent a second night on the streets for those sleeping rough. Behind the scenes, street outreach services have been re-configured to meet the new scheme and changes made to arrangements in hostels. The impacts of this including concerns about lack of direct access is planned to start 6 months after the scheme was introduced i.e. in early 2013.

Entrenched rough sleepers do not respond to traditional methods of re-settlement with repeated homelessness and returning back to the streets.

Specific responses are needed for this client group – who often have complex problems including substance misuse and mental health issues.

There are a wide range of services and accommodation for homeless people in Oxford – provided by a range of organisations with different funding streams. Investment was secured for homeless hostels and changes made to services in hostels and the advice and training services operated by Crisis at the Old Fire Station.

There is strong partnership working and groups such as Oxford Register of Affordable Housing, Families At Risk of Homelessness, Tenants at Risk, Accommodation Panel, Joint Housing Team, Single Homelessness Team. Pre eviction protocols have been agreed between organisations to prevent homelessness and have been largely successful. There has been an increased focus on education and training, to provide more holistic assistance, with the aim of helping clients in the longer term, thus preventing them going through a 'revolving door' and back to homelessness again. There is strong joint work operationally between Children's Social Care and Oxford City Council to ensure that young people are appropriately supported if they are homeless; families are supported if they are homeless or families are supported to look after children at home.

A fundamental review of homeless services supported through the Supporting People programme started in 2011/12. This continues to develop options and solutions to deliver a £500,000 saving from the £2.3 million countywide funding for homelessness through the scheme. Additionally, in 2012, Oxfordshire County Council implemented changes to governance and administration of the Supporting People Programme.

The City Council will continue to work pro-actively to improve the quality and access to private rented accommodation through licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation and other initiatives. Surveys of private landlords and tenants are being undertaken in 2012-13.

A Homelessness Review was undertaken in 2012 to inform the new Homelessness Strategy including development of a robust evidence base and review of homelessness issue and services with providers. This identified some gaps in provision including the fact that there is no mediation service and rent deposit schemes are not available to everyone. In relation to specialist groups it was felt that there is a lack of alternatives for people who do not want to enter hostel and other supported housing pathways to secure homes, lack of direct access and self-contained accommodation for those with mental health needs, more single person accommodation needed, lack of discharge accommodation and supported lodgings, services for persons with alcohol or drug addictions and those with dogs. Information from this review has helped shape this Consultation Document.

Details of services for homeless people can be found in Homelessness Survival Guide

The Homelessness Review 2012 and Evidence Base which are available on our website.

Future threats and opportunities

We are witnessing fundamental changes in the housing market, housing, social and welfare reform. The successes of the last 5 years will be ever more difficult to replicate in the years ahead.

Access to housing

The goal of home ownership is increasingly out of reach for future generations. The global banking crisis has had a structural impact on the mortgage market. The availability of mortgage lending supported high demand for home purchase and was instrumental in the doubling house prices nationally between 2001 and 2006. It contrasts sharply with the availability of new loans and the difficulties for households in raising larger deposits to buy houses.

There are few new housing developments being brought forward in Oxford – including social housing. Whilst Oxford City Council is developing schemes for the future, including new council housing, there is an immediate issue with lack of additional new affordable housing being brought forward. Just 10 units of new social rented housing for families will be brought forward in 2012/13, and there are few completions planned until 2015.

The impact of this has been more demand on the private rented sector and this will continue to dominate the homelessness and housing agenda in future years.

Market demand is so high that low to middle income households in Oxford are increasingly priced out of the market – even where housing benefit is payable to households, as the cap on the maximum rent levels is increasing much lower rates than growth in market rents. There are worrying signs that landlords will not join the Home Choice scheme as a consequence. Where they do, Oxford City Council will be faced with the increasing problems of meeting the gap between the rent demanded and the household's ability to meet the cost. The new powers provided to allow Councils to discharge their homelessness duty within the private rented sector will be used appropriately in Oxford to meet the needs of homeless households. However, they do not redress the issue of supply and demand or tackle the affordability crisis for homeless people and the wider population. Various organisations – statutory and voluntary – seek accommodation in the private rented sector for clients and the impacts will go beyond the needs of statutory homeless clients. Lack of move on accommodation for those in hostels and transitional accommodation will mean that supported housing may not be made available for people that need it. This is a major challenge for Oxford City Council and residents alike.

The lack of available, affordable homes in the City may well lead to increasing use made of properties outside of Oxford.

Oxford City Council successfully re-financed its Housing Revenue Account to meet Government policy changes, borrowing some £200m. The majority of this funding had to be paid to Government as a one-off settlement in lieu of an annual payment, but there remains some capacity to invest in new social housing and our existing housing stock. The Council is already committed to developing 112 new homes in the period to 2015, and has secured a funding contribution through grant support from the Homes and Communities Agency. However, further development does depend on restraining arrears and other costs where we expect increasing pressure. In addition, the re-invigorated Right to Buy may lead to the loss of existing social housing which may not be readily replaced given the lack of development opportunities.

There are also changes taking place in social housing – for both Housing Associations and the Council. New social housing may be let on Affordable Rent levels (up to 80% of market value) and on Flexible (fixed term) tenancies. The Council adopted a Tenancy Strategy in 2012 and will seek to influence Registered Providers in the City to follow their lead to ensure that social housing offers people settled homes at reasonable rent levels.

Welfare reform and household income

Planned national welfare benefit changes will have a negative impact on lower income households. Welfare spending is planned to reduce by £18bn by 2014-15 including housing and council tax plus other welfare benefits and national debate suggests that further reductions could come forward for the future. This has a significant impact on those people on who are partially or totally dependant on benefits for their household income.

Major changes are taking place to Housing Benefits. Young people are particularly affected with the single room rent restrictions on benefit paid being extended from those under 25 to those under 35 years old. This could lead to a need for more shared accommodation – which is already in high demand in Oxford as a University City. Debate is under way on the potential to the ending of Housing Benefit for those under 25 in the longer term. Over accommodation rules within the social rented sector and housing benefit non-dependant charges may mean families cannot offer a spare room to a family member or friend who is homeless. This could be either because they have needed to move to a smaller property and there is no spare bedroom or because they cannot financially afford to accommodate anyone. These regulations will also impact on families who foster children and could again impact on homelessness amongst younger people. Larger families will lose benefits as a result of a cap on total level of benefits paid to one household. Changes to the assessment of benefits for disabled people are likely to negatively affect some households. It is important to recognise that housing benefit

changes affect those who claim the benefit due to low incomes and not just those not in work.

The plans to introduce Universal Credit and payments directly to claimants, monthly in arrears is likely to have an adverse impact on household income, budgeting, debt and potentially put households at greater risk of homelessness. Currently Council and social landlords receive rental payments direct from Government. Oxford is part of a Demonstration Project to identify issues related to the direct payment of housing benefit to social tenants. However, this will ultimately impact on all non-pensioner households in receipt of benefits. It is likely to have a detrimental effect on accessing private rented housing where landlords require rent in advance – certainly not rent paid in arrears.

Interest rates are at historic lows but any changes would impact both on owner occupiers and landlords who are likely to pass costs onto tenants.

Given the above and general constraint on incomes, individual and household debt is likely to be an increasing problem for the future. Mortgage repossessions have been lower than national averages in Oxford but there were worrying signs in 2012 that this is increasing.

Public sector policy and finance

A wide variety of policy changes will impact on the Homelessness Strategy

The Localism Act offers flexibilities for local authorities to discharge their homelessness responsibilities by securing a good quality, well managed, affordable private rented home. Oxford City Council has already had major successes in working with the private rented sector but as discussed elsewhere, the issues of supply and demand together with affordability are not being addressed within Government policy framework. The sustainability of the Council's work with private rented sector through Home Choice is in question given the unrelenting demand for and escalating rent levels in private rented homes in Oxford.

The Review of Allocations Scheme in Oxford and elsewhere will have an impact on who is being housed and hence homelessness. The stark reality is that the overwhelming majority of people on the Housing Register may never be offered a council or housing association home. Groups to whom Council's will award reasonable preference in allocating social housing is outlined within national policy and now includes ex military personnel. The City Council already recognises a local connection in assessing ex-military personnel and provides tailored information on housing choices for personnel. This preference will be further considered as part of the Allocations Scheme Review in 2013. A national debate has been launched to question whether younger people under 25 should be able to access social housing.

Where households are successful in obtaining a council or housing association home this may be on a higher rent than existing tenants – either as a consequence of new homes at Affordable Rents, or as a condition of grant funding through the Homes and Communities Agency or through the ‘Pay to Stay’ proposals. The latter plans to produce an income threshold over which social tenants will pay higher costs than neighbours on lower incomes. Government policy is also challenging whether new social tenants should be offered a secure ‘tenancy for life.’

The Health and Social Care Act abolishes Primary Care Trusts from April 2013. These are replaced by GP Consortiums who will be responsible for commissioning most health care.

New Health and Well Being Boards are being set up to oversee the quality of services, represent the views of local people and draw up a Health and Well Being Strategy – building on Joint Strategic Needs Assessments.

The Comprehensive Spending Review (2010) set out a national reduction of 28% on local authority budgets over the following 3 years. Oxford City Council has identified the necessary budget savings but there is still pressure to achieve planned savings and the outlook is continued austerity.

The Homelessness Prevention Payment from the Department of Communities and Local Government is not guaranteed in the future. This Fund supports £1 million expenditure on preventing homelessness in Oxford – predominantly on rough sleeping and services for single non-statutory homeless persons.

Supporting People funding for homelessness is being cut and savings of £500,000 need to be achieved. This will provide huge challenges and may mean the loss of specialist accommodation based solutions in Oxford for homeless people. This will also put more pressure on other housing which is in high demand. Furthermore, gaps in the market could lead to unregulated supported housing with risk to clients.

The Supporting People funding is no longer ring-fenced so can be spent on non housing support issues. In 2012, Oxfordshire County Council proposed changes to governance and administration in Supporting People funding which reflect this. The implementation of changes may have consequences for housing related support and will need to be carefully monitored.

In 2012, the Government delivered it’s report ‘Every Contact Counts’ and launched 10 local challenges (the Gold Standard) for local housing authorities such as Oxford City in homelessness prevention – incorporating a range of directly provided services, corporate commitment and partnership working to prevent homelessness

Our priorities to tackle homelessness and the issues identified in the Homelessness Strategy are included in the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2013

More information and background documents

Ten Local Authority Challenges or Gold Standard

- 1. Adopt a corporate commitment to prevent homelessness which has buy in across all local authority services**
- 2. Actively work in partnership with voluntary sector and other local partners to address support, education, employment and training needs**
- 3. Offer a Housing Options prevention service including written advice to all clients**
- 4. Adopt a No Second Night Out model or effective local alternative**
- 5. Have housing pathways agreed or in development with each key partner and client group that includes appropriate accommodation and support**
- 6. Develop a suitable private sector offer for all client group, including advice and support for both client and landlords**
- 7. Actively engage in preventing mortgage repossessions including through the Mortgage Rescue Scheme**
- 8. Have a Homelessness Strategy which sets out a proactive approach to preventing homelessness and is reviewed annually so that it is responsive to changing needs**
- 9. Not place any young person aged 16 or 17 years old in bed and breakfast accommodation**
- 10. Not place any families in bed and breakfast accommodation unless it is an emergency and then for no longer than 6 weeks**

***Making Every Contact Count: A Joint Approach to Preventing Homelessness
August 2012 – second Ministerial Working Group report***

Corporate Plan

Housing Strategy 2012-15 and Action Plan

Homelessness Evidence Base 2012

Homelessness Review 2012

Homelessness Survival Guide

Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2013-2018

This Action Plan is a tool for delivering our Homelessness Strategy by determining clear actions, performance targets, responsibilities, resources and monitoring arrangements. Also included within this Plan are actions tackling wider housing and support issues which will be taken forward via other Strategies. It has an early focus – concentrating on actions to be achieved in the first 12-18 months of the Strategy. This is considered appropriate given current uncertainties with the outcome of some reviews, projects and impact of new national policy. The Action Plan will be reviewed after the first full year (to 31 March 2014) and revised targets will be set at this stage for later years.

Through robust monitoring we will ensure that our targets are effectively planned, continually delivered and regularly refreshed. The action plan targets will be subject to our established performance management and business planning cycle.

Responsibility for monitoring the Action Plan is as follows:

Level	Frequency	Responsibility
City Executive Board	Annual	Annual review on progress and to determine further actions needed to deliver the plan.
Scrutiny - Housing Panel	As per work programme	Review <i>key performance indicators and statistics showing trends</i> , progress to date
Corporate Performance Monitoring – Housing Board	Quarterly	Review progress of the complete plan and consider any shifts in resources to tackle under/over performance and corrective action needed
Managers	Quarterly	Discuss with relevant team leaders to review progress and resolve any barriers to delivery. To be referred to Departmental Monitoring if unable to resolve.
Team	Quarterly	Meet with team members to review progress on action plans and where possible remove barriers to delivery. Refer to managers if unable to resolve
Individual	6 monthly appraisals and regular one to one meetings	Priorities set in appraisals and review meetings. Review progress and barriers and develop individual solutions to remove barriers.

PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO HOMELESSNESS

GOAL	KEY ACTIONS/MILESTONES	TIMESCALE	RESOURCES	RESPONSIBILITY
Reduce homelessness caused by parental exclusions	Review homeless mediation services provided by suitably trained and skilled independent mediators with specialist relationship breakdown expertise to ensure maximum effectiveness	Sept 2013	OCC mainstream Homeless Prevention budgets	Options Manager
	Develop and introduce re-housing plans with parents and children	June 2013	Existing resources	Options Manager
	Ensure revised allocations scheme supports homeless prevention initiatives does not provide incentives for parental exclusions	By Sept 2013	Existing resources	Allocations Manager

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41	Maximise homelessness prevention and best use of resources	Develop a case ownership approach to homeless prevention casework in the Council's Options Team	June 2013	Within existing resources	Options Manager
		Adopt policy relating to the new power (in the Localism Act) to discharge full homeless duties into the PRS – Private Sector Offer	February 2013 (CEB)	Within existing resources	Housing Needs Manager
		Revise procedures and staff awareness/training to incorporate any policy change	April 2013	Within existing resources	Options Manager
		Monitor progress (see also linking actions re: Home Choice and role of private rented sector)	Ongoing	Within existing resources	Options Manager

Maximise the role of Home Choice	<p>Produce report and options analysis considering the outcomes of landlord surveys and views of Home Choice to review scope of the scheme and analysis of current activity and performance. Undertake a gaps and options analysis including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Review possibility of creating a social lettings agency ➤ Review extension of deposit schemes ➤ Review incentives offered to landlords ➤ Review advice and support offered to landlords and clients ➤ Out of area moves where appropriate 	December 2013	Within existing resources	Private Rented Team Manager
42 Increase access to private rented sector homes	<p>Building on above and through targeted communications, encourage and support people who don't currently see themselves as landlords but may be prepared to let out property or rooms.</p> <p>Undertake awareness and publicity campaigns through press releases, website, newsletters and targeted approaches e. g. owners of empty homes</p>	<p>Dec 2013</p> <p>Sept 2013</p>	<p>Within existing resources</p> <p>Within existing resources</p>	<p>Private Rented Team Manager</p> <p>Private Rented Team Manager supported by Strategy and Enabling team</p>

43	Support and develop services to promote financial inclusion	Support development of Oxford City Financial Inclusion Strategy, with integrated financial management, budgetary skills and benefit advice	Ongoing and by April 2014	Within existing resources	Head of Policy/ Head of Housing
		Review awareness and role and working with Credit Unions	By Sept 2013	Within existing resources	Head of Housing/ Head of Customer Services
		Prepare report and review lessons learnt from Demonstration Projects for Universal Credit. Implement any new working practices	By Dec 2013	Within existing resources	supported by Housing Needs Manager, Strategy and Enabling Manager, Communities and Neighbourhoods Manager, Housing Benefit Manager and Rents Manager
		Improved referrals and access for debt advice and money management follow review of role of advice agencies (outcome of linked Housing Strategy target due Sept 2013)	By Dec 2013	Within existing resources	
		Develop plans to target large families who are likely to be impacted by welfare changes including the Benefit Cap and those affected by under-occupation changes	Plan by Apr 2013	Plan developed within existing resources	Head of Housing
		Implement plan and monitor progress	Ongoing with review as at end March 2014	Resources to deliver to be identified in plan and agreed before implementation	Housing Needs Manager/Landlord Services Manager

44	Develop services for young people	<p>To scope, identify opportunities and to develop a plan to improve education and awareness of housing options for young people</p> <p>Implementation of plan dependant on resources available – but to commence in Jan 2013 and further detail to be included in revised Action Plan</p> <p>Develop a plan to provide awareness and assistance in securing shared accommodation/ Lodger schemes</p> <p>Review options for step down accommodation for young persons needing to move on (gaps around 19-21 year olds)</p>	<p>Subject to inclusion in JHT workplan</p> <p>Jan 2013 start Q1 2014/15 review</p> <p>Dec 2013 Jan 2013 start Q1 2014/15 review</p> <p>By April 2014</p>	<p>Within existing resources</p> <p>Jan 2013 start Q1 2014/15 review</p> <p>Jan 2013 start Q1 2014/15 review</p> <p>Within existing resources</p>	<p>Housing Needs Manager – but to be developed and delivered through Joint Housing Team with Oxfordshire County Council</p> <p>Rough Sleeping and Single Homelessness Manager with partners</p>
	Develop social enterprise opportunities in education, training and employment to meet the needs of single homeless people in the City	<p>Work with partners including ASPIRE, Crisis Skylight Café and OFS to identify, develop and sustain employment opportunities for homeless and vulnerable people</p> <p>Develop schemes and identify lead agencies to seek funding and take forward with regard to mentoring</p>	<p>Nov 13</p> <p>Feb 14</p>	<p>Within existing resources</p>	<p>Housing Needs Manager</p>

Deliver sufficient, appropriate temporary accommodation or accommodation suitable for homelessness prevention at crisis point	Review and /or implement new crisis accommodation solutions including with private sector	April 13	To be determined	Housing Needs Manager
	(Dependant on above action) Review existing services and providers, review need for changes to service provision	Sept 13		

PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO ROUGH SLEEPING

GOALS	KEY ACTIONS/MILESTONES	TIMESCALE	RESOURCES	RESPONSIBILITY
45 Deliver and review impact of Ns Second Night Out	<p>Reduction in number of new rough sleepers spending 2nd night on the streets.</p> <p>Review NSNO after six months of operation to ensure operational procedures are smooth and clear to all agencies.</p> <p>Review any procedures necessary and communicate to partners</p> <p>Rough sleepers with no local connection are reconnected to services in their local area.</p>	<p>Ongoing – measure by PI By June 2012</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Within existing resources</p> <p>Within existing resources</p> <p>Within existing resources</p> <p>Within existing external contract</p>	<p>Rough Sleeping and Single Homelessness Manager – and through external service provider</p>
Develop services to tackle the issue of entrenched rough sleepers	<p>Implement plans to tackle entrenched rough sleeping to cover:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assertive outreach • Tasking and targeting • Personalised approaches • Meaningful activity • Alternative accommodation options 	As detailed in plan	Within existing resources	<p>Rough Sleeping and Single Homelessness Manager and with partners</p>

	Improve pathways through supported, specialist accommodation for former rough sleeper	MOPPs redeveloped to provide data on gaps in move-on options. Move-on options from hostels constantly reviewed to find on-going solutions	Ongoing	Within existing resources	Rough Sleeping and Homelessness Manager with partners
46	Ensure sufficient specialist accommodation and support to meet needs of single homeless clients in Oxford City	Full review of rough sleeping/ homeless pathway, including specialist accommodation, with Oxfordshire County Council – including City Council needs to be clearly represented in Supporting People Review Establish full data set on hostels baselines, and data to provide info on gaps in services. Identify and develop all options (and impacts) of any re-modelling of services Implement outcome of review	Review complete Sept 2013 Implementation for April 2014 start Preparation work from Jan 14 or as identified by review	Review within existing resources which will identify resource issues for the future	Rough Sleeping and Single Homelessness Manager
	Review anti-begging campaigns and messages support organisations who work to get people off the streets	Evaluate scope, impact and outcomes of anti-begging campaign in 2012 including review of local research Learn from experience in developing any 2013 campaign	By April 2013	Within existing resources	Rough sleeping and single homelessness manager

DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNICATIONS

GOALS	KEY ACTIONS/MILESTONES	TIMESCALE	RESOURCES	RESPONSIBILITY
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47	Improved data sharing across services including mental health	<p>Review data sharing protocols)</p> <p>Develop the CHAIN system and joint database</p>	<p>by Sept 12</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	Within existing resources	Rough Sleeping and Single Homelessness Manager with partners
	Ensure that Homelessness is recognised as a priority for action within the Health and Well Being Board	<p>Contribute to meetings, events and regular reports to Health and Well Being Board</p> <p>Identify opportunities for joint commissioning including with Health, DAAT, probation</p> <p>Work in partnership to develop supported accommodation projects for single adults with very high and complex needs (including people with undiagnosed mental health problems and personality disorders)</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>By Dec 13</p>	<p>Within existing resources</p> <p>Within existing resources</p>	<p>Housing Needs Manager/Strategy and Enabling Manager</p> <p>Housing Needs Manager</p>
	Support partnerships which develop effective pathways to enable people to turn their lives around and attain settled homes including adequate housing support when needed	<p>Ensure engagement and involvement in County wide housing and support programmes including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young People • Homelessness • Supported to Independent Living (SIL) • Victims of Domestic Violence • Floating support 	Ongoing	Within existing resources	Housing Needs Managers

<p>Develop and deliver Communications Plan with more targeted information about homelessness and housing options</p>	<p>Annual review of housing communications plan to identify gaps and actions arising from trends and changes and wider public awareness of homelessness, supply and demand for social housing, awareness campaigns including in schools and education, reviewing new ways of engagement)</p> <p>Produce new information as detailed in Annual Plan</p> <p>Produce new/updated information</p> <p>Review new methods of communication e.g. social media</p> <p>Undertake campaigns</p>	<p>Annual review be Dec each year</p> <p>Updating information and campaigns within following financial year as detailed in plan</p>	<p>Within existing resources</p>	<p>Strategy & Enabling Manager :</p> <p>Service Managers</p> <p>Strategy & Enabling Manager</p> <p>as identified in plan</p>
<p>Increase awareness of realistic housing options for those people working with potentially homeless clients</p>	<p>Disseminate regular information</p> <p>Continue joint training and awareness across agencies</p> <p>Deliver messages to partnership groups and through Induction schemes</p>	<p>As above</p> <p>Via regular partnership meetings and special events</p>	<p>Existing resources</p>	<p>Housing Needs Managers</p>
<p>Develop more listening and learning from homelessness people and service users</p>	<p>Review mechanisms to introduce meaningful and cost effective satisfaction and customer experience feedback – including independent facilitation</p>	<p>Nov 2013</p>	<p>Within existing resources</p>	<p>Housing Needs Manager</p>

Develop information and evidence bases for homelessness	Review and maximise efficiency of recording systems to consider secondary causes and effective equalities monitoring	By June 13	Within existing resources	Options Manager
	Monitor and review information and trends to inform future policy and service development Annual review of Evidence Base and publicise on website	By Oct 13	Within existing resources	Strategy and Enabling Manager

Review of existing and introduce new pre-crisis protocols 49	1. Enter into preventative pre-possession agreements with RPs and OCC Landlord Services – including for Flexible Tenancies and supported housing	Dec 13	Within existing resources	Options Manager
	2. Develop sustainment and prevention roles with Private Landlords especially Home Choice Landlords	Dec 13		Options Manager/Private Rented Manager
	3. Work with prison homelessness officers to build on existing pre-release services to ensure ex-offenders are able to make homelessness applications and access advice services prior to release	Apr 13		Options Manager
	4. Review and improve effectiveness of hospital discharge protocols	Aug 13		Options Manager

DELIVER EXCELLENT HOMELESSNESS SERVICES

GOAL	KEY ACTIONS/MILESTONES	TIMESCALE	RESOURCES	RESPONSIBILITY
Review best practice and seek continual improvement	Evaluate local services against Government 'Developing Homelessness Strategies: Local Authority Toolkit' issued in December 2012	By Dec 13	Within existing resources	Housing Needs Manager
	Ensure homelessness services strive to meet the national Gold Standard (10 local challenges)			
	Investigate potential to bid for external expertise in developing partnerships in homelessness by May 2013	Review by Oct 13	Subject to successful bid	Options Manager
	If successful support reviews and implement any changes			
Review performance and cost effectiveness of homelessness services	Participate in national benchmarking schemes Provide data Review results Bring forward recommendations to improve via service planning and review of Homelessness Strategy targets	Sept 13 Jan 14 April 14	Within existing resources	Housing Needs Manager/ Finance Manager/ Strategy and Enabling Manager

We have also set challenging goals and targets to support our Homelessness Strategy aims and to ensure we provide excellent homelessness services

GOAL	TARGET	Measurement	Priority link
Prevent households from becoming homeless	Baseline = 637 in 2011/12 Target = 540	Quarterly	Preventing homelessness
Provide tenancy deposits	Baseline = Home Choice – 131 LMDGS	Quarterly	Preventing

	Target = Home Choice – 130		homelessness
Maintain reduced levels of homeless acceptances	Baseline = 120 Target = 120	Quarterly	Preventing homelessness
Number of households in temporary accommodation (snapshot)	Baseline = 129 2011/12 Target = 120	Monthly	Responding to homelessness
Number of households in bed and breakfast accommodation (snapshot)	Baseline = 0 – 2011/12 Target = 0	Monthly	Responding to homelessness
Number of 16.17 years old in bed and breakfast accommodation (snapshot)	Baseline = 0 (2011/12) Target = 0	Monthly	Responding to homelessness

WIDER ACTIONS TO SUPPORT THE HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

51	Supporting Goal	Supporting Strategy, Policy	Lead
	Use planning powers and the housing enabling role to bring forward new social housing and ensure that Universities make provision for student accommodation	Housing Strategy Relevant Planning SPD	OCC – S&E and Planning
	Develop schemes to tackle under-occupation in social sector to free up family homes	Housing Strategy	OCC – HNT and landlord services
	Tackle Tenancy Fraud to recover social housing for those in need of it	Housing Strategy Fraud Policy	OCC – Fraud Team
	Develop Empty Property Strategy to bring homes into use	Housing Strategy Empty Homes Strategy	OCC – S&E to be reviewed in 2013
	Ensure Allocations Scheme compliments the Homelessness Strategy by assisting with the prevention of homelessness and the use of temporary accommodation for homeless households	Allocations Scheme	OCC – tHNT to be reviewed in 2013
	Ensure balance between all housing applicants, homeless households and those moving on from supported housing	Annual Lettings Plan	OCC – Housing Needs Team
	Greater supply of family housing through de-designation of accommodation	Council Housing Policy/Business	OCC – landlord

for households over 55 years old	Plan?	services
Review needs of vulnerable groups such as younger people, older people, BME communities and troubled families/families in difficulty	Revised Housing Strategy 2013	OCC – S&E - 2013

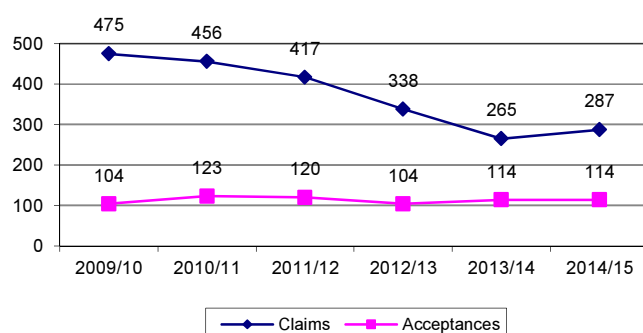
Where actions are necessary across Oxford City Council and wider partnerships – **bold** identifies Lead Officer

Appendix 3: Housing Needs Performance - How did we do in 2014/15?

Homeless Claims and Acceptances

We saw over 2,000 people at the Housing Options Duty service in the last year, visited around 50 people and assisted 105 households to access private rented accommodation by helping with a deposit. Through continued homelessness prevention work, the council has kept the number of people becoming homeless or threatened with homelessness low. In 2014/15 we accepted 114 households as statutory homeless. This was the same number as in 2013/14. In 2015/16, we aim to keep that number as low as possible by helping more people to stay in their existing homes or by assisting them in other ways to secure accommodation.

Homelessness claims and acceptances



As there is limited social housing becoming available for offers we are now discharging our homelessness duty by offering suitable accommodation in the private sector (using new powers in the Localism Act). In some instances we offer accommodation outside the city because of the high cost of private rented housing in Oxford. The median average rent for a 2-bed property is £995 per month, but the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) is only £834. For a 3-bed the median rent is £1,250, but the LHA is only £988. In 2014/15, we discharged duty to 41 households accepted as statutory homeless by making an offer of accommodation in the private sector. 12 households accepted the private sector offer and 29 households refused. However, 8 households won their review on suitability.

In 2014/15, the council and its partners prevented 1,147 households from becoming homeless. This included negotiations with landlords or other assistance to help people remain in their private rented property, assisting people finding private rented housing with the help of a deposit or bond, homeless prevention fund payments, helping to resolve housing benefits and rent arrears problems, providing a sanctuary scheme and reconciliation with family when they threaten to exclude family members.

To help our customers keep their accommodation and prevent their homelessness, the Council now try to look more holistically at all of our customers needs. We have developed excellent arrangements with the Oxford Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) to help customers manage their debts. This service is available for Housing Needs, Rents and Welfare Reform teams to refer customers at risk of homelessness to independent money advice, where help with managing debts would help customers to sustain their housing and avoid homelessness.

Teams in Housing Needs also work in partnership with the Council's Welfare Reform Team to help find solutions for customers affected by the bedroom tax and the benefit cap. The team provides financial support to help tenants pay their rent while they find their own way of coping with the effects of welfare reform. For those affected by the bedroom tax, solutions include help to move to a smaller home, applying for bedroom tax exemptions, getting help with debts or increasing their income through work or more hours at work. Families affected by the benefit cap are helped to apply for benefits exempting them from the cap, or are given support to find enough paid work to claim Working Tax Credit and exempt them from the benefit cap.

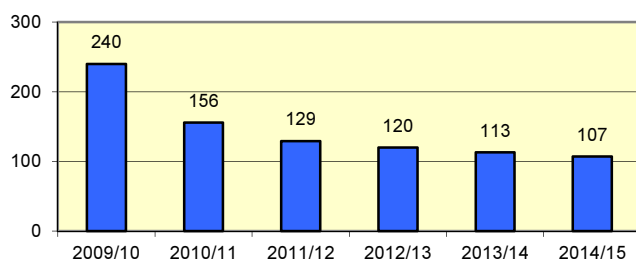
Shelter continue to provide an independent housing advice service at Templars Square on a Tuesday, and at St Aldates Chambers on a Thursday (drop-in sessions in the mornings), both of which continue to be well attended.

Temporary Accommodation

We have worked hard to reduce the number of households staying in temporary accommodation (mostly households which have been found to be homeless by the council and to whom we have a statutory duty to house) by arranging alternative suitable accommodation, where possible.

At the end of March 2015, the number of households in temporary accommodation was down to 107, a reduction of 6% from March 2014 (113). In England as a whole the number of households in temporary accommodation increased by 11% during the same time period. We aim to keep the number of households in temporary accommodation at 120 or less during 2015/16.

Number of households in temporary accommodation

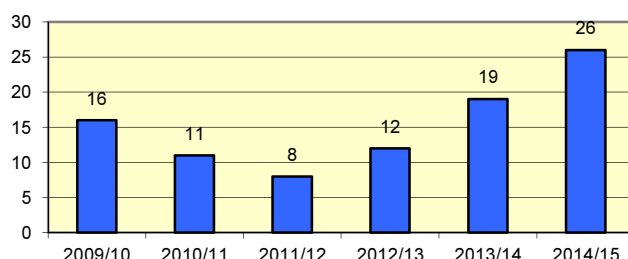


The Accommodation and Sustainment Team work to assist and empower clients to develop independent living skills, so those clients can positively move on from temporary accommodation. The Sustainment team specifically work with existing Council tenants to help them sustain their tenancy. Our performance in relation to these activities has been very good, with many positive outcomes for clients. 2014/15 saw the tenancy sustainment team managing 111 cases. Many of the cases were referred to the team because households who had fallen in to rent arrears were experiencing difficulties maintaining their tenancy or their home. The team were successful in sustaining tenancies with 94% of cases closed during this period having a positive outcome.

Rough Sleeping & Single Homelessness

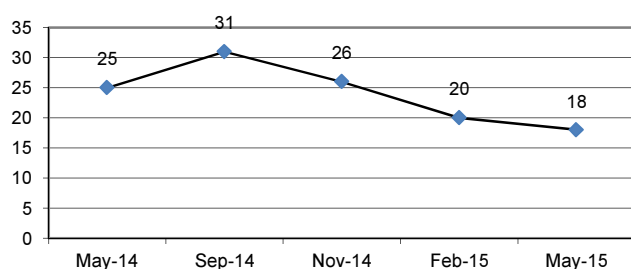
The number of people recorded as sleeping rough in the city remains an on-going issue and we continue to work in close partnership with agencies in order to address this. At the official count in November 2014, 26 people were counted sleeping rough.

Number of people sleeping rough



In addition to the Official Street Count that all Local Authorities are required to carry out between October and November every year, Oxford City Council and partners also conduct counts following the same strict government guidelines every three months.

Street counts 2014/15



No Second Night Out is a national initiative promoted by government, and has been rolled out across England over the past three years. In July 2012, No Second Night Out was launched in Oxford. The NSNO team works in close partnership with Oxford City Outreach to provide a rapid response to new and returning rough sleepers. The aim is that no one new to the streets of Oxford will spend a second night out on the streets. When a person has been verified as sleeping rough, a thorough assessment will be carried out and individuals will be offered a place in the NSNO assessment hub where they will be assessed and offered suitable accommodation and support (a Single Service Offer). This could include an individual being offered a place in one of the homeless hostels in the city, if the person has a local connection to Oxfordshire, or an offer to return to an area where the person does have a local connection.

We commission a highly assertive outreach team that work closely with enforcement agencies and we have set up a hotline for people to report if they are rough sleeping. The public can also use this hotline (01865 304611 or outreach.oxford@mungosbroadway.org.uk) to report someone sleeping rough, in order to ensure that everyone sleeping rough in the city receive the help and support they need to access accommodation and support.

In 2014/15:

- 269 people were verified as rough sleeping in Oxford city for the first time
- 146 rough sleepers accessed a No Second Night Out bed (some people may have accessed one more than once)

- the average waiting time to access a No Second Night Out bed for someone new to the streets was 6.8 days
- 85 people without a connection to Oxfordshire were reconnected to their local area

Oxford City Council fund a range of different services in order to tackle rough sleeping in the city such as Oxford City Outreach, O'Hanlon House, Elmore Community Services, Aspire Oxfordshire and others. More information about what we and partner agencies are doing to tackle rough sleeping in Oxford can be found on our [Street Homelessness and Rough Sleeping page](#).

Housing Register

The number of applicants applying to be included on the Housing Register is high, with many more people applying to us for housing each year than we can possibly help.

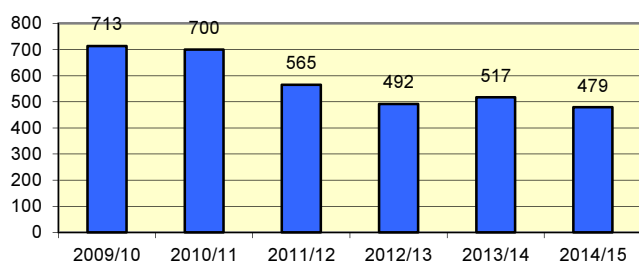
In December 2013, following extensive consultation, a new Allocations Scheme was introduced. Amongst many changes, most applicants are now required to have a local connection to Oxford in order to be on the housing register. In March 2015, there were 3,339 households on our housing register – 2,343 on the general register and 996 on the transfer register.

We received over 1,500 housing applications in 2014/15. We keep the housing register up to date by sending out re-registration letters to all applicants on the register once a year, and cancelling applications where we don't receive a response.

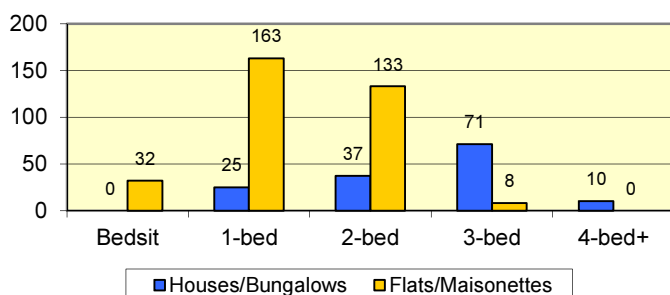
Allocations

Over the last year, 479 households were housed through the Choice-Based Lettings scheme and allocated new tenancies in Oxford by the Council and our partner Housing Associations. We allocated 346 council homes and 133 housing association homes. 70% of the households were allocated flats or maisonettes and 30% were allocated houses. Just over half of the households housed were families; 164 were allocated two-bedroom properties, 79 three-bedroom properties, 7 four-bedroom properties and 3 were allocated five-bedroom properties.

Number of properties allocated



Properties allocated in 2014/15: Breakdown Houses - Flats



Over the past year, we assisted 158 new Council tenants by furnishing their new homes to help them settle in. The cost of this service is recovered through additional rental charges for the following five years on those properties furnished.

The Council helped to make 57 more properties available to let to families in need, by assisting existing “under-occupying” tenants in two, three and four-bedroom properties to move and downsize to smaller more suitable properties through the Removal Incentive Scheme. The empty properties were then allocated to families in housing need.

Each year, the Council agrees lettings targets to help prioritise accommodation across the different housing lists. For example, we now aim to allocate 50% of all two bed property to the General Housing register, with the remaining property allocations split between the homeless and transfer lists.

New Affordable Homes

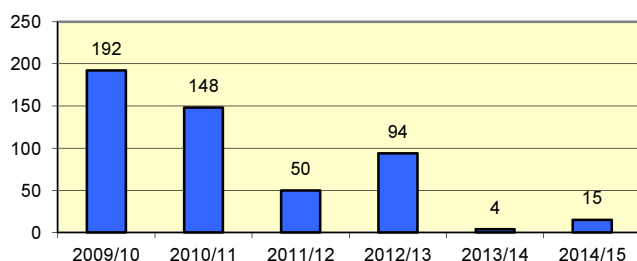
The delivery of affordable housing remains at low levels but the volume of the programme is being built up in line with Corporate housing targets. Completions in 2014/15 were 15 units, including the first units of the Council’s current building programme which will provide a total of 113 units for rent by the end of August 2015. Housing Association developments are expected to add another 50 rented units by the end of the year.

The development programme over the next three years will be shaped by the new Housing Strategy which has objectives to increase the supply of new affordable housing; improve access to housing that is already available; and to support the growth of a balanced housing market which underpins the plans for economic growth in the City.

Infrastructure work has started on the Barton Park scheme and residential construction will begin in Autumn 2016. Further opportunities to develop on Council owned land will be investigated and through working with housing associations and other partners, the aim is to deliver between 300-400 new dwellings by 2018.

Supporting the way the overall housing market operates will be through a combination of measures to get more effective delivery, to improve private rented sector provision where growth has been most marked and by bringing forward strategic sites such as Northern Gateway and Oxpens and major regeneration schemes such as the Blackbird Leys central area project.

New affordable homes



Empty Properties

Since April 2014, empty dwellings now fall under 5 categories, for Council Tax purposes: Short term empty (under 6 months), Long term empty (over 6 months), Long term empty premium (over 2 years), homes that are owned by a deceased person and Second Homes. The category, 'Long term empty premium' are now charged an additional 50% Council Tax.

The Council has a target of bringing 14 or more such properties back into use. We seek to achieve this by encouraging owners to act, and we have consistently exceeded the target. There are usually a complex range of reasons for a dwelling to be unoccupied. On occasions the Council takes formal action to ensure a property is brought back into use, and this may be initially by getting owners to improve the appearance or to secure a property. In 2014/15, the Council has served 7 formal notices on owners of empty properties. In October 2013, the Council agreed to move to compulsorily purchase a long term empty dwelling. In support of this and other possible compulsory purchases a budget of £750,000 has been set aside.

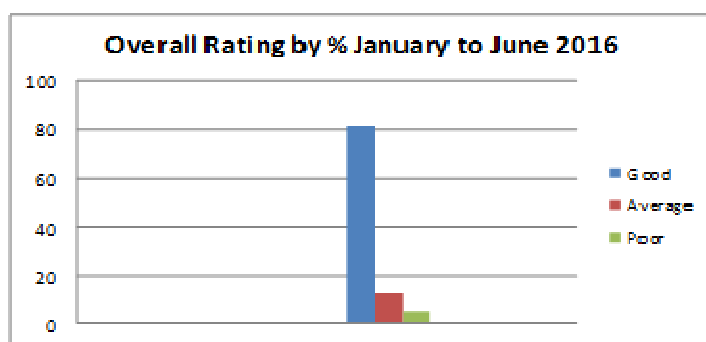
In partnership with Council Tax, unoccupied properties are identified and written to by means of a mailshot twice a year. Information received as a result of the mailshot is used to update records. The direct effect of the mailshot is the ability to have correct data on properties held by Council Tax, a truer picture of how many empty homes we have, and regular income as a result of the New Homes Bonus. In 2014/15, 93 properties have been occupied following this initiative.

Number of empty dwellings and second Homes in May 2015

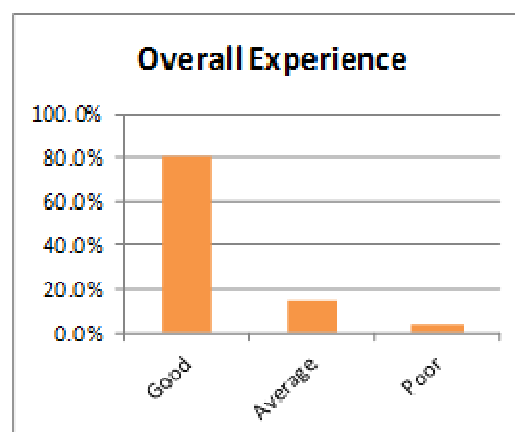
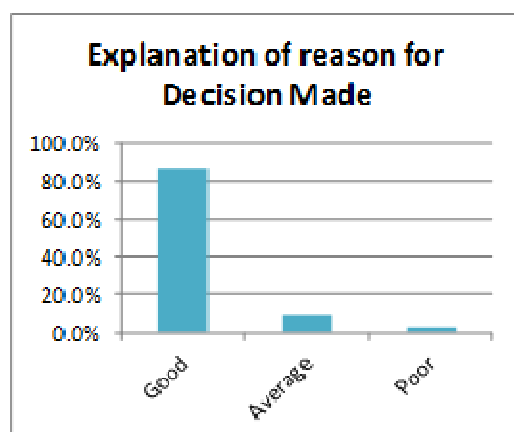
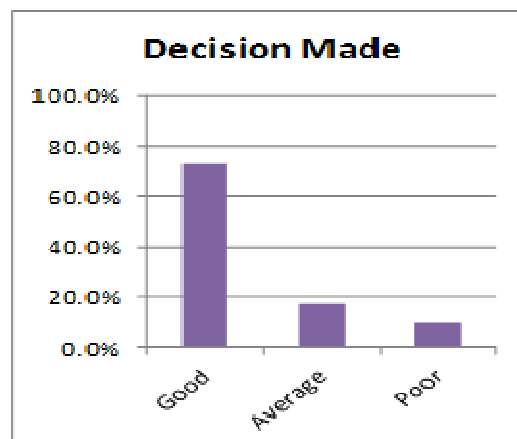
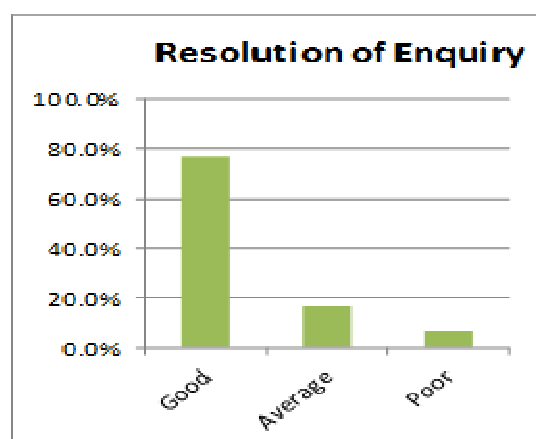
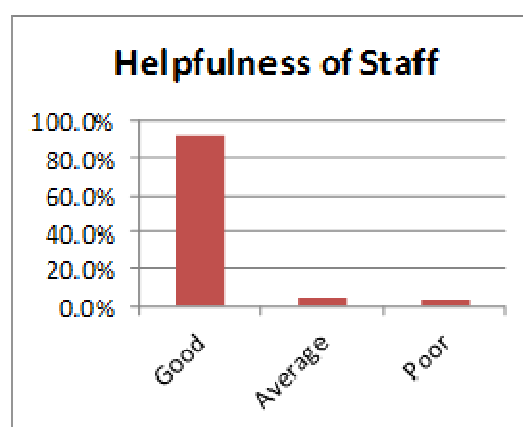
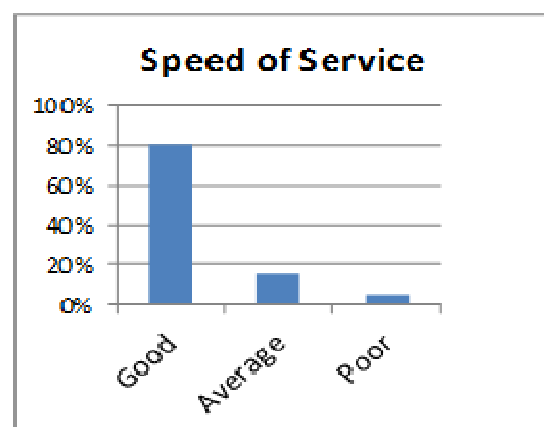
Category	Number
Long Term Empty Premium	72
Long Term Empty	164
Short Term Empty	485
Properties empty following death	204
Second Homes	762

Customer Feedback

Since January 2015, customers using the Housing Needs service have been asked to complete a short customer satisfaction survey. Since the survey was introduced over 200 people have completed the cards with 82% of these seeing an officer in St Aldate's Chambers and the rest during home visits. The results have been good, with many customers also taking the opportunity of personally complimenting the officer that dealt with them. All aspects of the service were rated as 'Good' over 80% of the time during the period January to June. The best rating was for Helpfulness of Staff which has been rated as 'Good' 91.9% of the time and is reflected in the additional comments received each month.



Ratings by Criteria:



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Appendix 4: Homelessness Strategy 2013-18 Mid-Point Review

Feedback from the stakeholder group meeting on 8 July 2015.

Strategic Objective One: Preventing and responding to homelessness

- Council to effectively respond to changes in legislation/funding, making clear to partner organisations what funding is available, or supporting services affected by funding cuts e.g. it is difficult for service providers to tender for services not knowing what funding is available from Local Authorities, Government, public and charitable sector organisations.
- Work more in partnership - pool funding and other resources where possible. Work better with County Council and other Oxfordshire districts to joint commission and provide services.
- Consider how any proposed DCLG cuts will impact on preventing homelessness and improving the number of customers able to access adult education and training.
- Proactively explore options to understand and deal with the impact of Government budget announcements and policy changes.
- Communication – Oxford City Council to continue and improve communications with internal and external departments and the voluntary sector in relation to delivering objectives to tackle and prevent homelessness.
- Tenancy placements outside the City –Oxford City Council needs to address the supply of additional homes/accommodation in areas where there are networks of support and facilities.
- Could the Council act as a landlord/letting and managing agent for private landlords so as to encourage more private sector landlords to rent at more affordable rents to customers in need of housing?
- Publicise Homechoice to attract more landlords. Continue to maximise the role of Homechoice in preventing and reducing homelessness.
- Oxford City Council should consider acting as guarantor for eligible clients – more private landlords are requiring rent guarantors.
- The Council could make a ‘call for landlords’ to encourage more property owners to rent to customers who may require lower level rents, Housing Benefit and other support - e.g. faith groups and philanthropic landlords.
- Progress against the Housing Strategy Action Plan – milestones completed but update on these required. Terminology needs to be clear and relevant.
- Consultation –customers need to be consulted with more about what help they need individually with finding and sustaining independent accommodation. Also, customers’ expectations need to be managed in relation to their housing circumstances.

- The Council should take a 'caseworker approach' to service provision.
- Explore community bank models –this may help with the implementation of Universal Credit.
- How do individuals get into a position where they can move out of benefits? Promote the 'Living Wage'. How can OCC influence other employers to adopt this?

Strategic Objective Two: Preventing and responding to rough sleeping

- The Council should be mindful of changes in terminology and new pathways that are being developed to deliver homelessness services – the strategy action plan can be updated to include new terminology.
- The Council should continue to work in partnership with other service providers and agencies in relation to pathways for people in need of specialist accommodation e.g. those with complex needs or long-term entrenched rough sleepers.
- The Council should continue to work in partnership to address the impact of Welfare Reform in order to help prevent homelessness and rough sleeping - work in partnership to provide training or workshops and consider impact of loss of income.
- The Council should continue to work in partnership to respond to the increase in rough sleeping - look into other funding sources to continue the support and good work of voluntary and support agencies - increase the number of support workers.
- Volunteering – work in partnership to promote volunteering and support funding for voluntary sector.
- Update and review actions on anti-begging campaigns (e.g. 'Your Kindness Can Kill' campaign) – Communications are needed to help people understand why homelessness occurs, what help is already available and what help people can give 'effectively'. Particularly work with student groups and look at how partnership working can help to increase charitable donations or improve understanding ('myth busting') around costs of and access to shelters.
- Housing First –there is a pilot project for entrenched rough sleepers to help them into self-contained 1-bed properties with very intensive support from Julian Housing. However, consideration needs to be given in relation to the assistance available for people who are ready to move on, where they have very specific needs and requirements.
- There is a need to consider providing a range of accommodation across the City e.g. hostels, shared homes and self-contained homes.
- Complex needs, substance misuse and mental health – Partnership working is really important between the Council and service providers to ensure a link with existing services who can provide specialist and therapeutically involved support to meet a wide range of customer needs.

- Severe weather emergency protocol –The Council will need to ensure that it is able (on-going) to meet the protocol which is implemented when severe cold weather is below 0 degrees Celsius for 3 nights or more.

Strategic Objective Three: Developing partnerships and communications

- Some of the issues raised in Strategic Objectives 2 and 3 above are relevant to developing partnerships and communications.
- The Council and its partners should consult with clients on what help they need to prevent homelessness - agree action plans, support and advice provided, join up with the County Council on communications (Supporting People User Group).
- Partnership working could be improved to access funding collectively and improve access to the services provided by support providers.
- The Council should work in partnership to address the needs of ex-offenders e.g. 'through the gate' services. Link with support workers, County Council, Police and Probation Services and with other district councils. Current partnership work needs to be continued and strengthened, especially if there is a potential for other support or specialist services to be reduced.
- The Council should continue working with private landlords to promote good practice and to prevent homelessness. The Landlords Forum could be a way to communicate Welfare Reform changes and provide help or advice to private sector landlords.
- The County Council, City and district councils across Oxfordshire need to ensure conversations (and consultation) are undertaken with private landlords and Registered Providers, and support obtained from all funding partners, when considering commissioning or de-commissioning of support or accommodation services.

Strategic Objective Four: Deliver excellent homelessness services

- The Council and its partners need to provide specialist accommodation to meet a range of housing and support needs.
- Continued funding for support and accommodation services needs to be secured.
- The Council is in the process of undertaking the Gold Standard Challenge– this will help to identify any gaps or weaknesses in homelessness service delivery and the Peer support can also help with identifying any opportunities to improve.
- The Council should consider and work proactively to address and identify implications of Government budget announcements.
- The points raised in Strategic Objectives 1, 2 and 3 above are also relevant.

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To: City Executive Board
Council

Date: 30 July 2015
23 September 2015

Report of: Head of Housing & Property
Head of Financial Services

Title of Report: Homelessness Property Investment

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To seek approval to enter into an investment in a dedicated property fund.

Key decision: Yes

Executive lead member:

Councillor Scott Seamons, Board Member for Housing
Councillor Ed Turner, Board Member for Finance, Asset Management and Public Health

Policy Framework: Corporate Plan Priority –Meeting Housing Needs

Recommendation(s): That the City Executive Board:

1. Grantsproject approval for the 'Real Lettings' initiative as set out in this report to enable the Council to enter into agreements with Resonance and St Mungo's Broadway.
2. Delegatesauthority to the Head of Housing and Property and the Head of Financial Services to enter into contractualagreementsonce these have been finalised and agreed by the Head of Law and Governance.
3. Delegatesauthority to the Head of Financial Services to publish a Voluntary Ex-ante Transparency (VEAT) Notice publishing the Council's intention to enter into such a contract

4. Recommend that Council include this type of investment in its Treasury Management Strategy as part of non-specified investments and amend the MRP policy in line with the principles outlined in this report.
5. Recommend that Council approve the £2.197 million balance on the Homelessness Property Acquisitions capital scheme be transferred to this investment.
6. Recommend that Council approve a supplementary estimate of £2.803m; financed from internal borrowing, as a revision to the Council's Capital Programme.

Appendices

Appendix A—Limited Partnership Structure

Appendix B—Cashflows and Agreements Flow

Appendix C—Risk Register

Appendix D—Equalities Impact Assessment

Appendix E—Support Provided from St Mungo's Broadway

Background

1. Local housing authorities have a statutory duty to ensure households that are believed to be homeless, eligible for assistance and in priority need (primarily if the household is vulnerable or has dependents) are provided with interim accommodation. Following investigations, the Council may accept that it has a statutory duty to find suitable permanent accommodation for that household. Temporary Accommodation is the accommodation provided by the Council on either an interim basis or, where it has accepted a statutory homeless duty, for the period until it discharges that duty (usually through an offer of suitable housing).
2. Best practice, is to try to prevent statutory homeless applications and acceptances, by taking action as soon as possible to either prevent homelessness (by keeping the household in their current accommodation) or to alleviate it by finding alternative suitable accommodation and making it available.
3. Oxford has traditionally had a disproportionately large 'homeless' population compared to the size of the city. There are a number of factors for this:
 - the high cost of housing;
 - low average wages;
 - low educational attainment from many school leavers;
 - the perceived affluence of the city;
 - the thriving local economy;
 - Oxford's proximity to London; and
 - a relatively young and transient population.

However, the ability of Oxford to respond to the pressure for accommodation is severely limited. The City has limited capacity for residential growth and a significant proportion of the housing stock (28%) is privately rented, compared to 17% nationally.

4. The mismatch between supply and demand is even more pronounced in relation to affordable housing. Average house prices in the City are high. Oxford was recently designated the least affordable city in the UK (Centre for Cities Outlook 2013) based on house price and rental affordability. The ratio of lower quartile house price to lower quartile earnings in Oxford is 10.20, compared to England's of 6.45 (Source: DCLG Live table 576, 2013).
5. To date, increasing demands for temporary accommodation have been managed through a number of different means, (see paragraphs 9 and 10). Although these have contained the pressure so far, demand remains. Hence the Council needs to take further action to mitigate against future pressure on its revenue budget.
6. There has been a sustained pressure on the Private Rented Sector (PRS) in the city for some years as landlords are able to select tenants not in receipt of benefit over those who are in receipt of benefits, particularly those in receipt of housing benefit or those with poor or non-established tenancy histories. The result is that homeless clients do not have access to this accommodation. The Council is also unable to lease new properties from private landlords, under its Private Sector Lease (PSL) scheme, and some existing properties have been lost due to landlords seeking to secure higher market rents.
7. A summary of monthly rents recorded between 1 Apr 2014 to 31 Mar 2015 by administrative area for England, Valuation Office Agency are as follows:

2 Bedrooms					
Area	Count of rents	Average	Lower quartile	Median	Upper quartile
ENGLAND	200,710	714	495	595	775
SOUTH EAST	30,170	820	675	780	900
Oxfordshire	2,123	921	780	865	1,000
Oxford	728	1,091	925	1,050	1,200

3 Bedrooms					
Area	Count of rents	Average	Lower quartile	Median	Upper quartile
ENGLAND	122,021	812	550	675	875
SOUTH EAST	17,502	998	795	925	1,150
Oxfordshire	1,220	1,145	925	1,095	1,295
Oxford	344	1,346	1,150	1,300	1,483

These compare to the Local Housing Allowance Rates: -

Local Housing Allowance Rates from April 2015		
Bedrooms	Weekly	Monthly
2 Bedrooms	192.48	834.08
3 Bedrooms	230.14	997.27

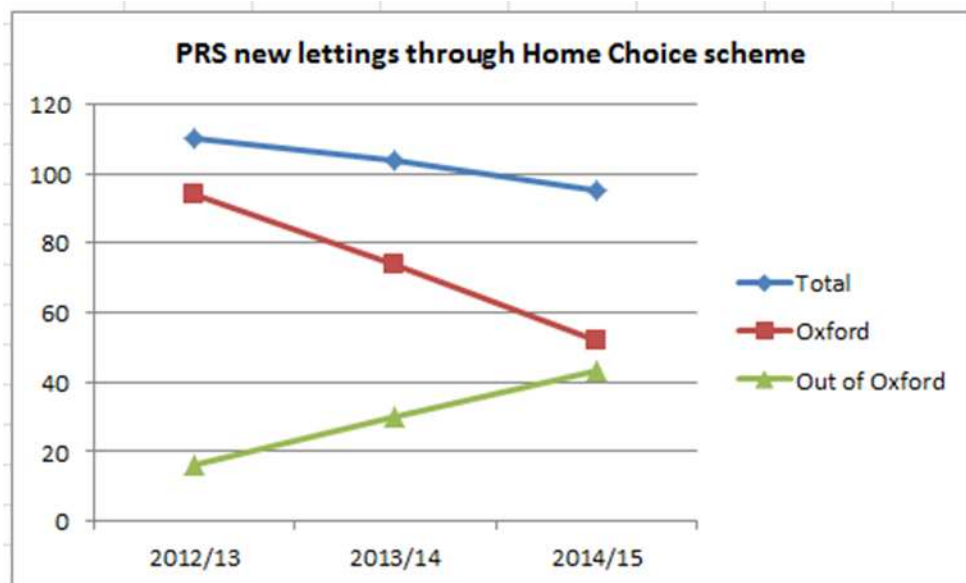
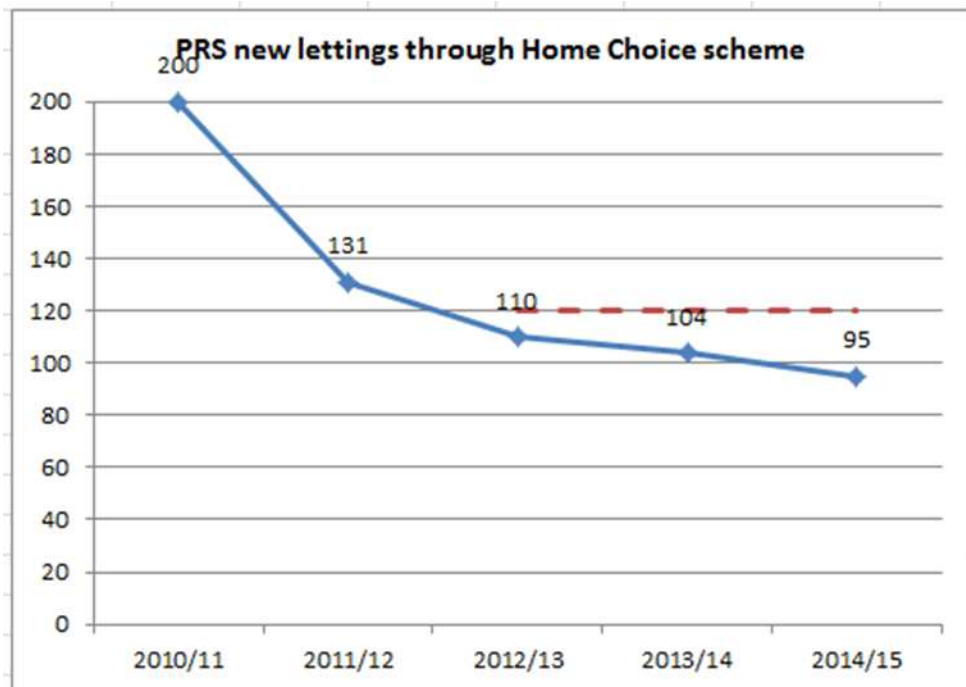
As can be seen even the cheapest properties attract higher rents than LHA rates, inevitably causing affordability issues for people on lower incomes.

8. A summary of clients supported through homelessness as at the 31st May 15 is:
- 938 clients in the PRS supported with a Home Choice deposit or bond
 - 182 clients pending referral to the Home Choice scheme – all being households we may have a statutory homeless duty to
 - 113 households in Temporary Accommodation - to whom we have accepted a statutory homeless duty to 77
 - 254 bed spaces in the adult homeless pathway (running at close to 100% occupancy rate)

Increasing Demands and Pressures on the Service

9. The significant pressures on the service arise from: -
- Lack of access to local Private Rented Sector move-on accommodation
 - Clients with very high and or, complex needs (i.e. mental ill health; alcohol or substance misuse), for whom shared accommodation is often inaccessible and unworkable
 - Clients requiring substantial resettlement support making out-of-area moves challenging
 - The impact of budget cuts in other parts of the public sector which affect support, e.g. new County contracts – currently out to tender and due to start in February 2016 –will reduce the Adult Homeless Pathway from 2 years to 9 months Rising rough sleeper numbers with local connection and a lack of access to No Second Night Out (NSNO) beds
 - Welfare reforms at the national level will increase financial pressures on households with limited means and result in more pressures on the homelessness service.
 - More clients being exempted from out-of-area moves (beyond Oxon) due to their having secured in excess of 16 hours local employment

10. The following graphs and table show the declining number of Home Choice new starts over the past five years, and the increasing reliance on out of area properties to compensate for the decline in access to suitable accommodation at sustainable rents in Oxford.



Actions Underway

11. The Council is working intensively with partners and stakeholders to try to address the situation. We invest significant funds locally to deliver services and work to promote best practice and ensure co-ordination of services across the sector. Recent activity has included:

Singles

- Launched a new 'sit-up' service in O'Hanlon House to provide seats/roll mats for more rough sleepers – to help bring them off the streets
- Funding a pilot with the Mayday Trust to test a new model of support for adults
- Funding a pilot with a number of Oxford Churches to develop an ethical landlord model
- The Housing First pilot to provide housing and intensive support to the most entrenched rough sleepers
- Met with providers to identify key gaps and 'brainstorm' barriers and ideas to overcome these, including out of area moves
- Working with the County, Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group and others to secure the best outcomes from the County cuts – including maintaining local hostel bed spaces
- Facilitating the establishment of a specialist accommodation service for clients with complex needs
- Setting-up a personalisation budget with Broadway to help fund PRS deposits for Oxford clients without a Local Connection and with no connection with another district

Families

- Match-funding the Council's Welfare Reform team
- Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) top up
- Funding the Sanctuary Scheme to secure the homes and prevent the homelessness of households experiencing violence or anti-social behaviour, or threats thereof
- Funding a new wrap-around Tenancy Ready Scheme – to support the Crisis provision and deliver the course in peoples own homes or in community locations as well as in the Crisis Skylight Centre
- Funding an additional officer to secure property out-of-area and help introduce and settle families into those locations

Homelessness Provision

12. Temporary accommodation is secured through:

- HRA accommodation
This is short term provision due to legislation, with up to 48 households being housed in two blocks currently earmarked for future redevelopment.
- General Fund Accommodation
General Fund accommodation is currently limited to 5 properties and without substantial capital investment; the amount of provision will not change. The 5 properties were funded from the £3.5 million Homelessness Property Acquisitions capital scheme of which there is £2.197 million budget remaining.
- Private Sector Landlords (PSL)
The PSL scheme (including staff costs) costs approx. £620k per annum.
- Bed and Breakfast

This is the most expensive form of accommodation with costs between £350 and £500 per week depending on household size. The net indicative costs for a smaller household are £265 per week or £13,780 per annum. Larger households would need at least two rooms which would double the cost. As other types of accommodation become less available and without an alternative solution the Council is likely to have to rely more on B&B accommodation.

Current Budget Position

13. The budget for Temporary Accommodation, Homelessness, and Housing Choice was £3.513 million in 2014/15. However, the budget overspent and had to utilise £265k of earmarked reserves in the year. The variance was largely due to sustaining existing clients in B&B and Home Choice accommodation.
14. The 2015/16 budget is £3.409 million (which takes into account additional efficiencies required for 2015/16). Assuming the same level of expenditure as 2014/15, the budget will be overspent by £369k at year end.
15. The homelessness reserves which can be used to finance one-off shortfalls in budget is £1 million. Assuming the same levels of demand, this reserve will be fully used in around 2.5 years' time. However, there may also be additional calls on reserves to deal with the consequences of cuts in hostel accommodation by the County Council.

Possible Solutions

16. Officers have been exploring possible solutions to relieve pressure on temporary accommodation since 2011. This has included developing options in partnership with a company called Orchard and Shipman, although suitable funding arrangements could not be agreed. In September 2013, the City Executive Board approved a model to directly procure additional temporary accommodation units.
17. Most recently the Council has been in discussion with Real Lettings – comprising Resonance (a Fund Management Company) and St Mungo's Broadway (a Homelessness Charity). The Real Lettings model uses a property fund to lever in additional funding to that provided by the Council, to procure accommodation that can be used to house homeless households in the PRS.
18. Until recently the fund has only been available to authorities in the Greater London area. In February of this year, Resonance put forward a proposal for an out of London fund. Most aspects of the fund are firmed up; however the service provision aspects are subject to a detailed negotiation to balance service provision and risk against costs.
19. Investment in this property fund is compared against two other options: -
 - Invest in a more general property fund and
 - Purchase properties direct and manage in-house

The relative costs of each are considered over a 10year period to allow for a phased introduction and the potential extension of Option 3 by 2 years.

Options

Option 1 – Invest in General Property Fund

20. As outlined at paragraphs 9 and 10, the future demands on the homelessness service and the associated financial pressures will only increase. If the Council does nothing to alleviate the service issues, the current trends suggest that pressures on temporary accommodation are likely to grow further, with consequential increased budget pressures.
21. If the Council were to invest £5 million in a normal property fund, it would expect to receive an annual return of around 6% or £300kper annum plus capital appreciation (assumed at 2% per annum) giving an overall average rate of return of 8%.
22. If the demands on the service increase, without additional property provision, the impact will be increased use of B&B accommodation. For 50 units this would cost in the region of an additional £800k a year which is not budgeted for.

Option 2 – Purchase properties direct and manage in-house

23. The Council has purchased 5 properties within the General Fund. The properties are managed within the General Fund and are rented out at Temporary Accommodation rates. This is the maximum allowed under the Housing Benefit subsidy cap – equating to 90% of the Jan 2011 LHA rate plus £60 per week. This is expected to change under the Universal Credit regime. Based on known and anticipated costs and income assuming a £5million investment and the provision of 28 properties, the financial impact is as follows: -

	Years		
	1 to 4	5 to 7	8 to 10
	£	£	£
"Cashflows"			
Net Rent	1,089,391	845,974	871,608
Running Costs	(394,613)	(351,571)	(364,380)
Investment interest lost	(225,273)	(196,152)	(164,385)
Capital cashflow	(5,000,000)	0	5,975,463
Net Cashflow	(4,530,495)	298,250	6,318,305
B&B "Saving"	1,588,001	1,276,330	1,354,451
Net "Cashflow" incl B&B	(2,942,494)	1,574,580	7,672,757
Cumulative "Cashflows"	(2,942,494)	(1,367,914)	6,304,843

24. The investment gives a return of 4.17% over 10 years excluding the reduction in bed and breakfast usage. The return is lower than that provided through a straight treasury investment because of the service delivery aspects of the arrangement. However, assuming that all tenancies reduced B&B usage, taking those savings into account the return is around 14.2% p/a.

Option 3 – Real Lettings Property Fund

25. This is a three way agreement between the Council, the property fund manager (Resonance), and the housing management provider (St Mungo's Broadway – a registered Housing Association) to provide additional temporary accommodation. A diagram illustrating the structure of the Limited Partnership is shown in Appendix A and a diagram illustrating cashflows and agreements is attached at Appendix B.
26. Resonance will operate a Property Fund under a Fund Management Agreement comprised of a number of investors including councils. The investors become Limited Partners to the Limited Partnership.
27. The property fund will purchase properties of the type required by St Mungo's Broadway based on a Framework Agreement. St Mungo's Broadway then operate the properties and manage the tenancies. Rental income is passed to the Property Fund by St Mungo's Broadway less 17½% which is retained by St Mungo's Broadway to cover their operating costs.
28. The Council will agree a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with St Mungo's Broadway. This will define the terms of St Mungo's Broadway's service. The SLA allows for the mix of properties to be influenced by the Council,

for the properties acquired to be within a specified geographic area, and for the Council to have nomination rights to them. The Council would be required to pay a nominations fee to St Mungo's Broadway which includes indemnity against some of the risks to St Mungo's Broadway from increased voids due to lack of nominations and excessive loss of rent. The precise arrangement is still open to negotiation, however the default is that the Council will pay a £3k fee for each nomination to mitigate the risk to St Mungo's Broadway; this is the assumption used to assess the financial impact to the Council.

The Fund

29. The Council would commit £5million over an initial seven year term to purchase units within the Fund, this would be extendable for up to two years by agreement.
30. The Fund has already attracted some in-principle match funding from Big Society Capital of up to £15m. The match funding is only available to the first three councils investing in the Fund. There would therefore be additional benefit to Oxford from being an early investor in the scheme. Initially there will be no gearing within the Fund with all acquisitions funded solely with equity. The commitment will be drawn down over an initial 2 to 3 year period. Tenancies taking place in years 3-7.
31. The Fund has a net target return of 5% per annum achieved through a combination of rental income and capital appreciation although this is not guaranteed. Any capital appreciation will likely be realised in the final two years of the Fund, given that the structure of the Fund is based on 5 year rental agreement periods on the investment properties. After the initial seven year term options include:
 - Extension of Fund by up to 2 year periods assuming agreement
 - Phased sale of properties over last 2 years of Fund
 - Potential sale to a follow on Fund, institutional investor or social landlords
32. In summary:
 - Approximately 50 properties would be acquired (subject to attracting match funding availability) in the Oxford locality, with acquisitions across the Oxford Broad Rental Market Area
 - The property portfolio would be split between one and two bed flats on a ratio of 10%/90% to 30%/70%
 - Properties will meet or exceed the Decent Homes Standard and will be let on Assured Shorthold Tenancies
 - The Council will seek to nominate persons ready to move-on from the Adult Homeless Pathway into the one bed homes. Two bed homes will be used to prevent the homelessness of households the Council is likely to otherwise have a statutory homeless duty to, usually through a Private Rented Sector Offer (PRSO) to households that it has accepted a duty to and is unable to place out of area, in order to discharge that duty, and reduce pressure on temporary accommodation

- Rental payments will be set at the Local Housing Allowance rates, with no requirement for deposits, bonds, or rent in advance payments
- Maintenance and risk on voids are the responsibility of St Mungo's Broadway under lease terms and conditions.
- St Mungo's Broadway will engage with clients with a view to progressing their independence, usually through gaining employment, and through the promotion of savings schemes. Tenants will be expected to move on from the tenancy into independent private rented accommodation in the third year of their tenancy, thus creating an opportunity for another nomination into the property. For more details of the service provided by St Mungo's Broadway, please see Appendix E.

Scheme History

33. Resonance and St Mungo's Broadway have been operating a similar scheme for London authorities since early 2013. ThatFund is now valued at £46.5 million a major investor being the London Borough of Croydon who has invested in a number of tranches. Whilst it is early days, the first Social Impact report showed 100% tenancy sustainment to date. The anticipated returns on the outside London scheme have been informed by the experience of the London scheme.

At the end of the Agreement

34. The current intention is that at the end of the investment period, including the 2 year extension, if the Council were minded to seek that, the Council would liquidate its investment. This approach means (subject to agreement with the Council's auditors) that no MRP needs to be charged to revenue for the principle invested.
35. Other options could include:
 - All parties want to close the fund and liquidate assets (or have to, because the options below cannot be achieved) – in which case the properties will be sold.
 - Parties want to roll-on into another 7 year fund as is
 - Some parties want to roll-on, but not all in which case Resonance will seek to attract additional replacement investors into the scheme. The London Fund has beaten its own investment targets for securing additional investors already
 - Either of these would require a different approach to MRP.
36. To liquidate the asset clearly there would need to be a decant plan for residual tenants to alternative property and tenancies would need to be managed down over a period of time beforehand.
37. Option three gives an average 1% return (based on the 5% investment return) including the £3k nomination fee but excluding the reduction in bed and breakfast usage. The return is lower than option one because of the service delivery aspects of the arrangement. Assuming that all tenancies reduced B&B usage the return is around 14.9% p/a.

	Years		
	1 to 4	5 to 7	8 to 10
	£	£	£
"Cashflows"			
Capital cashflows	(5,000,000)	0	5,692,631
Net Interest	181,686	124,814	62,407
Nominations	(228,000)	(225,000)	(75,000)
Net Cashflow	(5,046,314)	(100,186)	5,680,038
B&B "Saving"	1,821,278	2,279,160	1,197,199
Net "Cashflow" incl B&B	(3,225,036)	2,178,974	6,877,237
Cumulative "Cashflows"	(3,225,036)	(1,046,062)	5,831,175

Conclusion

38. Of the three options, Option 3 gives the greatest service benefit with the provision of 50 units compared to none for Option 1 and 28 for Option 2. In addition to this, the clients will benefit from close management and support from St Mungo's Broadway.
39. Ignoring the reduction in Bed and Breakfast usage, financially Option 1 gives the best return at 8% per annum, including an assumed capital appreciation of 2% per annum on average. Option 2 gives an average return of 4.2% and Option 3 an average return of 1.0%. Including the reduction in Bed and Breakfast usage, Option 3 becomes marginally the best option at 14.86%, followed by Option 2 at 14.19% and Option 1 at 8%.
40. It is therefore recommended that option 3 is pursued.

Legal Issues

Statutory Powers

41. Option 3 has both service aspect and investment aspects and the Council could, in theory choose either. Both would be capital expenditure and the effect on the Council through the accounting treatment has a similar effect. The service element costs £3k per nomination which would cost an average of £40k per year over the life of the scheme and which is therefore incidental to the main investment. The investment element is £5 million which would be invested in this specific property fund. This is therefore on balance a treasury management investment.
42. The Local Government Act 2003, section 12, provides a local authority with the power to invest for "any purpose relevant to its functions under

any enactment, or for the purposes of the prudent management of its financial affairs". The subsequent guidance issued by the DCLG forms part of the statutory guidance, which Local Authorities must have regard to.

43. There are certain conditions attached to the use of the investment power. Section 15 of the 2003 Act requires an authority to have regard to Investment Guidance issued by the Secretary of State, and the Investment Guidance re-issued in 2010 specifies that each authority should prepare an investment strategy, and that this strategy should set out policies for the prudent management of its investments, giving priority to the security of those investments and, secondly, their liquidity, before focusing on yield.
44. The Authority would be using its investment powers to enter into these agreements and through purchasing units within the Fund would be purchasing share capital in a body corporate which would constitute capital expenditure as per s25(d) of The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003.
45. The Fund is an Unregulated Collective Investment Scheme for the purpose of Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 which means that it is not afforded FSA protection.

Procurement

46. This is not caught by the Public Procurement Regulations as it is a Treasury Investment. The service aspects of the agreement are entirely ancillary to these purposes. It is therefore proposed that the Council should publish a VEAT (Voluntary Ex-Ante Transparency) Notice (a Voluntary Notice stating the Council's intention to enter into contract and our belief that it is exempt in OJEU (Official Journal of the European union). This notice runs for 10 days and if it is not challenged within that period, then any subsequent challenge could only be brought in damages, rather than on the basis that the agreements should be made void.

Legal Agreements

47. The legal agreements have been received in draft form and will be fully reviewed by the legal department before they are entered into.

Financial Issues

48. Whether the money advanced to the Fund is undertaken through reliance on investment powers, or statutory powers driven by service objectives, it would be deemed capital expenditure. It would be an Unregulated Collective Investment Scheme for the purpose of Financial Services and Markets Act 2000. Where the Council incurs capital expenditure funded by borrowing, it needs to consider whether a Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) is necessary to pay for the capital cost incurred and if so, how much.

49. An authority is required to make a “prudent provision” in respect of its MRP charge, and to arrange for its debt liability to be repaid over a similar period to that which the asset associated with the capital expenditure provides benefits such that the majority of new capital expenditure “financed by borrowing” is subject to a charge which reflects its estimated useful life. The guidance enables local circumstances and discretion to be taken into account.
50. In the case of the investment proposed under option three, the Head of Financial Services considers that there is no requirement to make an MRP over the term of the investment because the capital receipt would be used to repay the debt liability at the end of the investment period. This approach needs to be agreed with the Council’s auditors.
51. Should the value of the capital investment reduce and not be sufficient to repay the entirety of the “borrowing”; an MRP charge would need to be made to make up the shortfall.

Accounting Treatment

52. As investment powers will be used to purchase units in the Fund they will be recognised as a long term investment. Initial distributions will be recorded as investment income in the Income & Expenditure account and a reserve will be used throughout the life of the Fund to manage any fluctuations in the valuation of the investment until a capital gain or loss is realised on disposal of the properties.
53. If CEB approves the investment of £5 million into a property fund to support option 3, a capital supplementary estimate of an £2.803 million would be required. The Council already has £2.197 million remaining in the Capital Programme for homeless property provision.
54. The Council is not legally able to borrow to invest. This transaction would have to be funded from available internal cash balances. To ensure that this is transparent, resources to the value of the investment sum will be held in an earmarked reserve which will mitigate against risk of revenue impacts arising from any loss in capital value.

Environmental Impact

55. There are no issues arising directly from this report.

Risks

56. Appendix C lists the risk analysis relating to this activity and proposal

Equalities Impact

57. There is a positive impact around securing suitable and affordable accommodation locally for vulnerable homeless households in high housing need. See the Equalities Impact Assessment at Appendix D.

Environmental Impact

58. There are no issues arising directly from this report.

Name and contact details of author:-

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Service Area / Department: Housing & Property

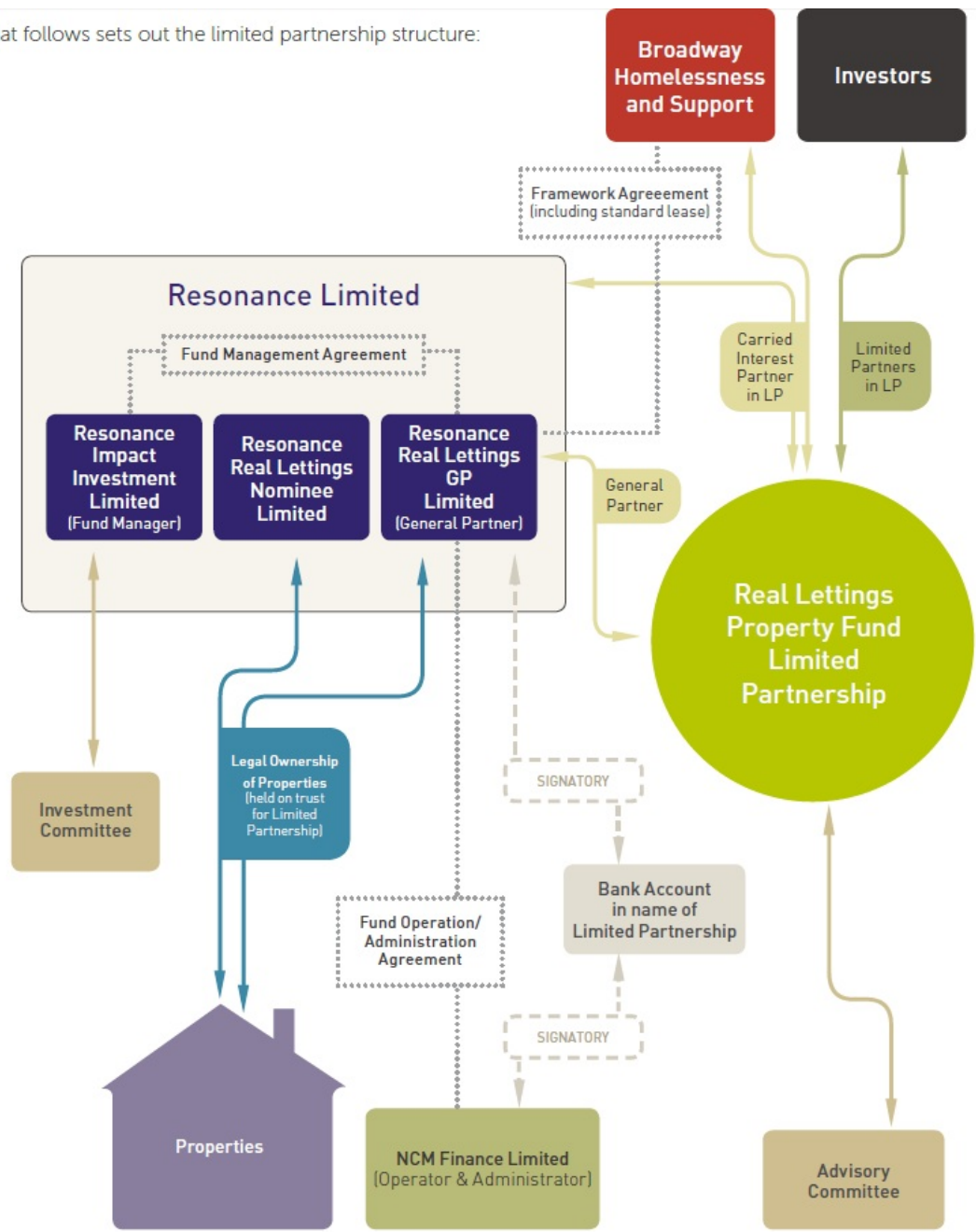
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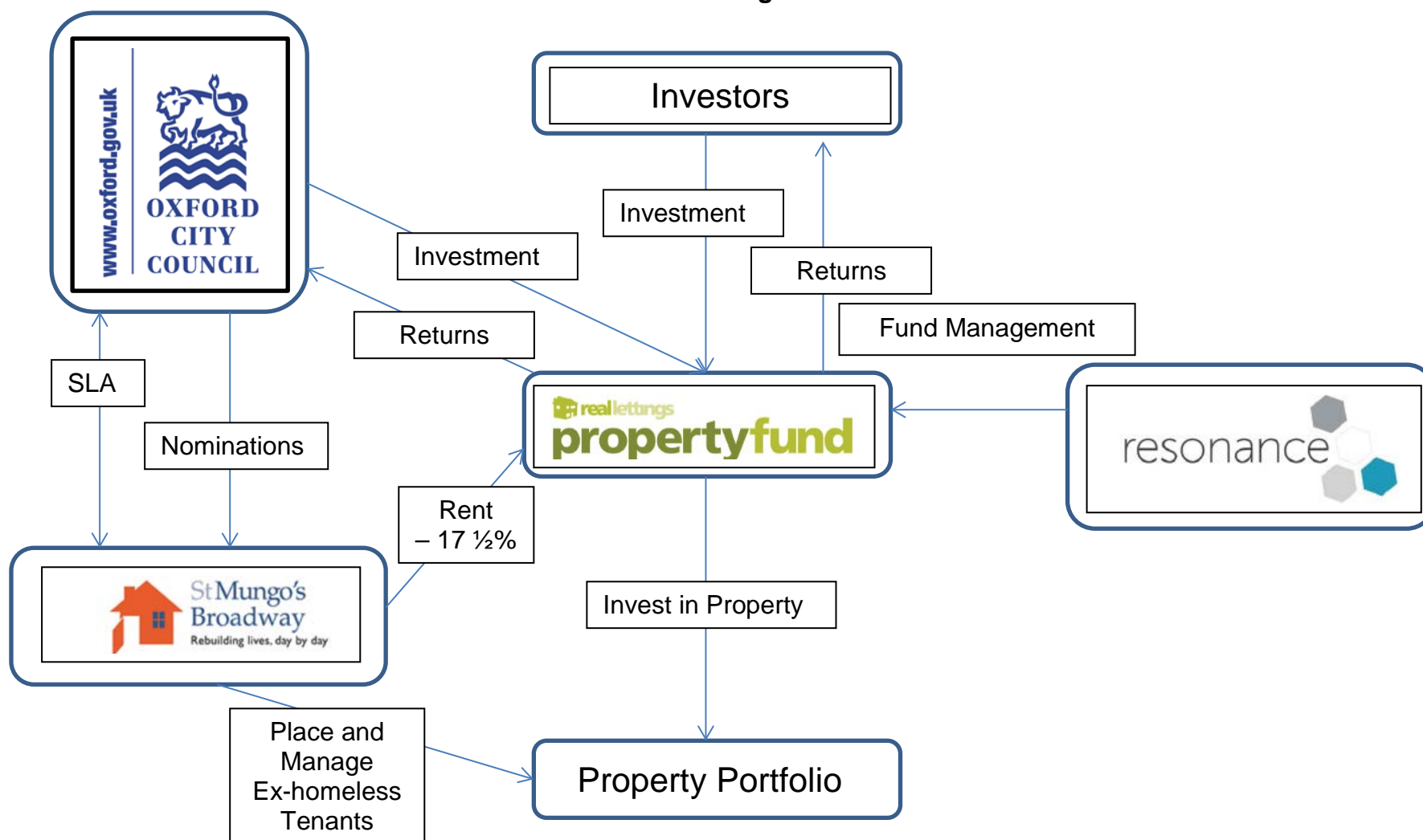
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The diagram that follows sets out the limited partnership structure:



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Cashflows and Agreements



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Risk Register

Appendix C

Homelessness Property Provision through the use of a property investment fund

Risk ID	Risk						Gross Risk		Current Risk		Residual Risk		Risk Mitigation	
	Risk Title	Opportunity/Threat	Risk Description	Risk Cause	Consequence	Date raised	I	P	I	P	I	P		
85	1	Investment return	Threat	Investment returns, although targeted, would not be guaranteed	Actual investment returns being lower than projected through adverse impacts such as loss of rental income	Less council funding	16-Jun-15	3	4	3	3	3	2	Regular monitoring reports will be assessed; fund managers can be held to account in relation to the fund performance; The London Fund has been operational since 2013 and has achieved an average net initial yield of 4.5%
	2	Liquidity	Threat	The Council must commit funds for a minimum of 7 years	Unforeseen circumstances lead to the Council requiring liquidation of its investment	Funds would not be available to support other requirements for the period of the agreement	16-Jun-15	4	4	4	3	3	2	The MTFS has assessed the risks of changes to external impacts on the Council's resources; The Council would have to try to sell its share in the fund, although the likelihood of being able to do so is small. Alternatively if the need is for capital resources, the Council could choose to take out external borrowing to pay for the new requirements
	3	Security	Threat	The Council loses its principal investment	Market conditions deteriorate such that the capital value of the investment is not maintained	Loss of investment and revenue implications arising from MRP	6-Jul-15	4	2	4	2	3	2	The Council will require regular updates on the performance of the fund including the capital value of its investment. Any reductions in value, should they occur, will not impact only on one year because the Council's MRP policy would allow for the cost to be spread over the life of the asset.
	4	Property Acquisition	Threat	The fund manager must find appropriate properties to deliver the service objectives and the projected yield from both an availability and selection perspective	Fluctuations in prices and market availability restrict the availability of suitable properties	Fund and service objectives are not met	16-Jun-15	5	4	4	3	3	3	Resonance have undertaken market analysis and have identified that there should be enough properties available that fulfil its criteria
	5	Capital Values - loss	Threat	The capital will not be protected	Economic climate	Properties reduce in value resulting in a loss of capital values	16-Jun-15	5	4	4	3	3	3	Property prices tend to rise over the medium to long term; the Council could decide to leave its investment in a follow-on fund until the market conditions improve
	6	Capital Values - MRP	Threat	The capital will not be protected	Economic climate	MRP will need to be payable leading to a charge on the revenue account	16-Jun-15	5	4	2	2	2	2	Resources to the value of the investment are held in a earmarked reserve which could then be use to mitigate the impact of the MRP charge

Risk ID	Risk						Gross Risk		Current Risk		Residual Risk		Risk Mitigation
	Risk Title	Opportunity/Threat	Risk Description	Risk Cause	Consequence	Date raised	I	P	I	P	I	P	
7	Long term property viability	Threat	Over time the properties are not fit for purpose	Changes in the type of clientele	The properties are no longer of the correct type to fulfil the needs of the service	16-Jun-15	3	3	3	3	2	3	Historical trends show that the main property requirement in this area is for 1 to 2 bedroom dwellings; this will be monitored to identify any emerging trends
8	Lettings Management	Threat	Properties and tenants are not managed as anticipated	Loss of staffing or other organisational changes reduces the ability of St Mungo's Broadway to manage the lettings part of the arrangement	The prevention and support outcomes are not achieved as envisaged	16-Jun-15	4	4	3	2	3	2	St Mungo's Broadway are a registered provider and as such are regulated by the Homes and Communities Agency; they are a large organisation and resources should be able to be diverted from other areas of the organisation to cover any short term issues; officers will monitor the position closely
9	Homelessness Demand	Threat	The demand to use these properties for homelessness purposes is not maintained	Presentations to the Council for homelessness support reduce	There is potential for loss to St Mungo's Broadway and the property fund leading to lower returns for the Council	16-Jun-15	4	4	4	2	2	2	The SLA will contain provisions that allow St Mungo's Broadway to utilise the property portfolio for other clients in the event of nominations from the Council reducing
10	Local Housing Allowance	Threat	Adverse changes to the Local Housing Allowance	Changes in welfare benefits impact adversely on the authority	The expected returns are not achieved	16-Jun-15	3	3	2	3	2	3	There have not been any changes to date in how the increases to the LHA are applied; the increases are already at CPI or 1% maximum which is below market rent increase. This will have been built into the financial models
11	Property disposal	Threat	Ability to exit the properties through a sale etc. at the full value of the investment at the end of the 7.5/9.5 years	The housing market changes and there is a reduction in the demand for properties	The expected capital returns will not be achieved and the fund may not be able to dispose of the properties to refund capital investments	16-Jun-15	4	4	4	2	3	2	Projections are that the demand for housing will increase over the medium term. Where something unforeseen occurs, the Council could choose to leave its investment in a follow-on fund until the market conditions improve
12	Property disposal	Threat	On liquidation the capital will not be available to be returned within the investment period	Property market slow	The capital is not available to be repaid in full at the end of the investment period; the full return is delayed whilst properties are disposed of	8-Jul-15	3	3	3	3	3	2	As the later stages of the fund are approached, Resonance would firm up on the exit strategy with investors (ie roll into another fund or phase disposal of assets) and the precise details and timing would be agreed with investors in order return capital at an agreed date; the Council will monitor progress as the time approaches

Appendix D: Equality Impact Assessment – CEB 30th July 2015

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 this proposal. The initiative recommended focuses on better meeting the needs of vulnerable homeless households through ensuring access to suitable and affordable private rented accommodation in the Oxford locality.

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

Persons approaching the authority as homelessness, or at risk of homelessness, will continue to be assisted under legislation, guidance, relevant case law, and best practice. Appropriate assessments will be undertaken for persons and their households that are eligible for assistance and where the authority has reason to believe they are homeless and in priority need. Consideration as to protected characteristics of customers will be considered within this process, and action taken to provide the most appropriate advice and assistance to that customers circumstances and needs.

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

No groups have been identified as being disadvantaged by this proposal, and it is expected to have a positive impact on many vulnerable homeless households.

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

No adverse impacts, relating to protected characteristics, have been identified.

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

This initiative will be monitored on a regular basis. Agreements and SLA will be formally monitored at least quarterly, and nominations will be reviewed monthly through operational monitoring and management arrangements.

Lead officer responsible for signing off the EqIA: Dave Scholes, Housing Strategy & Needs Manager. Date: June 2015

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Support Provided from St Mungo's Broadway

Real Lettings will be required to purchase self-contained properties that at least meet the Decent Homes standard. St Mungo's Broadway, a Registered Provider landlord (Housing Association) will manage these in accordance with best practice principles, with advice and guidance provided to tenants to enable tenancies to be sustained, and to assist tenants to move on into the wider private rented sector within three years. They will have a locally based housing management presence in Oxford.

St Mungo's Broadway (SMB) will engage with clients with a view to progressing their independence, usually through gaining employment, and through the promotion of savings schemes. Clients will be given a one year AST tenancy by St Mungo's Broadway (SMB) with the intention of renewing this for a further one year term. SMB have extensive experience of working with vulnerable clients, and proven success of moving many of them towards independence. This is the driving ethos of the organisation.

Clients will be given clear information and support prior to the start of the tenancy and throughout the first year, to ensure that they realise this is transitional accommodation, and that the aim is to help them move on after the two years. SMB view this as primarily being achieved through the clients securing work, and gaining confidence in themselves and in managing money and saving. A formal end of year one review will take place with each customer, leading into year two, which is seen as the key year for behavioural change.

The average length of stay in the London scheme is 2.5 years. If clients have not moved on by the end of the third year, SMB will be taking assertive action to more directly intervene with the client, and to secure possession of the property if they are not engaging and have exhausted all other options. Below are some high level conclusions against the 3 criteria measured from the second year of operation of the Real Lettings London Fund:

1. Improving housing opportunities - tenancy sustainment remains very strong (c 96% sustaining tenancy for over 6 months), offering evidence that those at risk of homelessness are capable of managing a household given the right context and support
2. Progressing towards work - the percentage of tenants in work and seeking work has remained constant even as the Fund has grown rapidly (38 in work / 7% training / 22% education)
3. Improving resilience against homelessness - majority (c 90%) of homes are kept in good / very good condition and majority of tenants are confident of meeting new people in the local area

The agreement between the Council and SMB will specify a number of responsibilities, including the following in relation to support:

Tenant Support Services

- Detailed assessment of the client's suitability for the PRS
- One point of contact for the Tenant for both assessment and resettlement
- Tenancy sign up (including explanation of rights and responsibilities)
- Tenancy set up (utilities, benefits, council tax, grant applications, furniture sourcing)
- Six months core resettlement support including 3 planned contact
- Referral to employment, training and education services

- In maintaining the properties, our staff pick up on un-reported issues
- Ongoing 'low level' support as and when required
- Signposting to external agencies where appropriate
- Monday – Friday Tenant helpline (with out of hours service)
- Encourage to access a peer support scheme as appropriate
- 12 monthly tenancy checks to ensure Tenant is still managing in tenancy/home
- Tight void/arrears management – Provision of support for Tenants in arrears

Outputs and Outcomes

- Tenancy sustainment
- Saving for a deposit
- Progress towards work
- Positive move on
- Showing signs of social integration
- Improved financial management
- Taking care of home
- Paying rent when on Universal credit
- Tenancy sustainment 12 months+
- Improved self-confidence and self esteem

The following extract from the Partnership Agreement with Resonance, also details some of the reporting measures around tenancy support, sustainment and move-on:

SCHEDULE 6

INVESTMENT OBJECTIVES⁷

1. INVESTING FOR SOCIAL IMPACT

The Fund has been structured in order to achieve significant social impact in the area of homelessness. It will achieve this by scaling up a proven effective model for transitioning formerly homeless people, or those at risk of homelessness, into successful private rented sector tenancies, with resulting improvements in housing options, progress towards work and re-integration into society, and greater resilience against reverting to homelessness. In addition, this will free up much needed hostel places to cope with rising numbers of rough sleepers.

The Fund will lease all properties acquired to the Lettings Carried Interest Partners for a minimum 5 year term. The lease terms will insulate the Fund from insurance and routine maintenance costs as well as the risk of tenant voids. The Lettings Carried Interest Partners will sub-let the properties to tenants at risk of homelessness on fixed short term tenancy agreements with rental in most cases coming from Local Housing Allowance. The Fund's relationship with the Lettings Carried Interest Partners is governed by the Framework Agreement.

2. IMPACT MEASUREMENT

The Fund will report annually to investors on its social impact using the measures shown in the table below.

Outcome sought	Measures	Definition/calculation	Why this measure?
Improving housing opportunities	Tenants have improved housing outcomes when they leave	Positive move-ons measured 3 months after tenants leave flat	Recovery – significant and lasting contribution to breaking the cycle of homelessness and helping people move on to a home of their own
	Tenants sustain their tenancies for more than 6 months	Percentage of people sustaining a tenancy for 6 months or more	
	Tenants save for a deposit so they can move into the private market	Percentage of people saved for one month's deposit	

Progressing towards work	Tenants show one or more signs of progression towards work	Percentage of tenants showing one or more of: training completed; work experience/work placement; completed sector based work academy, or other work skills developed; regular volunteering; use of childcare; starting a job	Inspiration and empowerment – having a stable home enables tenants to take positive steps towards work, reflected in gaining skills and contributing to social and economic life
Improving resilience against homelessness	Tenants showing signs of social integration	Percentage of tenants (re-)connecting with family or friends regularly and/or participating in clubs, sports, social groups, etc.	Recovery and bridge building – tenants make new social connections
	Improved financial management (non rent)	Extent to which tenants have and keep to a budget; bills are paid on time; regular saving (non deposit); absence of late payment; absence of disconnection	Recovery and empowerment – tenants are in control of their finances and are better able to plan
	Taking care of their home	Percentage of tenants whose home is clean and well-maintained; absence of neglect or tenant damage; absence of neighbour complaints	Inspiration and empowerment – tenants demonstrate that they are motivated to look after their own space and take pride in it

To: City Executive Board

Date: 10 September 2015

Report of: Head of Planning and Regulatory Services

Title of Report: Oxford Growth Strategy

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To update Members on progress of the Oxford Growth Strategy and identify future financial pressures which may arise as a consequence of it.

Key decision Yes

Executive lead member: Councillor Alex Hollingsworth

Policy Framework: Corporate Plan Priority 'Meeting Housing Need' in particular sub-objective 3, 'Reviewing the Green Belt'.

Recommendation: That the City Executive Board resolves to:
note the contents of this report, in particular the potential need to identify additional resources of £310,000.

Appendices to report

Appendix 1 Oxford Growth Strategy Route Map: Investing in Oxford's Future
Appendix 2 Risk Register

Summary

1. The Oxford Growth Strategy links a series of interrelated workstreams aimed at promoting and delivering sustainable urban extensions to Oxford, by way of a Green Belt review needed to deliver the huge unmet housing need within the City. Linked to this is the City Council's joint working with the other Oxfordshire authorities and stakeholders to address Oxford's unmet housing needs.
2. This report sets out background and progress to date on the Oxford Growth Strategy, and also reports on the progress of joint working with stakeholders. Additionally it identifies future resourcing issues.

Background to Oxford Growth Strategy and Post-Strategic Housing Management Assessment Process

3. In April 2014, the five District Councils in Oxfordshire published the new Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). This identified an 'objectively assessed need' for around 100,000 homes to be delivered in Oxfordshire during the period 2011-31, to address both future and existing unmet housing need. Of this, 24,000 - 32,000 homes were identified as needed to meet the needs of Oxford. However a recently prepared Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment ('SHLAA') indicates that there is only capacity in Oxford to sustainably provide around 10,000 further homes within the City's boundaries, thereby demonstrating that some 14,000 - 22,000 new homes for Oxford will need to be provided within neighbouring local authority areas. The deficit of homes that cannot fit within the City's administrative boundaries is referred to as the 'Oxford unmet need'. It should be noted that a defined number for this has not yet been agreed by neighbouring local authorities.
4. In response to the SHMA, the Oxfordshire Growth Board (which replaced the former Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Partnership) set in train a series of jointly-commissioned studies to arrive at a sustainable distribution of housing in the neighbouring local authority areas to address the unmet Oxford housing need. This is referred to as the Post-SHMA Process, and includes technical work to inform an agreed Oxford unmet need figure; a joint Green Belt study/review, a County-wide 'Assessment of Spatial Options' against sustainability criteria, and an Infrastructure Study to inform and then test the deliverability of the preferred spatial strategy. In November 2014, the (then) Shadow Growth Board agreed that all reasonable endeavours would be used to complete this work, and agree an apportionment, within 12-18 months.
5. The post-SHMA process has been challenged by some of the Districts despite previous commitments by all to adhere to the process. Reflecting the urgency of the housing crisis, the City Council has progressed its own work to robustly demonstrate the potential for sustainable urban extensions to Oxford (see Corporate Plan – Meeting Housing Needs, Issue 3), whilst recognising the need for a balanced housing growth strategy. Professional planning and transport consultants were commissioned to make this high-level case. A 'Route Map' entitled Investing in Oxford's Future: Deciding on Strategic Growth Options was published in August 2014 setting out how this could be achieved, through a staged process of evidence-building.

Milestones achieved

6. The Post-SHMA Process has taken longer to progress than the timescale agreed by the Growth Board. The timetable to complete the technical part of this work by September 2015 has slipped by 6 months. A Green Belt Study was commissioned in May 2015 and has been progressing, with completion due in October 2015. However, other workstreams that have slipped include:
 - Agree Oxford's unmet need: Discussions with neighbouring local authorities ongoing. Estimated 6 month slippage.
 - Strategic Growth Options Development: Deadline of March 2015 missed by Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire Councils who have to date not to date submitted long list of growth options for their area. 5 month slippage.

- Assessment of Options against sustainability criteria: Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire Councils have recently formally questioned the robustness of the agreed process, therefore commissioning is currently on hold. Estimated 6 month slippage.
- 7. It should be noted that the City Council has met all key deadlines for this process, and its officers have consistently urged that the timetable is adhered to.
- 8. The Oxford Growth Strategy has on the other hand achieved the following milestones:
 - Informal assessment of Oxford Green Belt, completed May 2014
 - Growth Strategy Route Map, published Aug 2014
 - Oxford Strategic Growth Options High Level Review of Opportunities, published Oct 2014
 - Oxford Housing Land Availability and Unmet Need Assessment, published Dec 2014
 - Draft Development Frameworks for Urban Extensions North and South of Oxford, to be published in 2015
 - Oxford Growth Options Report of Findings and Delivery Statement, to be published 2015
- 9. In summary, the conclusions of this work is that there is good potential to deliver significant sustainable urban extensions to the north of the City in Cherwell district, and to the south of the city in South Oxfordshire district. All of these reports can be found on the Oxford Growth Strategy web pages at <http://www.oxford.gov.uk/PageRender/decP/OxfordGrowthStrategy.htm>.

Next steps for the Oxford Growth Strategy

- 10. The Oxford Growth Strategy is an on-going project. An important first stage has been to prepare a high-level case for sustainable urban extensions.
- 11. The Vale of White Horse Local Plan and West Oxfordshire Local Plan have been submitted. Both are predicated on the joint work of the Growth Board feeding into respective early Plan reviews to address the Oxford unmet need. Senior City Council officers have advised these local authorities that it is not acceptable, in the City Council's view, to defer the Oxford unmet need to future Plan reviews, as this substantially delays the delivery of housing for Oxford and adds to the worsening housing crisis. The City Council will therefore be making strong representations at both these local plan examinations. The Vale of White Horse examination is underway with hearings scheduled for late September 2015. The West Oxfordshire examination is in its early stages, with a timetable for hearings yet to be confirmed. It is anticipated that the City Council will be instructing Queen's Counsel to represent them at both of these examinations. This will require budgetary provision, for both examinations, of up to £50,000.
- 12. Work is also progressing on the South Oxfordshire Local Plan review. It is understood that a Preferred Options consultation will take place towards the end of 2015. Whilst the Preferred Options stage is not the final stage of consultation, it is nevertheless an important one which precedes finalisation of the South Oxfordshire District Council Local Plan.

13. With this in mind, the City Council is liaising with other landowners in the area identified by the Growth Strategy (south of Grenoble Road). Because of the importance of the site in helping to meet the future housing needs of Oxford, a collaborative approach with the landowners is anticipated in order to ensure that an appropriate site within this area is promoted through the South Oxfordshire Local Plan.
14. It is recognised by all parties that a significant amount of work is needed to demonstrate beyond reasonable doubt that a site south of Grenoble Road is suitable in terms of impacts on landscape, Green Belt function, ecology and transport, and that it is deliverable taking into account required infrastructure. Without this detailed work, other sites could be concluded by the relevant local planning authority, or other decision-makers, to be more suitable for meeting Oxford's unmet housing needs, particularly bearing in mind the significant barrier posed by the existing Green Belt designation. The Council will also be making strong representations at the South Oxfordshire local plan examination and instructing Queen's Counsel. This will require budgetary provision of up to £40,000.

Financial Issues

15. The City Executive Board will be aware that Council has agreed a budget allocation of £80,000 to support (the strategic planning work relating to) Housing Growth. These funds go some way to supporting the work required to ensure that a site south of Oxford is successfully promoted.
16. However, significant further work is anticipated to be needed to further the objective of the Oxford Growth Strategy. Most immediately, studies to identify issues around the constraints set out in paragraph 13 and propose mitigation strategies, are required. Whilst these costs can be shared between landowners, the City Council can reasonably be expected to pick up some of the costs. In particular, it should be noted that the City Council in its corporate assets capacity is a significant landowner in this area.
17. Further to scoping discussions with the other landowners and their agents, it is anticipated that the City Council will be asked to contribute £300,000 towards this work, the total cost being shared between the landowners. This is based on the advice of planning consultants to cover the technical work required to maximise the likelihood of a site south of Oxford coming forward.

The total budget identified is therefore £300,000 for technical planning work south of Oxford; £50,000 for Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire Examinations, and £40,000 for South Oxfordshire examination. The current budget allocation of £80,000 is insufficient to support this further work. The City Executive Board are therefore asked to consider providing additional resources as part of its annual Medium Term Financial Plan refresh. The £310,000 identified would provide for both a shortfall in funds available to make legal representations at the three Local Plan examinations, and for planning work relating to the land south of Oxford.

Legal Issues

18. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as amended by the Localism Act 2011 places a legal duty to cooperate on local planning authorities to engage constructively, actively and on an on-going basis on cross-boundary planning matters, towards achieving an effective spatial strategy. This effectively places a

duty on Oxford to make representations to its neighbouring local authorities to deliver housing within their areas to address unmet housing needs identified in Oxford (most recently in the SHMA 2014) which cannot be accommodated within the City's administrative boundaries.

Environmental Impact

19. As the contents of this report are for information only, there are not considered to be any environmental impacts. However should at any stage the Council decide to formalise proposals for development either North or South of Oxford, there will be clear environmental impacts that will need to be assessed in the relevant report(s).

Level of Risk

20. The principal risk is that further detailed studies and analyses will be required if District Council partners seek to depart from the agreed post-SHMA process. However, the Councils are aware that if this arose this would present strong grounds for failing to meet the duty to co-operate and would place proposed Local Plans at risk.

A detailed risk register is attached at Appendix 2.

Equalities Impact

21. There are not considered to be any direct impacts on equalities. Should the Council formalise its joint working arrangement in respect of one or more sites on the edge of Oxford, there would be clear positive impacts arising through enabling the significant address of housing need, including future development of significant levels of affordable housing.

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List of background papers:

None

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Investing in Oxford's future

Deciding on strategic growth options

A route map



Oxford is an international city. It is the focus of a world-class knowledge economy with one of the most important concentrations of high-value businesses in Europe.

However the City's continuing housing crisis through the lack of housing availability, choice and affordability, is significantly undermining its future and contributing to social inequality.

This document is prepared by Oxford City Council and summarises the planning issues being faced by the City and sets out the process and strategy the Council is following in seeking to address these issues. This includes the consideration of development opportunities around Oxford.





Starting point

housing and growth

In the search for growth, policymakers from all political parties are increasingly recognising that cities are vital to the economic future of the country. Yet the challenges facing UK cities including Oxford are immense.

In particular, it has been clear for some time that housing supply is not keeping up with demand. Reasons for rising demand include improved life expectancy rates and a growing number of one-person households. There are almost 1.8 million households on English local authority housing registers and significant levels of overcrowding in the private and social housing stock.

Poor housing impacts directly on residents' health and educational attainment, while difficulties in accessing affordable housing can also limit the ability of people to move to find work. The need to increase the supply of housing and tackle affordability issues is a key housing policy issue.

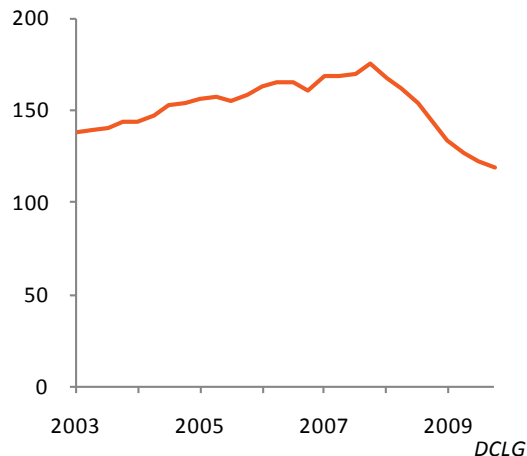
In 2007 the Government set a target of increasing the supply of housing to 240,000 additional homes per year by 2016. There was debate over whether this target would meet the demand for new housing and deal with the backlog of unmet housing need.

In fact, the onset of the credit crunch in 2007 put the achievement of even these targets under serious pressure. Despite rising demand, the collapse in mortgage advances meant that private builders reduced the supply of new housing.

Falling house prices in the recession have not solved the problem of affordability as they have been accompanied by tighter lending criteria, particularly larger deposit requirements.

Housebuilding has fallen sharply

Housing completions, England, 000s, four-quarter rolling total



Indeed, the National Housing and Planning Advice Unit (a non-departmental public body) has said that the recession has increased the requirement for house building to make up for the fall off in construction rates.

It has advised that up to 290,500 additional homes may be needed in each year to 2031.

Supporting Oxford's Success

Oxford is a global brand, known the world over for its academic excellence and historical significance.

It is home to around 4,000 businesses providing around 120,000 jobs. It is the fifth most visited City in the UK by international visitors, with approximately 9.5 million visitors per year, generating £770 million of income for local Oxford businesses.

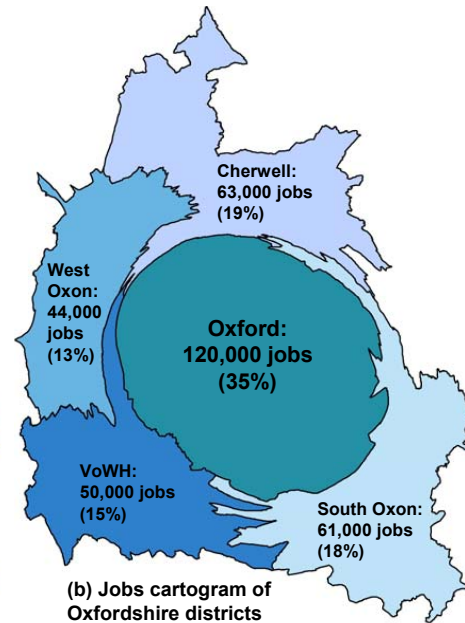
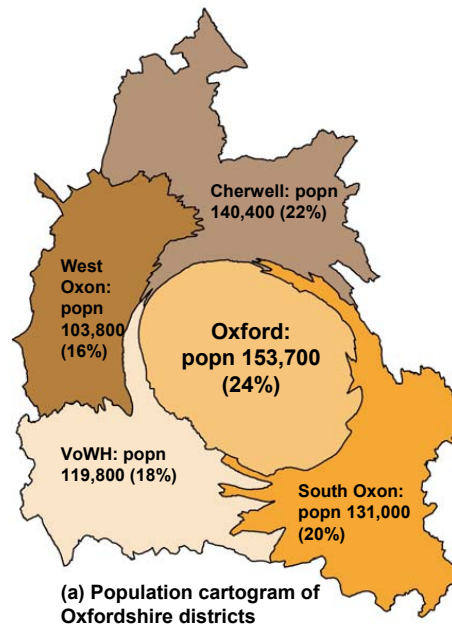
The area is amongst the top five technology innovation locations in the world, with 1,500 high tech firms employing around 43,000 people.

Our Universities and science institutes support the unique grouping of 'big science' and other research facilities in the area. Together with Oxford's global profile, this provides an outstanding environment for foreign direct investment and businesses to spin out and grow.

Oxford is also strategically located between the two largest cities in the UK, London and Birmingham, at the heart of the national rail and road network. Its strategic location supports the growth of business, such as the MINI Plant Oxford, with the company exporting vehicles to 110 countries using transport links to Southampton docks. Rail electrification and the new East-West Rail line further strengthen the City's location.

Oxford's close proximity to London Heathrow Airport also makes it an attractive place to do business.

Oxford contributes £4.7bn to the national economy. Its GVA per head is £30,800, the fifth highest Gross Value Added (GVA) per capita of any City in the UK, and significantly higher than the national average of £20,300. Its success is therefore essential to the sub-region and wider success of the UK



economy, and it regularly has the top rankings as a successful place to grow (Demos/PWC).

The success of Oxford has seen the City's population increase by some 10% (17,600) between 2001 and 2011 creating additional demand and pressure on housing. This will continue to increase. The City has a quarter

of the population but provides over a third of jobs in the county, and half the workforce travels into the City from the surrounding districts and beyond. This employment in turn supports further local employment and services across the county. The continuing success of the City is essential to the wider local, regional and national economy.

Facing the challenges

Despite a wealth of assets, Oxford has not reached its full potential when compared with other internationally renowned areas around world-class universities, including Cambridge.

The recently published Oxfordshire Innovation Engine report found that between 1997 and 2011 Oxford's economy would have increased by a further £0.5bn GVA if it had matched Cambridge's growth. Our universities and business need space to develop to remain leaders in their field. The report identified that the City needed to grow to accommodate housing, employment and research needs and that greater priority should be given to this objective.

The report also found that the growth in Oxford and in the county had been constrained by insufficient public transport, an at-capacity road network, under-developed business networks and an acute shortage of housing.

Our leading businesses report severe difficulty in the recruitment and the retention of staff at all levels, because of a lack of housing choice and affordability.

Similarly, the Universities identify they are being held back in the global competition for the best research talent, and services in hospitals and schools are being compromised through the lack of available affordable housing for key staff; for example the high turnover of teaching staff is adversely affecting pupil attainment. Poor and overcrowded housing is impacting on some of the most vulnerable in the City.

Most of the employment growth in the county between 2001 and 2011 was in the City where high technology firms chose to locate; particularly those who require close links with the Universities. There is also clear evidence that seeking to force these enterprises to locate elsewhere is ultimately unsuccessful, and potentially increases commuting and other costs.

Census 2011 data shows that 6.2% of households in Oxford are classed as overcrowded compared with an Oxfordshire average of 3.3%. There are increasing breaches of Housing in Multiple Occupancy (HMO) Regulations and instances of 'beds in sheds'. This is despite Oxford's housing stock increasing at a rate of 10.4%; faster than the comparable rate of development in Oxfordshire (9.5%), the South East (8.6%) or England as a whole (7.6%).

Oxford has overtaken London as the UK's least affordable City for housing in the Centre for Cities Outlook 2013. House prices in Oxford continue to increase at a rate well above most people's salaries; an increase of over 20% is predicted in City house prices over the next five years.

Oxford average house price

£340,864



Oxford average salary

£30,299

Many in our communities know that they and their families cannot continue to live and work locally unless more homes and more choice of affordable homes become available.

Recruitment in the hospitals and clinical centres is increasingly based on extended commuting or sharing overcrowded accommodation. The City Council has needed to offer mortgage subsidies for teachers to improve recruitment to support raising educational attainment in City schools.

A feature of the lack of housing in the City is extended commuting, with work journeys needing to jump the Green Belt, and beyond. Around 50% of Oxford's workforce commutes by car into the City, which is unsustainable. But for those living in the City we have some of the highest levels of sustainable transport use in the country: bus, bicycle and pedestrian.

Responding to the challenges

The six Oxfordshire authorities, the Local Enterprise Partnership, Oxford University and Oxford Brookes University and the big science facilities at Culham and Harwell are committed to addressing the issues being faced.

The Oxford Strategic Partnership's Economic Growth Strategy sets the framework for the City's economic development and has been adopted by the City Council and endorsed by partners, including business, the Universities and further education colleges. This strategy was carried forward into the 'City Deal' agreement.

Following the strategy an independent study, the Oxfordshire Innovation Engine, commissioned by Oxford University and the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) confirmed the Oxford Strategic Partnership's analysis and recommendations.

Government Ministers and the Local Authorities signed a 'City Deal' in 2014 which promotes new investment and growth in the City and county, including £95m public sector investment and £600m private sector investment creating a further 18,600 new jobs focused on the knowledge sector and 500 new apprenticeships together with the necessary skills, training, housing and infrastructure to support growth. Some of this growth is already evident: for example Mini Plant Oxford is increasing its workforce, Oxford University is expanding its research facilities at the Old Road campus, and there are plans for development at Westgate, Oxpens, Oxford Station and Northern Gateway.

Central to the City Deal are the commitments by the Oxfordshire Authorities to enable housing growth in the City; to accelerate the delivery of 7,500 new homes across the county and to ultimately deliver the housing need requirements identified in the independent Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) (commissioned jointly by the Local Authorities and published in April 2014). These commitments are critical in supporting balanced growth which supports our economic success and avoids a deepening housing crisis.

The SHMA was endorsed by all the Local Authorities and concluded that 100,000 new homes were needed in Oxfordshire by 2031, which includes making good some of the shortfall of housing delivery from recent years. As part of the overall total some 28,000 new homes are required in Oxford City. Most of this growth arises from trends such as people living longer and smaller households, and in the case of the City net in-migration is not forecast to increase, but we have a young population and growth in families.

The latest Strategic Economic Plan promoted to Government by the LEP, the Local Authorities and partners in June 2014 confirms the City Deal and seeks further funding for infrastructure and skills to enable the planned growth.

In conclusion, the City Council and partners recognise both the opportunities for growth and the challenges which have to be addressed if we are to continue to have a successful economy and meet our housing needs, and have committed to the homes and infrastructure required.

The destination

meeting housing needs

Meeting the City's housing need is critical for everyone living and working across the sub-region. It is clear that due to its tightly confined boundary, Oxford City will not be able to meet its housing needs (28,000 additional homes) in the period to 2031.

The City Council as a planning authority and land owner is actively supporting development and new homes, including innovative partnerships such as Barton Park, and is expected to deliver over 1,500 new homes over the next five years, but initial assessments of housing capacity in the City suggest that there is only a limited supply of further development sites.

A further capacity study is currently being undertaken to ascertain whether further potential to deliver more new housing can be identified. However it is inevitable that a large proportion of Oxford's housing requirements will need to be accommodated in the surrounding authorities, but in locations where it is capable of meeting the needs of the City. This requirement sits alongside surrounding authorities' requirement to meet district housing needs.

The intention of this document is to provide a guide to the decision making that will ensure that informed decisions can be reached as to how best to accommodate the housing growth identified in the SHMA in and around Oxford.

The planning decisions will be taken by the Oxfordshire authorities and through the process of individual Local Plans. However, Government has placed a requirement on Local Authorities to work together collaboratively on these issues and not to ignore issues which extend across individual boundaries.

The need to address this housing need is very pressing and cannot be deferred, and the lack of housing is already now having profound adverse consequences for our economy and our communities.



The journey

112 identifying the best locations for new homes

In order to ensure informed decisions are made in relation to accommodating housing needs, Oxford City Council has embarked on a programme to objectively consider the various growth options in and around the City.

The City Council has asked itself the following questions:

- How should growth be accommodated in and around Oxford?; and
- If through urban extensions, where should these be?

In answering the first question, the City Council's view is that there should be a balanced approach to the delivery of housing and the City Council must work with surrounding districts to accommodate this housing need through a mix of solutions including development within the existing City boundary; planned extensions to the City, as well as growth elsewhere. This pattern of growth has been successfully adopted in similar cities, such as Cambridge.

New housing locations need to be based on sustainable development criteria. These include access to employment and services in the City, landscape and environment, and other considerations. Oxford has good public transport, cycling and pedestrian networks, together with established schools and services. Locating new homes at a distance from the City will potentially increase and extend commuting.

The Green Belt boundary is drawn extremely tightly around Oxford's urban area and flooding and other constraints limit the options for growth beyond the existing boundaries. This has frustrated the ability of the City to grow its housing stock sufficiently to meet the housing need. The proportion of Green Belt needed to meet Oxford's total housing need until 2031 is likely to be no more than around 1.1-1.4% of

the current designated Green Belt land in the county.

The City Council is suggesting a balanced approach which means that up to half its housing need could be met without requiring Green Belt land. This means that an area equivalent to less than 1% of the Green Belt in the county might be needed, and there may be no net loss if Green Belt land is swapped or extended in areas elsewhere in the county. The areas released for development would be where land has a lower amenity and environmental value.

The City Council supports the principle and purposes of the Green Belt, and has a robust policy in its Local Plan (Core Strategy) to reflect this. There is also the potential to extend the Green Belt to afford rural areas more protection, and in other parts of the country, areas have been swapped to get a better balance.

However, the Oxford Green Belt boundaries were established in the 1950s, and it is appropriate to review policies over time to ensure that their purpose is still valid and that there is a reasonable balance between competing housing, environmental, economic and other priorities. Already there are proposals to change the Green Belt in adjoining districts to meet local need, but these are being pursued outside a strategic assessment and ignore the City's needs.

The City Council is supported in this view. The Oxford Strategic Partnership's Economic Growth Strategy published in early 2013, based on independent research by consultants Shared Intelligence, identified the urgent need to enable housing and employment growth through urban extensions. The Oxfordshire Innovation Engine Report by consultants SQW also recommends housing and

employment growth to the north and south of the existing area with necessary Green Belt adjustments. Every strategic review in recent years has acknowledged Oxford's need for housing and employment growth and endorsed the option for growth through a sustainable urban extension.

Balanced strategy

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The principle of an urban extension to Oxford is not a new concept. Successive Government Inspectors have acknowledged that the City's housing needs cannot be met within Oxford's administrative boundaries because of the lack of suitable development land.

The Panel of Inspectors considering the South East Regional Plan also supported an urban extension to accommodate housing in the longer term. Specifically they concluded that land to the south of Grenoble Road should be allocated for 4,000 homes.

The Panel did not come to this conclusion lightly. It considered the importance of the Green Belt and also whether the concept of a new settlement close to Oxford could relieve pressure for growth on the City

However, it concluded that there were exceptional circumstances to justify a Green Belt review and that an urban extension would provide a more sustainable solution than a new settlement, particularly on travel patterns (given that homes and jobs are already supported well by a well-developed network of public transport, cycling and pedestrian routes which removes the need for car based commuting).

The City Council supports these views. It also notes the example of Cambridge, where over a decade ago the Local Authorities agreed a balanced strategy which includes protecting Cambridge's historic character and allows sustainable urban extensions rather than dispersing housing and employment growth and creating unsustainable patterns of development.

Significant progress has been made in Cambridge in understanding the interaction between existing employment locations, new housing, public transport and other policy and practical issues in determining the most appropriate locations for new development. This has led to a Green Belt review and the identification of key strategic sites on the Cambridge fringe and beyond.

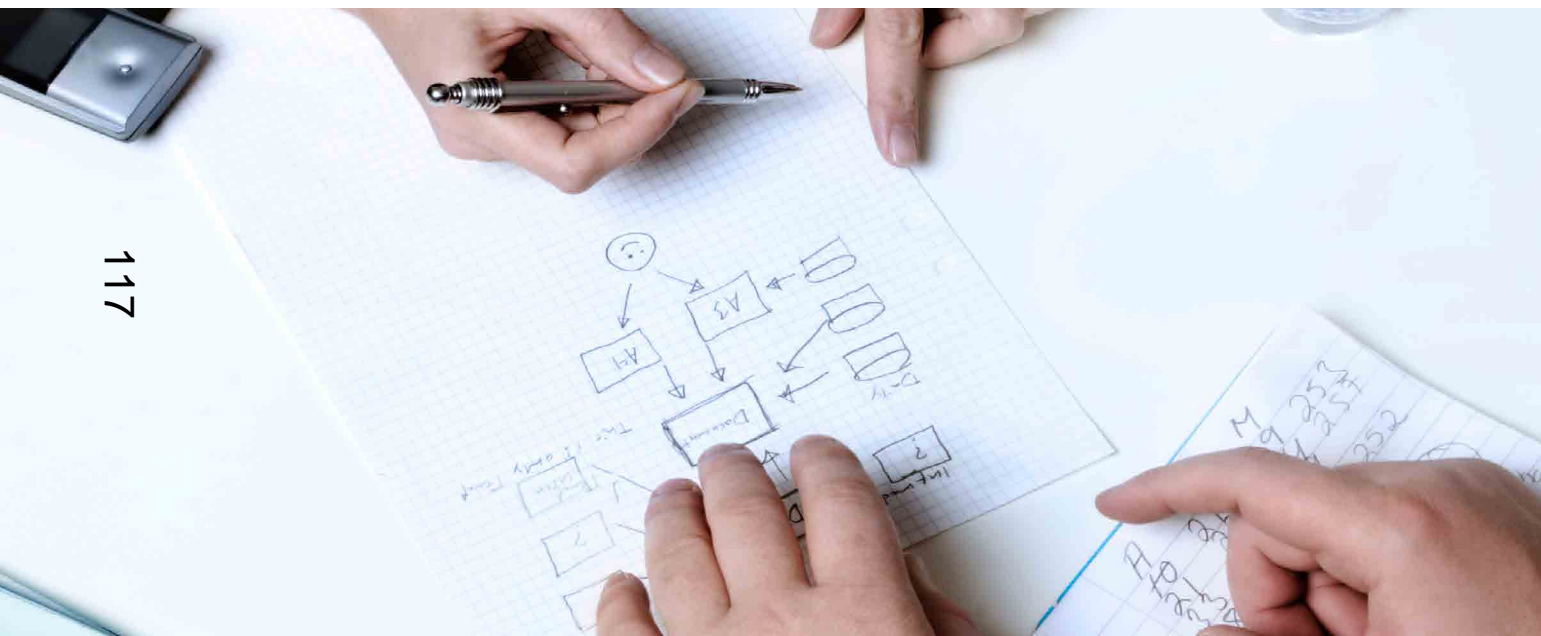
In Oxford, the transport infrastructure cannot sustain the current planning policies which fail to address the balance of employment and housing growth in the City and continues to rely on extending market towns and villages and increased and longer commuting.

It is neither practical nor sustainable to try to provide improvements to the transport infrastructure to support all additional housing beyond the Green Belt. The problems arising from adopting this strategy over recent decades are evident on the current road network, and for many where home or work is not convenient for public transport the car will remain the pre-dominant mode of transport. An urban extension which gives enhanced public transport accessibility must therefore form part of a balanced wider growth strategy.

The process plan

Having concluded that an urban extension(s) around Oxford is desirable as part of a balanced approach to addressing housing needs, the City Council has embarked on a five stage process for determining where the urban extension(s) should be.

The process could be undertaken within around six months if there was support from adjoining authorities. As the existing housing pressures are becoming even more acute, and delivering the solutions will take time, the City Council believes that it is now urgent for this process to proceed with adjoining authorities.



Stage 1

Review of capacity of
Oxford to accommodate
growth (update of
SHLAA)

Stage 2

Review of constraints and
opportunities for growth
around Oxford (including
Green Belt Review)

1
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The initial stage (Stage 1) has already commenced and seeks to fully assess the capacity of Oxford to accommodate the housing needs of the SHMA, without adversely affecting the important historic character of the City. The conclusions of this assessment will help to inform how much development would potentially need to be accommodated through urban extensions.

Stage 2 has also commenced. The City Council has already undertaken an initial assessment of the Green Belt ('Investigation into the potential to accommodate urban extensions in Oxford's Green Belt - Informal Assessment, May 2014) and identified areas of the Green Belt that merit further consideration for possible release for development.

This identified six possible areas for urban extensions:

- South of Grenoble Road
- Wheatley
- Wick Farm
- North of Oxford/South of Kidlington
- Yarnton
- North of Abingdon

Of these, south of Grenoble Road, North of Oxford/South of Kidlington, and North of Abingdon are considered to have good prospects for achieving sustainable development, whilst maintaining the Green Belt function (and in particular the protection of the historic character and setting of the City).

This information will now be considered alongside other constraints and opportunities such as:

- Highway and infrastructure capacity
- Environmental and heritage considerations
- Landscape value and visual impact
- Proximity to jobs and public transport

Stage 3

Appraisal of growth options (including Sustainability Assessment)

This will allow the positive and negative attributes to be fully considered through a Sustainability Appraisal (Stage 3). The Sustainability Appraisal process will allow each possible location to be scored against sustainable development indicators and conclusions to be drawn as to where the best locations for accommodating development exist.

Stage 4

Capacity assessment of preferred growth options (reconciled with SHMA requirements)

Once this has been completed in early Autumn 2014, preferred growth options will be announced and the capacity of these location(s) to accommodate development needs will be examined (Stage 4). This will involve high level masterplanning to consider:

- Site specific constraints
- Landscape and mitigation requirements
- Transport and access (including pedestrian and cycle linkages)
- Density and land use
- Drainage strategies

Stage 5

Deliverability Assessment of growth options

Further assessment in terms of infrastructure requirements and development viability (Stage 5) would then be undertaken to ensure that the preferred option(s) can be delivered in a credible and timely manner.

The process is expected to take some six months to complete and will finish with the publication of an Urban Extension submission document. The City Council will use this document to inform discussions in agreeing development strategies in Oxford and the surrounding districts.

Conclusion

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The lack of opportunity for housing and employment growth is now undermining the City and the wider economy to a significant degree.

Unless the need for new homes and affordable homes is addressed increasingly families will not have the choice to live and work here and our services and communities will suffer.

Previous county-wide planning policies based on allocating the City's housing needs to market towns across the county have not delivered and have overburdened the road infrastructure. The solution requires sustainable urban extensions to the City as part of a balanced housing strategy.

This document summarises the issues and seeks to set out a plan to consider the constraints and opportunities around the City to determine the best locations to accommodate urban extensions.

Working with the surrounding districts and the county council, the City Council seeks to deliver the new homes and quality development which are essential both to the City's future and that of the wider area.



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Title	Risk description	Opp/ threat	Cause	Consequence	Date Raised	Owner	Gross		Current		Residual		Comments	Controls				
							I	P	I	P	I	P		Control description	Due date	Status	Progress %	Action Owner
Reputational risk and partnerships	Content of report records concerns with elements of joint working under the Duty to Cooperate. It also makes clear its support for development in areas outside its administrative area.	Threat to reputation of Council in terms of its partnership role with other local authorities	Content of report records concerns with elements of joint working under the Duty to Cooperate. It also makes clear its support for development in areas outside its administrative area.	Press articles instigated by other parties including neighbouring local authorities; reduced opportunity for consensus or common ground on thorny planning issues	21/07/2015	David Edwards	1	3	1	3	1	3		Accept the risk	n/a	Current	n/a	David Edwards
Future financial risk to note	Future additional expenditure, whilst not requested in the context of this report, is likely to come up in a future CEB report	Opportunity of addressing housing needs; threat of future spend having limited impact	Future additional expenditure, whilst not requested in the context of this report, is likely to come up in a future CEB report	None at current time as report is for information only	21/07/2015	David Edwards	3	1	3	1	3	1		n/a	n/a	Current	n/a	David Edwards

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Housing Panel work programme 2015-16

Items for Housing Panel meetings

Topic	Approach	Progress
Tenant Involvement	Review group or one-off panel	
Performance monitoring	Regular monitoring of housing performance measures.	Ongoing
STAR survey results	Annual monitoring of results of the tenant survey.	
Rent arrears	Monitoring of performance measures; update report.	
De-designation of 40+ accommodation	Final annual report on the latest phase of the de-designation of 40+ accommodations.	
Review of the Homelessness Action Plan 2013-18	Mid-point review of homelessness action plan.	Completed 4/9
Supporting people	Verbal updates on the joint commissioning of housing support services.	
Choice Based Lettings	Request report for autumn 2015 (current 3-year agreement ends in December). To consider issues of fairness, communication and a possible move to a weekly cycle.	
Security in communal areas	Request report to consider ways of improving security for tenants, including the use of PSPOs in tower blocks. Engage with block representatives.	
Great estates programme	Request report to update members on capital investments to improve housing estates including Blackbird Leys and Barton.	
Asset Management Strategy	Pre-scrutinise asset management strategy for Council's housing stock.	Completed 4/6
Sustainability of the Council's housing stock & HRA business plan	Report to CEB expected in 2016.	
Homelessness Property Investment	Pre-scrutinise decision to approve investment in a property investment fund to help secure access to local, suitable and affordable private rented accommodation.	Completed 4/9
Housing Energy Strategy	Pre-scrutinise report to CEB on energy efficiency and fuel poverty in the Council's domestic housing stock. Consider environmental sustainability of the Council's housing stock	
Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Licensing Scheme	Pre-scrutinise report to CEB setting out the results of the statutory consultation and the proposed future of the licensing scheme. Consider	

	research trends of private sector housing costs	
Sheltered Housing Review	Pre-scrutinise decision to approve outcomes of review, including future of some of the stock. Consider progress against previous Housing panel recommendations.	
Private Sector Housing Policy	Pre-scrutinise report to CEB setting out the future priorities and areas of intervention in the private rented and owner-occupied residential sectors in Oxford. Consider licensing for private sector landlords & research trends of private sector housing costs.	
Housing Development delivery models & project approval for the delivery of the Council's 2015-18 affordable housing programme	Pre-scrutinise report to Council setting out possible housing development models and to seeking project approval for the delivery of the Council's 2015-18 affordable housing programme. Consider alternative delivery models including; community land trusts, self-build, more housing on the waterways, high-density housing.	

Draft Housing Panel Agenda Schedules

Date and room (all 5pm start)	Agenda Item	Lead Officer(s)
4 June, Plowman Room	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Housing Asset Management Strategy (pre-scrutiny) 2. Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Licensing Scheme (pre-scrutiny) 	<p>Stephen Clarke</p> <p>Ian Wright / Adrian Chownes</p>
3 September, St. Aldate's Room	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Performance Monitoring – quarter 1 2. Review of the Homelessness Action Plan 2013-18 3. Homelessness Property Investment 4. Oxford Growth Strategy 	<p>N/A</p> <p>Dave Scholes / Frances Evans</p> <p>Dave Scholes</p> <p>Cllr Hollingsworth / David Edwards</p>

8 October, Plowman Room	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Choice Based Lettings (TBC) 2. Private Sector Housing Strategy (pre-scrutiny) 3. Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Licensing Scheme (pre-scrutiny) 4. Housing Energy Strategy (pre-scrutiny) 	<p>Tom Porter</p> <p>Ian Wright</p> <p>Ian Wright/ Adrian Chownes</p> <p>Debbie Haynes</p>
9 December, Plowman Room	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Performance Monitoring – quarter 2 2. Housing Development delivery models & project approval for the delivery of the Council's 2015-18 affordable housing programme (pre-scrutiny) 	<p>N/A</p> <p>Alan Wylde</p>
9 March, Plowman Room	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Performance Monitoring – quarter 3 	N/A

Informal meetings closed to the public

Date and room	Agenda Item	Lead Officer(s)
26 October, 5pm	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sheltered Housing Review (pre-scrutiny) 	Frances Evans
7 January, Plowman Room (5.30pm)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Budget Review 2015/16 – Regeneration & Housing (joint session with Finance Panel) 	Stephen Clarke / Nigel Kennedy

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MINUTES OF THE HOUSING PANEL (PANEL OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE)

Thursday 4 June 2015



PANEL MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors Benjamin, Henwood, Hill, Hollick, Sanders, Smith, Wade and Henwood

OFFICERS PRESENT: Stephen Clarke, Ian Wright, Adrian Chownes, Andrew Brown (Scrutiny Officer)

8. ELECTION OF CHAIR FOR THE 2015/16 MUNICIPAL YEAR

Two members were nominated to chair the Panel – Councillor Hollick and Councillor Smith – but the Panel was unable to elect a chair because the votes were tied.

The decision to elect a chair for the municipal year was therefore referred to the next meeting of the Council's Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Hollick was selected to chair this meeting in a random selection process.

9. APOLOGIES

None.

10. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

11. HOUSING ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Head of Housing and Property introduced the housing asset management strategy and said that it is already running in many respects.

The Panel asked a number of questions including about; housing need in the city, the impacts of government policy, taking a co-ordinated approach with peers, speeding up void times, the stock condition survey, renewable energy on Council properties and the consultation response rate.

A member noted that there are numerous unused garages in Blackbird Leys. These could be knocked down and the sites developed as affordable housing or off street car parking for residents. The Panel heard that this is within the

concept of making better use of the City Council's assets and that a review of these assets is needed as part of the Estate Improvement Plans (section 5.2). It has been several years since such a review took place and a member noted that at the time, several sites were treated as a virtual site. The Panel suggest that the City Council goes back through this cycle again and that the Strategy makes specific mention of garages.

The Panel agreed to:

- Support the Housing Asset Management Strategy
- Recommend that making better use of garage assets should be explicitly included in the strategy
- To pre-scrutinise the upcoming Energy Strategy
- To seek further information about tenant involvement

12. HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION (HMO) LICENSING SCHEME

The Environmental Health Service Manager and HMO Enforcement Team Leader introduced the report. The Chair noted that scrutiny members would like to have been involved earlier on in the process.

The Panel asked a number of questions including about; rates of compliance with conditions, information sharing with tenants, restrictions on new HMOs, legal limits on uses of income from HMOs, weekday tenants, children living in HMOs, and whether the City Council has any powers to limit rent increases and ensure longer tenures.

The Panel questioned whether there is more scope to incentivise good landlord practices and dis-incentivise bad landlord practices. The Panel heard that the City Council could look at lower charges for landlords who comply with the scheme and introducing a 'polluter pays' principle where landlords whose properties require more checks could contribute more to the cost of this. However, there is a fine balance and the scheme needs to remain self-funding. Fee structure options will be presented to Members in October.

The Panel also questioned whether the City Council has scope to introduce tougher penalties for non-compliance, for example when landlords seek to renew their HMO licence having failed to comply with the conditions of their previous licence. The Panel heard that the City Council is one of the toughest local authorities nationally in terms of enforcement but has scope to be tougher on non-compliance. The balance of activity is likely to shift somewhat from focusing on unlicensed HMOs towards ensuring greater compliance.

The Panel agreed:

- To support the HMO scheme and option 3 – renewing the HMO licensing scheme in its entirety for a further 5 years, noting that consideration should be given to appropriate incentives and disincentives for landlords, and to the balance between taking a more pro-active approach to

compliance whilst continuing efforts to extend the licensing scheme to cover more HMOs.

- To recommend that enforcement within the private rented sector is a corporate priority and that it is necessary to take a different approach to enforcement in different sectors.
- To review the proposed October report setting out the results of the statutory consultation and the proposed future of the licensing scheme, before it goes to the City Executive Board.
- To ask officers to look into a suggestion that HMO tenants should be entitled to free bulky item collections.
- To follow up on a question about controls over HMOs in the new Barton development with planning officers.
- That comparative data between investment levels in HMO stock compared to other sectors would be useful.

13. WORK PROGRAMME AND OPERATING ARRANGEMENTS

The Panel noted its work programme and agreed to add the following topics for further consideration:

- Tenant involvement
- Estate Improvement Plans

The Panel agreed to meet in private in early July to plan its work for the year ahead.

The Panel thanks Linda Hill for her time on the Panel and agreed to advertise the co-optee position to tenants and hold informal interviews with applicants over the summer.

14. NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Noted.

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Noted.

The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 6.48 pm

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