Agenda



Housing Panel (Panel of the Scrutiny Committee)

Date: Wednesday 9 November 2016

Time: **5.00 pm**

Place: St Aldate's Room, Town Hall

For any further information please contact:

Andrew Brown

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Email: abrown2@oxford.gov.uk

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Housing Panel (Panel of the Scrutiny Committee)

Membership

Chair Councillor David Henwood

Councillor Angie Goff
Councillor Jennifer Pegg
Councillor Gill Sanders
Councillor David Thomas
Councillor Elizabeth Wade
Geno Humphrey (co-optee)

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AGENDA

Pages 1 **APOLOGIES** Substitutes are not allowed. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** 2 3 **HOUSING PERFORMANCE - QUARTER 2** 9 - 12Contact Officer: Andrew Brown, Scrutiny Officer Tel: 01865 252230 abrown2@oxford.gov.uk Background Information The Housing Panel has a role in monitoring Council performance against housing targets. This report contains outcomes at the end of 2016/17 quarter 2 (September 2016) for a set of housing performance indicators. The Panel has requested additional information about the occupants of temporary accommodation, which is also included. Why is it on the agenda? For the Panel to note and comment on housing performance at the end of 2016/17 guarter 2 and the numbers of families and children in temporary accommodation. Who has been invited to comment? Stephen Clarke, Head of Housing 13 - 48 **UNIVERSITY HOUSING NEEDS (5.15 PM) 45 MINS** 4 Contact Officer: Andrew Brown, Scrutiny Officer Tel: 01865 252230 abrown2@oxford.gov.uk Background Information The Panel asked to discuss the impacts of the high cost of housing on the two universities and their approaches to land management in the City. Why is it on the agenda? For the Panel to consider the following lines of inquiry:

1. How are the two universities affected by Oxford's housing

situation, and what do they see as the medium to long term risks if prices and rents remain so high?

- 2. How are the universities responding to the issues they highlight in response to Question 1?
- 3. How will the universities be able to contribute to meeting the city's housing needs, and what general proposals are they likely to be making to the Council during the Local Plan review?

Oxford Brookes University have provided some documentation to support this discussion and any further submissions will be circulated separately.

Who has been invited to comment?

- Carolyn Puddicombe, University of Oxford
- William James, University of Oxford
- Sue Holmes, Oxford Brookes University
- Paul Large, Oxford Brookes University
- David Whittingham, Oxford Brookes Student Union.
- Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Board Member for Planning & Regulatory
- David Edwards, Executive Director for Housing & Regeneration
- Mark Jaggard, Planning Policy and Design, Conservation and Trees Manager

5 HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATIONS (HMOS) (6.00 PM) 30 MINS

Contact Officer: Ian Wright, Service Manager Environmental Health iwright@oxford.gov.uk

Background Information

The Panel asked for a report on HMO licensing. In particular, the Panel have asked to consider how the proportion of HMOs in any given neighbourhood is calculated and the oversight of HMO planning decisions.

Why is it on the agenda?

The Panel is asked to note and comment on the report. The Panel may also wish to make one or more recommendations to the City Executive Board.

Who has been invited to comment?

- Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Board Member for Planning & Regulatory
- Ian Wright, Environmental Health Service Manager
- Adrian Chowns, HMO Enforcement Team Leader

49 - 62

63 - 70

6 RENT PERFORMANCE (6.30 PM) 30 MINS

Contact Officer: Tanya Bandekar, Service Manager Revenue & Benefits Tel: 01865 252281 tbandekar@oxford.gov.uk

Background Information

The Panel has asked to monitor the Council's rents performance including current and former tenant arrears.

Why is it on the agenda?

For the Panel to monitor and scrutinise rents performance. The Panel is asked to note and comment on the report and may also wish to agree one or more recommendations to put to the City Executive Board (via the Scrutiny Committee).

Who has been invited to comment?

- Councillor Susan Brown, Board Member for Customer and Corporate Services
- Tanya Bandekar, Revenues and Benefits Service Manager
- Neil Markham, Incomes Team Leader

7 TOWER PROJECT REVIEW UPDATE (7.00 PM) 15 MINS

Contact Officer: Simon Warde, Tenant Involvement Manager Tel: 01865 252839 swarde@oxford.gov.uk

Background Information

The Tenant Scrutiny Panel has initiated a review of the tower block refurbishment project and the Housing Panel has asked to be kept informed of progress.

Why is it on the agenda?

For the Panel to receive a verbal update on the scope of the Tenant Scrutiny Panel's review of the tower block refurbishment project. No results or interim findings should be expected at this stage.

Who has been invited to comment?

Geno Humphrey, Chair of the Tenant Scrutiny Panel

71 - 78

8 HOUSING PANEL WORK PROGRAMME

79 - 90

For the Panel to note and agree its work plan, which can be adjusted to reflect the wishes of the Panel.

The Scrutiny Officer will introduce the work plan and advise the Panel on any suggested changes to it.

9 NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

91 - 94

For the Panel to agree and note the record of the meeting held on 5 October 2016.

10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Housing Panel meetings are scheduled as follows:

1 March 2017

3 May 2017

All meetings begin at 5.00pm.

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.



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

Performance Summary Housing Panel

Sep-2016

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

Measure		Owner	Result	Latest Data		Year End	RAG	Trends		s	Comments
Ref	Description		2015/16	Target	Result	Target 2016/17		Prd	Year	Year on Year	
An Effic	An Efficient and Effective Council										
	hipaga hi i	I <u> </u>	1	1 _		l		0		1	
HP008	HP008: Number of new homes granted permission in the city	Patsy Dell	Not Recorded	0 Number	16 Number	400 Number	G	P			Progress is continuing towards the annual target of 400 homes per year.
NI156	NI 156: Limit our use of temporary accommodation at 2015 levels	Stephen Clarke	115 Number	120 Number	121.00 Number	120 Number	A	K	2		We are one household above target but below the same positon at half year in 15/16. Meeting the target continues to be challenging. Pressure continues from more tenancy ends in the private rented sector (PRS), and we have less options in the PRS to help address these. The team continue to work hard to prevent homelessness and make robust case decisions, against this challenging external environment. Lettings into social housing are also down on last year, due to fewer relets coming through as well as a lack of new build supply.
BV066a	BV066a: Percentage of rent collected	Tanya Bandekar	98.25%	95.33%		98.25%	G	×	>		The team have collected above target after the previous month when arrears were above the March 2016 figure so back on track, The Escalation Policy is nearing completion in test and will then automate letters to those with smaller debts which will help further.
DS011	DS011: Percentage of Right to Repairs completed on time (Gas and Responsive)	Sean Fry	99.70%	99.00%	99.68%	99.00%	G	2	2	>	6218 jobs completed on time, out of the 6238 jobs completed YTD.
DS012	DS012: Percentage of Routine Repairs completed on time (Gas and Responsive)	Sean Fry	95.39%	96.50%	99.98%	96.50%	G	×	2	N	6358 jobs completed on time, out of the 6624 jobs completed YTD. working on WIP
HC016	HC016: Number of affordable homes for	Stephen Clarke	166 Number	7 Number	0 Number	7 Number	R	P	V		Flats at Dora Carr Close are programmed to be completed in December

	rent delivered										
	HP003: The number of people estimated to be sleeping rough	Stephen Clarke	56 Number	0 Number	0 Number	45 Number	R	4	×	P	An annual estimate of rough sleepers is done in November.
	HP004: The number of successful interventions with rough sleepers	Stephen Clarke	326 Number	150 Number	235 Number	300 Number	G	R	N	K	On target
BV064	BV064: Empty homes returned to use	Stephen Clarke	20 Homes		8 Homes	14 Homes	O		N	N	On target
	CS002: Time to process changes in circumstances	Helen Bishop	8 Days	9 Days	11 Days	9 Days	A	×	×	N	The HB team have placed more resource to the backlog, so we will see a greater drop in the processing times as more older work is cleared quicker.
	CS005: Time to process new benefits claims	Helen Bishop	13.86 days	13.00 days	12.89 days	13.00 days	G	×	×		There were 368 applications processed in September in an average of 12.41 days. Our target for 2016/17 is 13 days. The September result made our year to date cumulative result 12.89 days.
HC003	HC003: Homeless Acceptances	Stephen Clarke	141 Number	66 Number	54 Number	132 Number	G	V	K	2	On target
HC004	HC004: Homelessness cases prevented	Stephen Clarke	1,170 Number	550 Number	463 Number	1,100 Number	R	X	2		The figure is provisional as we're still awaiting some data. However, homeless preventions are becoming increasingly difficult due to the buoyant private rented sector market and unaffordability of rents. This indicator is being carefully monitored to see if this trend continues for the rest of this year (at levels that are down on 15/16).
	Total number of affordable homes completed in year	Stephen Clarke	Not Recorded	35 Number	20 Number	35 Number	R	R			Barnes Road handovers are now complete

Number of households in temporary accommodation

	31- Mar-16	30- Jun- 16	30- Sep- 16
Families with dependent children or expected babies	97	103	104
Single households	14	16	14
Other	4	4	3
TOTAL	115	123	121
Number of children in temp accom	171	178	183





STUDENT RESIDENCES

DEVELOPING A STRATEGY FOR OUR OXFORD CAMPUSES





Oxford Brookes University has a vital part to play in the local, regional and national economy. Indeed, it has been remarked upon to me a number of times that if Oxford did not have this University, it would need to invent it.

The economic argument is clear: we are a vital provider of key skills for the local area, from nurses and teachers to architects and motorsport engineers. Furthermore, our students support local business and we are one of Oxfordshire's largest employers. More than this, though, we contribute culturally and socially both as an institution and also through the actions and efforts of our student population, who are an integral part of the communities in which they live.

We are proud of our place in both Oxford and Oxfordshire and work hard through membership of groups such as the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, to secure successful futures for all of us. As with every city, Oxford has its challenges and key amongst those is the provision of sufficient housing. As a university we know we have a role to play in ensuring we provide adequate levels of housing for our students in the city and we remain committed to Oxford City Council's target of Oxford Brookes University students living outside university-provided accommodation. That said, there are details associated with this target which warrant further consideration – not least questions regarding competition and skills provision, which are described in more depth further on in this strategy.

A series of significant changes in higher education policy over the last few years means that the sector has become increasingly competitive. Oxford Brookes University is in a strong position in this marketplace but, in order to continue to thrive, we cannot rest on our

laurels. It is important that we continue to improve, meeting and exceeding student expectations in every area of provision.

As part of this, in 2014 we announced a ten year estate investment plan. This will now see us invest on average £22million per annum in improvements. It will also see us move all activity off the Wheatley Campus by 2021/22, focusing provision on our Headington, Harcourt Hill and Swindon campuses. This decision, coupled with the age of some of our existing student accommodation stock, is another reason why it is timely to produce a residential strategy.

I hope this document provides a clear outline of the objectives of our residential strategy as well as an overview of our current accommodation portfolio; our student number projections; our students' needs; and our plans for future residential provision.

As specific information on projects becomes available we will ensure that our local communities and stakeholders are kept up-to-date with developments.

Alistair Fitt
Vice-Chancellor

RESIDENTIAL STRATEGY OBJECTIVES

- **1.** Meet Oxford City Council's planning policy requirement in relation to Oxford Brookes students without a place in University managed accommodation living in the defined Oxford city boundary.
- 2. Increase the student accommodation provision to respond to the changing demand from our students both in number and mix.
- **3.** Match student accommodation locations to the future configuration of Oxford Brookes University's campuses.
- **4.** Offset the loss of student beds in buildings coming to end of life or being temporarily closed for refurbishment.
- **5.** Ensure we are providing our students with a range of accommodation choices and rent levels that offers good value for money.
- **6.** Review with Oxford City Council and seek to agree refinements to the planning policy requirement of a maximum of 3,000 Oxford Brookes University students without a place in University managed accommodation to better meet the needs of the city, University and our students.

SOME CONTEXT

Student needs and expectations

Residential accommodation is an important part of a student's time at university and is one of the factors prospective students consider carefully when choosing where to study. It is clear that, across the board, expectations of the residential offer are rising.

Students also continue to have a variety of needs. Recent changes in trends include more second and third year students now preferring to live in halls of residence, where there is availability. We currently need to carefully balance this against the needs of first year students. In addition, there are more requests for studio flats for some international and mature students as well as for suitable accommodation for families.

All students expect high quality accommodation and the majority have a preference for en suite facilities. There is a market for high-end provision, which is often met through collaboration with the private sector. However, it is important that the University residential portfolio also offers cost effective options to ensure that students from lower income backgrounds are not priced out of higher education, especially given the cost of renting privately in Oxford.

It is also important to note that students frequently report difficulties with the private rental sector and this is something we are working with Oxford City Council to address.

The importance of student accommodation to Oxford

It is well-documented that Oxford is a city with high real estate costs. This has a number of important implications for the city and region – not least the issue of affordability of housing for key workers and the impact this has on commuting into the city. Oxford Brookes University has its part to play in this and we are committed to continuing to invest in halls of residence for our students, thereby ensuring residential properties and houses of multiple occupancy are also available for the non-student rental market.

Building student accommodation in Oxford

Real estate costs in Oxford also have implications both for students and for development projects.

High land prices and other associated development costs in the city make it neccesary to work with private providers to develop affordable student accommodation options at an acceptable density and quality.

Opportunities for large, private developments in the city are limited and Oxford has little experience of larger developments which are directly let to students. Typically, these direct let arrangements allow for no control over pricing structures to ensure value for money and involve less direct management of the properties. More involved management has a number of benefits. These include security and welfare support mechanisms for students as well as mitigation of impacts associated with these sorts of developments for local communities, which is something which we know local residents value.











The 3,000 target

We remain committed to seeking to achieve Oxford City Council's target of no more than 3,000 Oxford Brookes University students living in the defined Oxford city boundary without a place in University managed accommodation.

On 1 December 2015 there were 12,120 full-time students in need of accommodation, with 5,207 places in accommodation provided by Oxford Brookes University and 3,166 students living at home or outside Oxford. This resulted in 3,747 students without a place in university provided accommodation living in the city, exceeding the City Council's target. This is something we are working hard to address.

However, it is also important to note that Oxford is the only city in the UK which puts restrictions on its universities and their students living in the local community. In addition, these restrictions only apply to Oxford Brookes University and the University of Oxford, meaning other education providers operating or wishing to operate within the city have a competitive advantage in this regard. Taken together, these factors present a challenge for Oxford Brookes in competing with other institutions to recruit students - both in a national and a local sense. This also has an impact on skills provision in Oxfordshire.

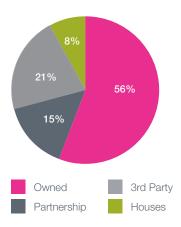
For example, in order to meet the growing needs of local NHS Trusts, Oxford Brookes would like to increase the number of students studying for degrees in nursing and professions allied to medicine. Growth on all courses is currently restricted due to the City Council's policies. One outcome of this is that nurses who could be training and going on to permanent roles in Oxfordshire hospitals are going elsewhere for their studies and subsequent employment. Another possible outcome is that other higher education providers, not based in Oxford, gain competitive advantage by offering additional nursing places in the city without restriction.

Both our nursing and teaching students in particular play an important role in the local economy as part of its workforce during their courses. The University therefore feels there is a case to be made for these students sitting outside the Oxford City Council target.

Oxford Brookes contributes over £1million a day to the UK economy. The University's regional contributions include, but are in no way limited to, skills provision, employment and student spend in the local economy.

OUR CURRENT STUDENT ACCOMMODATION PORTFOLIO

Our current portfolio of halls accommodation is a combination of owned, leased and nominations agreements, with a mix of en suite and non en suite cluster flats (typically for 6 people) and some studios. The majority of accommodation is self catering with a small catered provision at Wheatley. Accommodation contracts usually run for the full academic year, with lengths varying from 38 to 50 weeks.



Students living in halls are not permitted to bring motor vehicles to Oxford. To help with their travel around Oxford we provide BROOKESbus passes (offering free travel on BROOKESbuses) to the majority of students as well as bike parking facilities at each of our halls of residence.

University-owned accommodation

University-owned accommodation represents 56 per cent of the accommodation stock the University has available to students. The ages of our halls range from just under five years old through to just over 30 (see opposite for a further breakdown). Some of the older halls require refurbishment in the near future.

Cheney Halls is a partnership agreement whereby a third party developed, financed and manages the property exclusively for the University, which lets it to students.

The Lady Spencer Churchill Hall and Harcourt Residences are coming to the end of their lives, so some new accommodation will need to be developed to compensate for this reduction in student beds.

Nominations agreement

A large proportion of the private provider accommodation in Oxford is under ten years old. Most of our private provider accommodation is contracted through nominations agreements for which the University underwrites most of the risk for a specified period. Others are leased. These partnerships account for 36 per cent of our portfolio and help us towards achieving the City Council target.

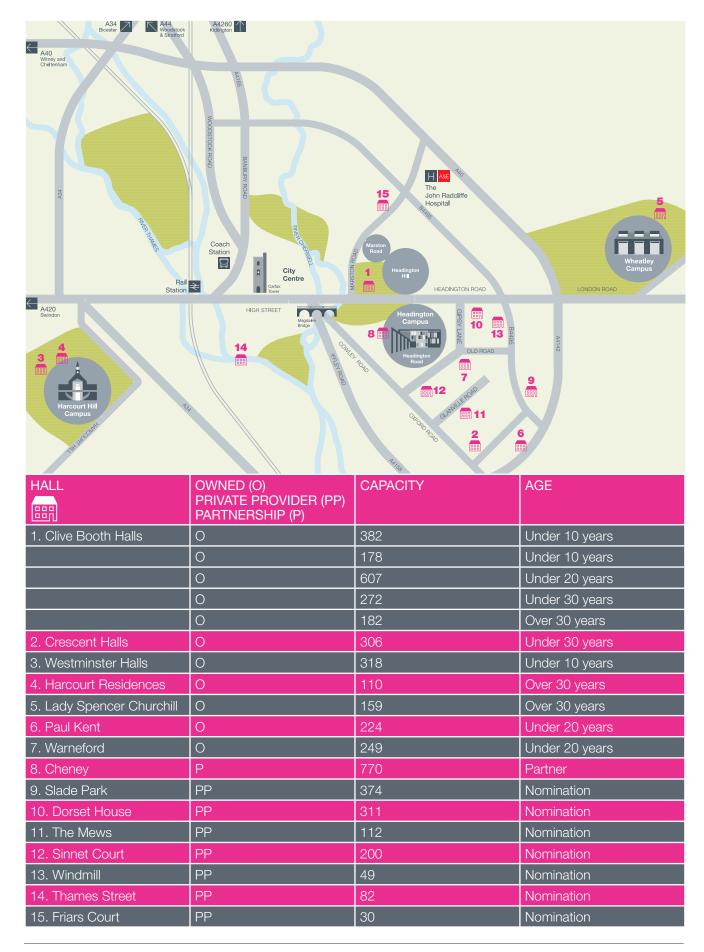
Student housing

The Accommodation Bureau at Oxford Brookes University has run a shared housing scheme since 1972. Student housing represents eight per cent of our student bed stock. The University vets landlords and tenants and carries out regular inspections, arranges for repairs and organises any charges that are necessary. The Bureau is part of Oxford City Council's Landlord Accreditation Scheme.

Student houses ensure that our students, the tenants, receive a product the University is confident in and provides the house owners with peace of mind that their properties will be leased consistently and be well looked after. A large proportion of our leased student houses are owned by Oxfordshire residents.



Our newest accommodation incorporates a number of sustainable features such as green sedum roofs which help insulate the building and manage water run-off, a combined heat and power unit and temperature controls that manage the heating when students aren't using specific areas.



MEETING CHANGING **NEEDS**

The estate investment plan

We intend to move all activity from Wheatley over the next five years, including closing the ageing residential accommodation on the campus. The University has aspirations to enhance its use of the Harcourt Hill Campus, which will involve rebalancing student numbers between that campus and Headington. This will ensure that the campus is a vibrant place for students to learn and will enable investment in its sport and leisure facilities so that they continue to be an asset for the local community.

Student number growth

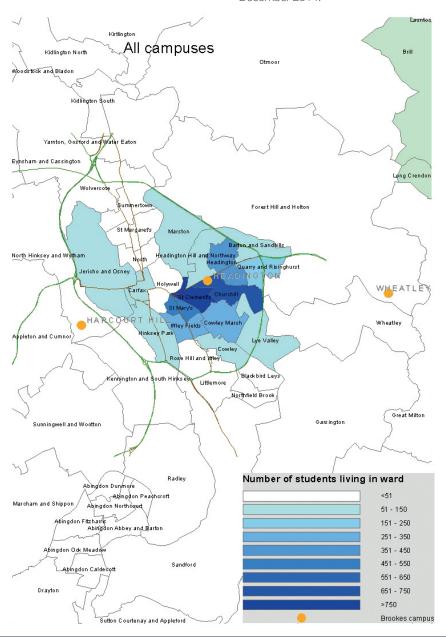
The University has modest ambitions for growth and aims to increase the undergraduate intake by 1-2 per cent annually. In 2015 there were 12,120 full time on campus students, at 2 per cent growth we would have around 14,889 students by 2025. To accommodate this growth and to continue to work towards Oxford City Council's target of no more than 3,000 students living in the community, the University needs to increase its bed stock.

Changes in student demand for university accommodation

Analysis of data has identified that since 2010 the number of students who have decided to live in Oxford during their studies has risen from 64 per cent to 70 per cent. This shift in demand is most likely due to a decline in postgraduate students who often live at home, an increase in domestic undergraduate students who are less likely to live at home and a decline in students recruited from Oxfordshire.

Nevertheless, not all students will require accommodation. In 2015 just under 30 per cent of on-campus students already lived locally or within commuter distance from our campus when they applied.

This map shows the spread across Oxford of those students studying at Oxford Brookes and not living in University managed accommodation, as at 1 December 2014.



WHAT DOES THIS **MEAN?**

Rebalancing provision

We will look to rebalance our provision of student accommodation across the city to ensure any increases in student numbers at the Harcourt Hill Campus are supported by appropriate residential provision.

Deficit in room numbers a forecast for 2025

As at 1 December 2015, based on growing undergraduate and postgraduate student numbers, changing demand for university accommodation and the need to meet Oxford City Council's 3,000 target, Oxford Brookes needed to increase its bed stock by 2,605 by the year 2025 (calculated based on 2 per cent growth, increased demand and existing parameters around the City Council's target).

This must be met alongside the need to refurbish older halls of residence and the reprovision of some of our older accommodation.

Addressing the deficit

We have already increased our bedstock since December 2015. In 2016 we have increased our University-managed portfolio by 147 and in 2017 we have a further 167 beds coming on line through a nominations agreement with the owners of Beech House in Headington.

To meet the current deficit in rooms and to respond to planned increases, we intend to bring more accommodation into our portfolio. This will enable us to manage the number of students who live in the local community progressively over the next ten years.

OUR PLANS

Early priorities

An early priority will be to roll out an extensive refurbishment programme for our older halls of residence to ensure we are providing high quality student accommodation which meets student expectations and continues to attract students to live in our halls. In some cases this may involve demolition and rebuild in order to meet the needs of today's students.

In addition, we need to address the current and predicted deficit of student residential accommodation in line with Oxford City Council's target and aim to increase bed places by 1,500 over the next five years.

Core principles of development

We understand that delivering additional student residential accommodation in Oxford will require careful thought and close work with councils and local communities. Based on feedback received in previous consultations and conversations as part of the Headington Neighbourhood Plan, we have produced four core principles of development which will seek to ensure that any future residential construction or refurbishments are guided by the varying needs of stakeholders.

- We will aim to house more students in halls-style residences.
- We will prioritise maximising the potential density of existing, onsite residential accommodation.
- We will explore viable opportunities to build residential accommodation on our campuses.
- We will prioritise proposals we receive for student accommodation which:
 - > are close to main roads with good bus connections to our campuses
 - > enable Oxford Brookes to manage or have a degree of control over the management of the accommodation
 - > enable the university to maintain a mixed portfolio.

Maximising the potential of the University's existing provision

It is recognised that the better use of the University's current sites could make a significant contribution to meeting the need of students.

There is the potential to intensify the use of land for student accommodation at Clive Booth Halls. This project would deal with both the need to replace the oldest accommodation and allow for expansion of the portfolio. The project would increase the number of rooms and also enhance the social space for all students living on the site.

There is potential to add a small number of extra rooms at Crescent Halls.

Early community feedback on proposals to increase usage of the Harcourt Hill Campus has indicated a strong desire for the University to consider building additional student accommodation oncampus. Once the future configuration of the campus becomes clearer, this option will be investigated by the University and discussed with stakeholders.

Off-campus student accommodation

There are opportunities across the city to work with developers to provide additional student accommodation and we are actively pursuing a number of options in line with our core principles of development.

We currently have a nominations agreement for the Beech House development on Latimer Road, which is due to be completed in summer 2017 and provide an additional 167 rooms. This property is close to our Headington Campus, sits on a main road that is well connected by buses and has appropriate management arrangements planned.

In addition, the University is pursuing potential opportunities that are within two miles of the Headington Campus and options that will support our Harcourt Hill students' accommodation needs. We are confident that these would meet our accommodation needs over the next five years.

However, these opportunities are in the early stages of discussion. Oxford Brookes will communicate further details if they progress to more formal stages of negotiation.

We will continue to look at other opportunities for Oxford Brookes University to increase its student bed stock in line with our core principles and work with partner accommodation providers to ensure local communities are consulted and included in the development process.

The University expects these consultations to take place in line with the Oxford Brookes protocol which seeks to ensure appropriate consultation with, and information provision to, the local community.

















Student-informed decision makina

We will carry out further research with students to understand what they expect from accommodation in terms of price and facilities. Student consultation is scheduled for winter 2016. This will feed into our continued evaluation of our accommodation portfolio to ensure our product mix best meets the varying needs of our students.

It will also enable us to develop a brief for student requirements to ensure rooms and social area facilities meet needs and expectations.

A STUDENT RESIDENCES STRATEGY FOR OUR OXFORD CAMPUSES

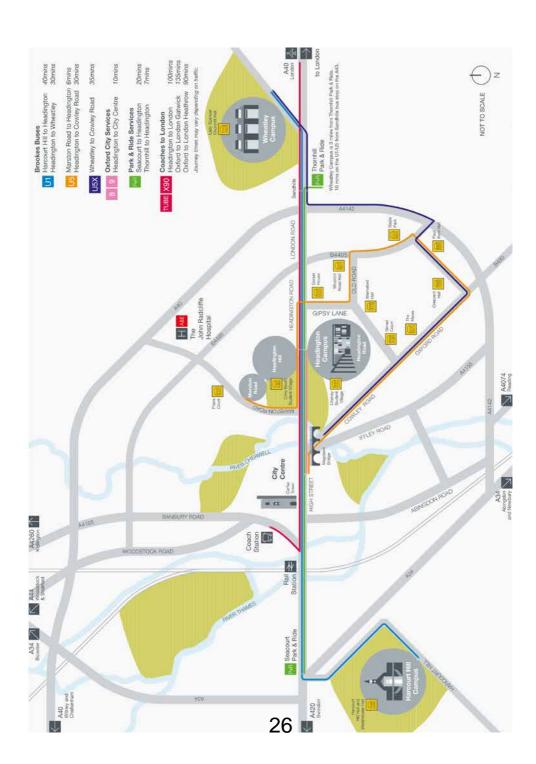
- Our aim is that the University's accommodation will be first choice for any of our students living in Oxford. This will be achieved through a high quality portfolio providing a variety of accommodation at a range of rent levels, meeting the needs of our students and providing them with good value for money.
- We will raise the quality of our existing halls of residences by implementing a rolling programme of refurbishment and upgrades.
- A higher proportion of students is now seeking accommodation in Oxford than in previous years, which has had an impact on our plans to achieve the 3,000 target and we need around an additional 750 rooms to meet the current deficit.
- Over the next ten years we will also need to add a further 1,855 rooms to our accommodation to support changes in student numbers.
- We will bring forward a series of projects to maximise the accommodation options on our current campuses and the sites of halls of residence.
- We will identify and bring forward with partners, schemes to address any remaining gaps within our accommodation offer. These are likely to be spread over the ten year period of this strategy.





HALLS OF RESIDENCE INFORMATION 2016/17





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UUK/Guild HE Code of Practice for the Management of Student Housing

Oxford Brookes University halls of residence and accommodation services comply with the Code of Practice; every hall office holds a compliance folder which is available for you to look at if you wish.

Further information on the Code can be found at: www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/aboutus/AssociatedOrganisations/Partnerships/ACOP/Pages/default.aspx

Hospitality Services are committed to providing a professional and friendly service that values you as an individual.





WELCOME FROM THE RESIDENCE MANAGEMENT TEAM



Welcome to Oxford Brookes University.

We hope you enjoy your stay in our halls of residence. Your hall is your new home for the coming academic year. Most students will live in halls for their first year of study, but there is the option to continue to live in halls in further years too. Each hall has a manager who is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the site and a range of other staff as well as a warden team.

For most, halls are an exciting place where you can create a vibrant community and make friendships which last for a lifetime. Communal living is a new experience for many students, and most manage the change extremely well. This booklet is designed to help you settle into your new community and tell you about the support available to you.

We strive to provide secure and affordable accommodation for our students living in halls. We offer support and information throughout your university career, and our staff are always willing to help you, especially if you are living away from home for the first time.

We aim to make your experience at Oxford Brookes an enjoyable one. If you feel we are not meeting your expectations please tell us.

Constructive feedback, compliments, comments and criticism help us to provide the services that students require; so get involved, this is your community.

We look forward to welcoming you to your hall. Residence Managers

ABOUT YOUR HALL

Our halls of residence are all a little different. They vary in size, location, on-site facilities and the arrangement of rooms. Depending on which hall you are living in, if you are in a study bedroom you will be part of a flat, corridor or block where you will share a kitchen/living room and maybe bathroom facilities too. Studio flats are self-contained units. They all produce vibrant and diverse communities, and give students a great opportunity to meet a wide variety of people.

Staff and wardens

There are a range of staff who work in our halls of residence. They are all here to help you if you have any problems. Each hall is managed by a Residence Manager. The size of the team they work with will vary depending on the size of the hall. Large halls have large teams while smaller halls have smaller teams. In addition to the Residence Manager there will be Assistant Residence Managers, Residence Support Assistants, Administrative Assistants, domestic staff, security staff and Hall Wardens. We also have a Residences Liaison Officer and Residence Community Officer who work across all sites to improve communications and provide social events.

Our regular hall staff work in the hall offices while they are open. Out of hours the Hall Wardens are available if you have any questions or concerns, and overnight there are security staff on call.

Hall Wardens are either members of Oxford Brookes staff or students in their second, third or fourth year who live in halls and are there to provide pastoral support and advice to student residents, as well as working in the hall office in the evenings and at weekends. Wardens are also Disciplinary Officers and have a responsibility to ensure that residents are adhering to the Hall and University Regulations.

They also organise social events and can provide information about Oxford in general. You will get to meet your warden team when you move in, and C

their details will be available in your flat if you need to contact them.

If you decide that you would be interested in becoming a warden in future years please email RCO@brookes.ac.uk for more details and an application pack.

Your bedroom

Your bedroom is your home for your time in halls. It's your personal space within your flat or corridor. It's where you live, keep your belongings and study.

Your bedroom will have the following furniture and fixtures in it when you arrive:

- bed-base and mattress
- mattress protector
- desk and desk chair
- reading lamp
- book shelves
- wardrobe
- waste bin
- bedside cabinet
- curtains

There will also be a vacuum cleaner provided for your flat and we expect you to keep your room clean and tidy. There are pinboards for posters etc. so please don't pin or stick items to the walls. If you damage the walls with drawing pins or blutac you will cover the cost of repair. You are responsible for your room. When you arrive we will give you an inventory form to complete, please do so and hand it in at the hall office.

NOTE: We don't provide bedding in the rooms. You need to bring your own bed linen. Alternatively you can buy it from your hall at arrival, or buy a bedding pack before you arrive from the shop in your StarRez account.

The kitchen

Most of our halls are self-catered, so each flat or corridor will have its own kitchen. All residents share the space for cooking and socialising. Storage is limited for each resident, so try not to bring too much with you.

Each kitchen has

- a cooker
- a microwave
- kettle
- fridge/freezer

You will be expected to keep the kitchen tidy. If you are living in a studio flat at Westminster your kitchen will have

- a small fridge/freezer
- cooker
- microwave
- kettle.

Please refer to https://www.brookes.
ac.uk/Documents/Studying-at-Brookes/
Accommodation---What-to-bring/ for a list of items to bring, and those you should leave at home.



Fridges and freezers

Your kitchen will have standard fridges and freezers shared by the flat/corridor. You may have less space for chilled and frozen food storage than you are used to. It can be better to wait until you arrive to buy groceries, instead of arriving with more than you can store.

Bike storage

Each hall has an area to store bikes. The type of storage varies by hall and we recommend buying a good lock. It's advised to have a D-lock on the frame and a cable lock elsewhere on the bicycle.

Smoking

There is no smoking permitted within the internal areas of any halls of residence or within 5 metres of any building. This includes e-cigarettes. You can read the University's Smoking Policy at

www.brookes.ac.uk/services/hr/health_safety/ no_smoking.html

Endsleigh Insurance

Basic contents insurance is provided by Endsleigh Insurance as part of your accommodation package. The insurance provided covers some of the items in your room for theft, fire and flood risk. To check what's covered please visit

https://www.endsleigh.co.uk/personal/ home-insurance/review-studentcover/?agent=12329&utm_source=uma&utm_ medium=partners&utm_campaign=block_ halls_certs_may_2015

and enter the policy number HH1212 or Institution 'Oxford Brookes' in the search boxes.

Laptops, tablets and phones are not covered if you take them outside of your room. You may wish to consider taking out additional cover to protect these items. Endsleigh offer some packages to extend your basic cover these items and other gadgets. Go to www.Endsleigh.co.uk/reviewcover for more information

LIVING IN YOUR ACCOMMODATION

Arriving

Arrivals weekend is a busy time, so we stagger arrival times to prevent bottlenecks. The table below lists what time we recommend you arrive. It is sorted by the first letter of your surname.

SURNAME	SATURDAY 17 SEPTEMBER	SUNDAY 18 SEPTEMBER
A-C	10.00-11.15am	10.00-11.15am
D-G	11.15am-12.30pm	11.15am-12.30pm
H-L	12.30-1.45pm	12.30-1.45pm
M-P	1.45-3.00pm	1.45-3.00pm
R-S	3.00-4.15pm	3.00-4.15pm
T-Z	4.15-6.00pm	4.15-6.00pm

Please note that if you are going to be living in Clive Booth Student Village you will be able to book your arrival time online. Details are available in your hall e-induction.

If you can't make your time slot we recommend you arrive between 10am and 6pm on the Saturday or Sunday. If you need to arrive outside these times, make arrangements in advance. You should contact the hall office using details on page 19. Not all hall offices are staffed 24 hours, so it is important that you contact them to make special arrangements.

If you are coming from overseas and will arrive a few days before arrivals weekend you can move into your hall room up to a week early provided it is an Oxford Brookes University managed hall. We will charge you for the additional days. Please email accomm@brookes.ac.uk to arrange this. If you

are going to be living in Cheney Student Village you will not be able to arrive in your room early. If you are going to be living in a third party hall you will need to discuss arrangements with the hall directly.

At arrivals weekend, the hall offices issue keys, and will be extremely busy. We ask that only the licence holder (the student) arrive at reception to check in.

Mail

If your mail is properly addressed it will be delivered to your post box in halls. Hall staff will, at their discretion, sign for packages that do not fit into your post box but please note they are signing only to confirm the package has been received.

Oversized packages are delivered to halls at your own risk. It is now possible to get parcels from Amazon delivered to local shops or the brass lockers in the John Henry Brookes building.

You will be notified via your Oxford Brookes email address that a package is awaiting collection from your hall office. Please collect your packages during the times that your hall specify (you will need to show photographic ID). The length of time the hall office will hold your package varies from hall to hall.

Hall staff reserve the right to refuse/dispose of any package that is giving off any noxious fumes or is suspected to contain substances that are illegal or may pose a risk to health and/or safety. Packages not collected within 7 days will be donated to a local charity.

Data and phone lines

There is a network access point in every bedroom which allows you to connect to the wired University network; subject to the relevant rules and regulations. Once you have enrolled on your course and have your student number, you will be able to use this. This service is included with your hall fees.

Although it does not form part of your contractual agreement there is complimentary Wi-Fi in all halls. Information about getting online can be found in the leaflet in your 'Residents' Information Pack' in your kitchen, or by visiting the IT website www.brookes.ac.uk/objs.



Mobile Phones

Most students use mobile phones. Please note that there are areas of poor signal strength in some of our halls. This is beyond the control of the University, and signal strength may vary between service providers.

Telephones in-hall

Unless you have a medical condition which requires you to have a phone line in your room, our halls no longer have landlines. If you don't want to use your mobile phone to make calls, we recommend you use Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) services instead. This is a way of using voice communication over the internet, rather than a conventional landline network. You can use the University network to access these types of services (for example Skype

or Google Talk etc.) and can use it to contact halls staff if you need to.

Once you are able to access our internet networks, you can set up a service using one of the available providers. Please note that you might need to purchase a microphone or headset if your computer, tablet etc. does not have them.

The advantages of these systems are:

- Free installation and calls using the software application
- Competitive rates when calling landline or mobile telephones
- Easy to install and use (more information will provided in your welcome folder)
- You can use it on smart phones, laptops, tablets etc.
- VoIP providers can also assign you with a number so that other people can contact you using a landline telephone.

Vacation arrangements

Your contract is continuous from arrivals weekend until you leave in the summer. This means you can stay in your room throughout the Christmas and Easter vacations. If you don't want to live in hall you can still leave all of your possessions in your room. If you go home for the holidays you will need to tell us for security and safety purposes. Please complete the vacation form that's available in your hall.

Most hall contracts end at the start of June. If you need to stay in Oxford over the summer vacation, we do have a limited number of hall rooms available that you can book. These are available on a first-come first-served basis.

Students are not allowed to rent out their rooms directly to anyone else. This is called subletting and is illegal and a breach of the Hall Regulations. Any room swaps must be organised through the Accommodation Bureau. The accommodation is provided as single accommodation, unless otherwise stated. This means that you are unable to co-habit in a room.

When you leave

At the end of your Licence to Occupy you will be required to permanently leave your room (usually by 10am) and return your room keys in person to the hall office. If you are leaving early you will need to contact your hall office.

You must leave your room and the communal areas of your flat clean and tidy. All furniture and items must be left as they were when you arrived and any food removed from cupboards and fridges. Missing or damaged items are charged to you for replacement (see page 21). Please ensure that you hand in your room key to the hall office when you leave.

At the end of your Licence to Occupy, any belongings which are left in your room will be stored for two weeks and we will try to contact you. If after two weeks we have not had any contact from you, then we will send the items to a charity shop or they will be disposed of. If you have contacted us and cannot collect your belongings within two weeks, there will be a storage charge until you can collect them. We cannot store your items for longer than four weeks however, and after this time they will be disposed of.

Cost of living

It's a good idea to learn to budget before you come to university. It can be a shock when come to university and experience the cost of living for the first time. The following is just a guide to what your weekly expenditure is likely to be. The great news about living in halls is that your utility bills, insurance, internet and most of your bus travel are already included in your hall fees. If you are in a catered hall most of your food is included too.

The table details the average weekly expenditure for living costs beyond hall fees and those items that are included in your hall fees.

ITEM	COST					
Laundry costs	£6-9					
Telephone/mobile bills	£10					
Transport (in addition to	£10					
BROOKESBus travel)						
Food (for non-catered students)	£50					
Household goods	£10					
(toiletries, cleaning products etc)						
Leisure, sport and hobbies	£35					
Other expenses	£30					
(clothes, haircuts, gifts etc)						
Total weekly expenditure	£145					

Some people may be able to spend less in some areas. It's always worth shopping around and looking for deals and vouchers to reduce your expenditure. Buying food as a flat can be much more economical than everybody buying their own food every week.

There are some costs you may incur that are monthly costs, such as a TV Licence (if you bring a TV with you). If you extend your contents insurance to cover specific items, this will also be on top of these costs. Some courses also have expenditure associated with them – like fine art, where you will need to buy paper and art materials. Your department should be able to give you accurate study costs information.

With accommodation fees included, it is likely you will be spending around £300 per week to live while you are at University. This will vary depending on which hall you are living in and what you are studying. It's useful to keep a close eye on your spending and your bank account. If you do struggle to afford to live while you are at University our financial aid office may be able to help you www.brookes.ac.uk/studying-at-brookes/finance/financial-aid/.

LIVING IN OXFORD

Oxford is a great city to be a student. With two large universities the city caters well for 18 – 29 year olds who make up roughly a third of the city's population.

Oxford Brookes' main Headington Campus is in East Oxford, a short bus ride from the city centre and close to the Cowley Road, which is the heart of the student community. The Cowley Road has lots of bars, restaurants pubs and clubs as well as great music and cultural venues and independent shops. Lots of our students also live in the Cowley Road area if they chose to move out of halls in their continuing years.

Oxford has lots of cultural attractions. We have the Ashmolean, the Pitt Rivers Museum and the National History Museum to explore. There is the Modern Art Oxford gallery where lots of our students' work is exhibited. We have exciting theatre, dance and stage shows at the New Theatre, the Pegasus Theatre and the Oxford Playhouse. Oxford Castle is a great place to visit plus we have loads of music events. There's the Common People festival every year in South Park (right next to our Headington Campus), The Oxford Folk Festival, the Cowley Road Carnival in July, and May Day events across the city from sunrise onwards.

Oxford is an amazing place to eat. Many great restaurants and cafes are on the Cowley Road, but you can also find great food in the city centre, Summertown and in the Covered Market. There's also lots you can do outside. Oxford is a very green city with lots of parks and two rivers. Blenheim Palace is just outside the city. We're also very close to the lovely South Oxfordshire countryside and the Cotswolds.







ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT& RECYCLING

There is scientific consensus that human activities have contributed to climate change. The University would like all residents and staff to play their part in reducing this impact. We collaborate with local and national charities during the year to support their fundraising from donations of unwanted items and food. This has been very successful at reducing waste, increasing recycling and supporting the community.

Heating

The University is bound by legislation and an approved Code of Practice which determines the temperature levels within its buildings. Halls of residence heating is controlled centrally. The thermostat switches radiators off once a flat reaches the required temperature. If you have no heating, it may be that the flat may has reached this pre-set temperature. Please note that the University turns off central heating from June until the Autumn.

Bicycles

A free Bike Doctor service is offered during semester time at all campuses. The Bike Doctor provides students and staff with while-you-wait bicycle repairs (or you can leave your bike with the Bike Doctor for collection later in the day).

There are discounts for Students with a valid ID card in some bike shops. Please visit **www.easit. org.uk/cycle** for details.

The Oxonbike bike hire scheme is available from several points on the Headington Campus. For more information on the above please refer to www.brookes.ac.uk/cycling.

Please remember to take your bike with you at the end of your stay as all left bikes are donated to charity.

BROOKESbus

All Oxford Brookes students are eligible to apply for a BROOKESkey. This is a travel card that offers discount on trips to London and the airports as well as £1 fares on buses around Oxford. Students can keep the card for the duration of their course.

Additionally Oxford Brookes students living in halls and all undergraduate students paying full fees have an Inclusive Travel Pass added to their BROOKESkey which allows travel on BROOKESbuses for no charge and is valid until the end of the academic year. Please visit https://brookes.oxfordkey.co.uk/smart-card/register/ to register for your key. If you have any questions please contact transport@brookes.ac.uk



Car club

Oxford Brookes has a car club which allows you to hire a car when you need it. For terms and conditions please visit **www.brookes.ac.uk/carclub**.

How you can help

Students at Oxford Brookes University can make a positive impact on saving energy by

- turning down radiators when a room is warm enough, including kitchens and corridors
- closing windows which are left open (also important for security reasons)
- switching off lights when not in use
- turning the tap off when brushing teeth
- using a plug in the sink and not letting hot water pour away
- taking quick showers
- switching off radios, laptops, computers and TVs when not in use.

Our halls of residence use around £800,000 worth of energy each year and these costs are included within everybody's rent. It is important that we all 'do our bit' to reduce energy use so that the University can use some of this money to support student activities in other areas.

Recycling

Residents are required to remove all of the rubbish from their flat and take it to the refuse collection point on daily. Clear instructions and collection point locations are provided on the notice boards and in resident information packs in your kitchen.

Please read the notices above the bins to ensure that you put the correct materials into the recycling containers. Rubbish such as banana skins could contaminate the whole load, and therefore would be sent to landfill instead of being recycled.

Halls also operate a re-use scheme. When students leave halls, they can donate items for future students to re-use or send to charities. Please contact the hall office for more information.

We also work with Oxford Food Bank. Students can donate unwanted canned or packaged food or toiletries at the end of their stay. This means food is not going to landfill and local people benefit.





HEALTH & SAFETY

General maintenance

Your bedroom may require maintenance during your stay in halls. If you have maintenance issues in your room you can report them through the Residents' Information Portal. If you are resident in Cheney Student Village please report maintenance issues to reception. Please give as much information as you can i.e. location and description of fault. This will ensure that work can be done as soon as possible. For emergencies (e.g. water leaks, or electrical problems) please contact on-call staff.

Planned maintenance occurs through the year, such as; fire alarm testing, water testing, shower head descaling, gutter cleaning, grounds maintenance. We will notify you when access is required to your room.

Fire alarms

All halls undertake statutory fire alarm testing on a weekly basis between Monday and Friday (except bank holidays). The actual dates, locations and times of testing will be advertised/circulated at each hall in September. If you hear the fire alarm outside of these advertised times you must evacuate the building to the nearest Assembly Point. We recommend you establish a safe route out of the building and to the nearest Fire Assembly Point when you arrive at your hall.

Safety in halls

Oxford Brookes takes Health and Safety very seriously and as a result we have a regime of internal and external inspections and protocols. The following information is provided so that you are aware of what the University is doing and understand these issues. If you have any questions or concerns please contact your Residence Manager.

Asbestos

In some older halls you may find small stickers which indicate that asbestos is present. Please don't be alarmed by this. Asbestos was a standard building material during the 1960s and the vast majority of buildings of this age will have low levels of asbestos. Asbestos is not dangerous providing it is not disturbed.

Oxford Brookes arranges for an independent survey to be completed on an annual basis and have placed these stickers to ensure that maintenance engineers know where it is and can work safely. If you would like more information on this subject please go to www.brookes.ac.uk/services/hr/health_safety/docs/obuhsn35.html

Legionella control

You may have heard of Legionella Disease but you might not be aware of what it is. It is a disease caused by bacteria that can be found in natural water sources e.g. water systems in offices, academic buildings, residential accommodation and houses.

You can become infected by inhaling bacteria in aerosol form. Oxford Brookes University has policies and procedures in place to manage risk from contamination in accordance with the current legislation and good practice. Site risk assessments are completed and an approved specialist water treatment company is appointed to undertake the necessary monitoring and maintenance activities.

What this means for you, is that periodically we will need access to your room or flat to monitor the quality of the water. We will always give you notice when this is going to happen and as is possible we will avoid exam periods.

PERSONAL SAFETY

We want you to enjoy your time living in halls and we also want you to be safe and secure during your entire student journey. Oxford is a very safe city, and while the vast majority of students do not experience crime during their time here, unfortunately some do. We take security very seriously. All halls have security staff cover and all student rooms have window locks. We also work closely with our Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and the local police to ensure that we have done all that we can to make our students safe.

Unfortunately despite all the measures we take, some students will come into contact with crime. The following gives an overview of what steps you can take to reduce the likelihood of this happening to you. Please make sure you read it carefully, and make sure you report any suspicious activity to the hall staff, PCSOs, security staff or the police.



Personal property

You should register your property on www. immobalise.com when you come to University. This means it may be more likely to be returned to you if it is stolen and recovered by the police. We provide basic contents insurance as part of your hall contract. Please check this carefully to see if all of your items are covered. If they are not you can purchase extensions to this cover, or you may be able to have your property covered by your parents' home contents insurance.

There are tools that you can install on your smartphone, tablet or laptop to help track it if it is stolen. If you have an Apple product there are built in tools you can activate. Many android phones and tablets also have built in tracking programmes, or this functionality is part of downloadable security apps.

If you have a windows tablet or laptop you can download programmes such as Prey https://preyproject.com/ (this also works on Android and Apple products). Additionally security software now frequently includes tracking.

None of these products are endorsed by or supported by Oxford Brookes Information Systems. There are lots of options available and we recommend you research which one meets your needs.

If you bring a bike with you to Oxford we recommend that it isn't a particularly expensive model and that you always use two locks, one on the frame and one on a wheel. There is dedicated bike storage at our halls, and on our campuses.

In your hall

Generally students living in halls of residence experience lower rates of crime than students in privately rented accommodation. You should not be complacent however. The location of halls are advertised and well known. Criminals sometimes target halls of residence for their activity, especially at the start of term. Here are a few tips to help keep you and your room safer:

- Keep money, keys and electronic items (laptops, tablets phones etc.) out of sight when you are not in your room
- When you leave your room make sure your windows and door are properly closed and locked – this includes if you leave your room to go into your flat kitchen or shared bathroom
- If there are any problems with your door, windows or locks report them immediately
- Report the loss of any keys immediately
- Report any suspicious activity immediately
- Challenge anybody on site who you do not recognise. Staff will be able to show you their staff card and we will always give you 24 hours' notice if we need access to your room
- Don't let anybody tailgate you into a locked building (i.e. follow in immediately behind you) and make sure all doors close behind you
- Don't prop doors open
- If you see any criminal activity being carried out report it to the police or security immediately.
 Details will be in your kitchen packs and on notice boards.

Out and about

Oxford has Purple Flag status (https://www.atcm.org/programmes/purple_flag/
WelcometoPurpleFlag) which means that our city is considered safe. We still recommend that you take extra precautions to ensure your safety when are you are out and about. For example:

- When you go out, make sure you tell somebody where you are going
- Try not to carry a lot of cash on you or display expensive personal items that can make you a more attractive target for crime
- At night try to travel as a group rather than on your own
- Avoid short cuts or unlit areas after dark
- Be vigilant at cash points (ATMs) and don't be distracted when using them. Make sure you don't carry your PIN on you
- Don't accept lifts or share taxis with people you don't know
- Remember that if you don't have money to get home you can always use the Brookes Safety Bus (http://www.brookesunion.org.uk/ safetybus)
- Keep an eye on your drink, and those of the people you are with when you are in bars or clubs. Do not accept drinks from strangers, especially if you have not watched their preparation
- If you are threatened or cornered then scream, shout or use a personal alarm to draw attention to yourself
- If somebody tries to grab your bag, let them take it. Your safety is more important than your possessions
- Report any incident to the police or security immediately
- Keep an eye out for your friends. If you think somebody might be in trouble, see if you can help

Illegal or unsafe behaviour

The University recognises that drugs, alcohol and other substances play a part in the lives of some individuals. Please note that the University does have a Substance Misuse Policy which states that:

"The University does not tolerate substance misuse or the possession and selling of illegal drugs on any of its premises. This includes individual student rooms in University Halls of Residence and in premises managed on behalf of the University by a third party, such as privately-managed halls of residence or University properties off-campus."

In addition to any criminal consequences of drug use, students are subject to disciplinary action if they are found to be in possession of illegal substances. This can have repercussions for a student's future at the University and future employment prospects.

While alcohol is not illegal, it is a substance that can be misused and drinking to excess can have significant health consequences. Alcohol can make you behave out of character and also dulls the senses. This can mean you are less alert and aware of dangers. The current guidelines are that adults should not drink more than 14 units of alcohol a week – which is 7 pints of ordinary strength beer/lager, 14 small pub measures of wine or 14 single measures of spirits. For more information on staying safe when drinking alcohol, please visit https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/advice/staying-safe-while-drinking/how-to-stay-safe-at-uni/

All students at Oxford Brookes must comply with the Student Conduct Regulations. These Regulations include references to how students impact the safety and security of students, staff and other individuals while they are at Oxford Brookes. Further to any criminal proceedings a student may become party to, if you breach these Regulations you will be subject to disciplinary action from the University and your future at the University may be affected.

It is important that you understand how your actions can impact on other people. The University will not tolerate threatening behaviour, physical assault, bullying or sexual assault.

Sexual assault is any act of a sexual nature where consent has not been obtained. For more information about consent, have a look at the Thames Valley Police Consent is Everything video (www.thamesvalley.police.uk/crime-prevention/keeping-safe/consent-is-everything.htm). Understanding consent is important for everybody's safety and wellbeing and it is worth remembering that most sexual assault takes place within pre-existing relationships – whether these relationships are with people you are dating, people you are friends with, acquaintances or people you meet during a night out.

If you are the victim of any attack or assault, please talk to a member of hall staff or Hall Warden immediately, who will support you and give you guidance on the next steps. You can also gain professional help and support for any issue through Wellbeing – 01865 484650 www.brookes.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/. You can be assured that if you report any attack or assault to staff in your Hall or in the University, this will be treated in the strictest confidence.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1 How will the flats be mixed?

Accommodation is allocated via a random computer allocation system, so your room could be on any floor, and facing any direction. Flats are mixed, and will be made up of students who are of different genders, cultures and studying different courses. The only exception to this is those students who have longer contracts due to course requirements who are generally housed together.

2 Will the accommodation be with undergraduates or postgraduates?

Where possible, students who have requested postgraduate or mature undergraduate accommodation will be allocated within postgraduate blocks. If a student moves out during the year and we have students wanting accommodation then this room could be filled with an undergraduate or postgraduate student.

3 How much will it cost to do my laundry?

The laundry costs £2.20 for a wash and £1 for the dryer.

4 Am I allowed to bring a TV?

Yes, televisions are allowed. You will be required to have a TV licence and the signal can vary in halls, so an internal aerial may be needed.

5 Are guests allowed to stay?

Yes guests can stay in your room after the first two weeks of semester. They can stay for three out of seven nights and need to be registered at the hall. Please be aware that if they bring a car they will need to park at one of the Park and Rides.





SUPERMARKET LOCATIONS

Larger supermarkets

Asda

London Road, Wheatley Oxford, OX33 1YX

Sainsburys

Heyford Hill, Littlemore Oxford, OX4 4XR

Sainsburys

Unit 1, The John Allen Centre, Between Towns Road, Cowley, Oxford, OX4 3JP

Tesco

Unit 7, Oxford Retail Park, Cowley, Oxford, OX4 6XJ

Headington

Sainsburvs

98 London Rd Oxford, Headington Oxford OX3 9AJ

Tesco

83/83a London Rd Oxford, Headington Oxford OX3 9AJ

The Cooperative

152 London Rd, Oxford OX3 9ED

Waitrose

9-11, Old High Street Oxford, OX3 9JT

Cowley Road

Tesco Metro

159 – 161 Cowley Road Oxford OX4 1UT 0845 677 9520

Uhuru Wholefoods

48 Cowley Road, Iffley Oxford, OX4 1HZ 01865 248249

Tahmid Stores

53 Cowley Road Oxford OX4 1HP 01865 203202

Sainsburys Local

134b Cowley Road Oxford OX4 1JH 01865 448330

Baltic Food

88 Cowley Road, Iffley Oxford OX4 1JB 01865 248774

Simply Fresh

236 – 239 Cowley Road, Iffley Oxford OX4 1UH 01865 200600



USEFUL CONTACTS

Wellbeing Services

Mon - Thu 9am - 5pm Friday 9am - 4.30pm 01865 484650 wellbeing-recpt@brookes.ac.uk

Disability

01865 484653 disabilitysupport@brookes.ac.uk

International Students Advice Team

01865 484581 isat@brookes.ac.uk

Medical Centre

Mon - Fri 8.30am - 6pm 01865 483193 Out of hours 01865 242334 medical.centre@brookes.ac.uk

Safety Bus

Mon - Sat 9pm - 3am Sun 9pm - 1am 07714 445050

Student Finance

Tuition Fees: 01865 483088 Hall Fees: 01865 483866 finance-fees@brookes.ac.uk

Students' Union

Advice centre: 01865 484770 su.advice@brookes.ac.uk Executive Office: 01865 484750

Facilities

24 hour telephone number: 01865 483060 Harcourt: 01865 486585

Headington: 01865 483060 Wheatley: 01865 485853

Accommodation Bureau

01865 484660 accomm@brookes.ac.uk

Cheney Student Village

24 hours: 01865 325380

Clive Booth Student Village

24 hours: 01865 485013

Crescent Hall

24 hours: 01865 482850

Westminster Hall and Harcourt Hill Hall

24 hours: 01865 485403

Lady Spencer Churchill Hall

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bedroom	£42.00

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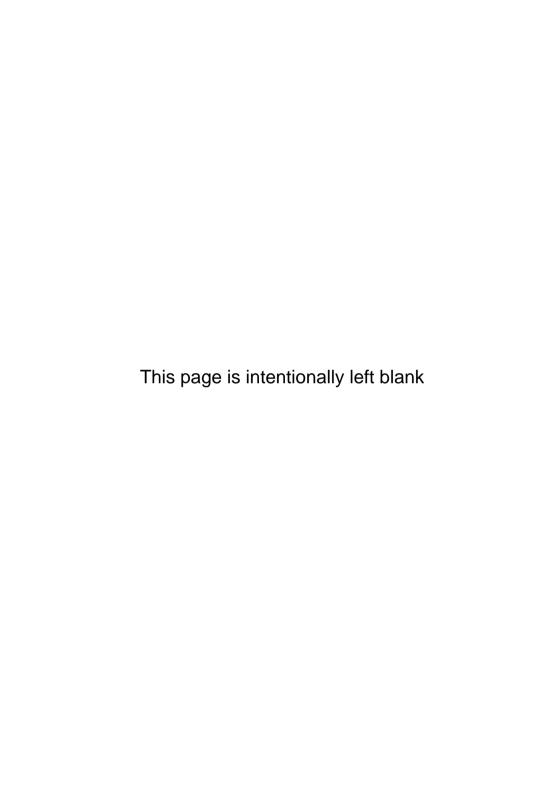
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To: The Housing Panel

Date: 9 November 2016

Report of: Head of Planning & Regulatory Services

Title of Report: An update on HMO Licensing

Summary

Purpose of report: To update the Housing Panel on the current position regarding HMO Licensing and the future plans for the service.

Key Decision: No

Executive lead member: Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Board Member for Planning and

Regulatory

Report author: Ian Wright, Environmental Health Service Manager

Policy Framework: Meeting Housing Need

Appendices to report:

Appendix 1 – Criteria for Longer Licences

Appendix 2 – HMO Licence Applications Fees and Charges

Appendix 3 – Enforcement statistics

Background

1. The Council has been licensing HMOs since April 2006 and in 2011 it extended licensing to every HMO in the City. The scheme was renewed this year and it will run until 2021. The purpose of this report is to update the Panel on how the scheme works and advise them on future issues.

The application process

2. The application process for licensing an HMO is governed by legal requirements set out in the Housing Act 2004 and supporting regulations. Currently the applicant completes an application form, pays the appropriate fee and signs a statutory declaration.

- 3. In order for the applicant to benefit from a longer licence at a lower fee the Council attached certain criteria (set out in Appendix 1) to licence applications to determine the length of licence appropriate. This approach was adopted to encourage professionalism in the sector and to provide an incentive to good landlords who were taking the responsibility to licence seriously. The fees attached to licences reflect the amount of time the Council spends dealing with the different type of licence applications.
- 4. The responsibility to make an application valid falls with the owner of the HMO. Where landlords do not take this responsible approach significant delays in the process can be caused. These delays are experienced with both new and renewal applications and the Council regularly spends time chasing applicants who have made invalid applications. This is reflected in the fees as shown in Appendix 2.
- 5. The Council currently operates an online application system and proposals are being considered to change and upgrade the system to improve this process to make it easier for landlords and reduce the burden on the Council in ensuring an application is made valid. Discussions with other local authorities such as the London Borough of Newham have demonstrated that this is a national problem, with very few software companies developing bespoke programmes for what is a relatively small market. There have been delays in the processing system for some time due to a variety of reasons. A planned upgrade by our existing supplier was not successful and changes in personnel have resulted in a number of backlogs that have had to be cleared.

Fit and proper tests for landlords & agents

- 6. All licences holders must be "fit and proper persons" which is defined in the Housing Act 2004. The Council does not consider a person to be "fit and proper" if they have been convicted of an offence under housing legislation or where there is evidence to suggest they have committed other serious offences such as fraud, dishonesty, drugs, violence or sexual offences. Where a person has been convicted of a relevant offence then he/she is considered to be not fit and proper for a period of five years from the date of conviction and as such they are not able to hold an HMO licence or be the manager of an HMO. Applicants are screened during the process and advised that their application will be refused and they will have to provide a suitable alternative licence holder and manager who is not directly associated with the person convicted.
- 7. In cases where a suitable alternative licence holder/ manager is not provided the Council will proceed to make an Interim Management Order which transfers the responsibility to collect the rent and manage the HMO to the Council. This type of action is usually taken as a last resort but it has been taken 6 times by the Council recently and there are a number of ongoing cases where this course of action may be appropriate.
- 8. Should any issues arise or new information be discovered after the licence is issued, the Council can revoke the licence. This is usually where it is found that the applicant has provided false or misleading information or made a false declaration.

What we are doing to find HMOs

9. The Corporate Target for 2016/17 is to licence 70% of the estimated HMOs in the City and the current performance is 73%. The estimated figure of 5,240 has been

derived from the Census data, although in reality it will be an ever changing figure. There is no definitive list of HMO addresses and so the Council has to actively seek out potentially unlicensed HMOs. Whilst there are many compliant and broadly compliant landlords there are a considerable number of landlords who passively or actively avoid licensing. In addition, the nature of HMOs means that some HMOs are in constant use whereas others, particularly smaller HMOs, will be created and then revert back to use as a dwelling house.

- 10. The Council targets proactive visits based on a comparison of data obtained from Census information and that held on the Council's system. A desk top check of data held by the Council on the property database, Electoral register and Council tax system is carried out to determine if there are any further indications that the property may be multi occupied. This has enabled the Council to identify areas within the City where there are higher numbers of potential unlicensed HMOs. The properties identified are categorised and prioritised by size, previous history etc. and officers conduct unannounced visits to assess the situation.
- 11. The Council takes reports about alleged HMOs extremely seriously and has a "report it" facility on the website. All reports made by the general public, residents, councillors, and other services such as the Community Response Team and the Police are checked against the Council's records. Most cases require a site visit to determine if the property appears to be occupied as an HMO.
- 12. So far this year this approach has resulted in 54 previously unlicensed HMOs being required to licence and 25 successful prosecutions.

Planning and HMOs

- 13. Many people get confused with planning controls and HMO licensing. The reality is that the two systems are completely separate and not dependant upon each other. They even have different definitions of what types of HMO are controlled. It is not legally possible to refuse to grant a licence because an HMO does not have planning permission and the DCLG view is that the aims of both sets of legislation are different and they have no intention to change the legislation. This means that there have been instances where the Council has had to issue a HMO licence and then serve a planning enforcement notice to stop the use of the property as an HMO.
- 14. The Council has taken steps to integrate the functions as far as practicable. Following the last restructure the HMO and Planning Enforcement functions are now in the same service which has improved communication and joint working. There are also questions on the HMO licence application form regarding the planning history of the property. If it is not clear that the property was in use as an HMO before 2012 then it will be referred to Planning Enforcement for investigation. Similarly, any unlicensed HMOs discovered by the HMO Enforcement Team will be referred to Planning Enforcement.
- 15. The issue in Oxford is particularly acute because of the introduction of the Article 4 Direction in 2012 to create a better balance of dwellings and take away the permitted development right to move from a C3 dwelling house to a C4 small HMO across the city. HMOs with 7 or more tenants are in a different Use Class and have always required planning permission. Planning policy HP7 on HMOs was introduced after consideration of a range of policy options applied by other local authorities and the rule of no more than 20% of HMOs within 100m either side of the application

- address was thought to be the best solution at the time. Along with the Local Plan, the HMO Policy is currently being considered for review.
- 16. When calculating the proportion of HMOs in any given neighbourhood the Development Management Teams will take into account the number of HMOs on the database that have been licensed in the street. They will consult with the HMO Enforcement team if the case is borderline. The information they have access to is available on the public access part of the Council's website.

When we take enforcement action & the types of action available

- 17. The Council is extremely proactive in enforcement and will take legal action where there is a clear breach of legislation. Subject to legal requirements, we will ensure that we exercise our regulatory activities in a way which is proportionate; accountable; consistent, transparent and targeted. This has resulted in the council being one of the lead authorities for HMO prosecutions in the UK.
- 18. The Council has a variety of duties and powers to deal with HMOs, predominantly under the Housing Act 2004. The legislation places a responsibility on the Council, in certain circumstances to take action and also provides powers (discretion) to act in other matters.
- 19. Where the Council finds clear evidence of someone breaching the HMO requirements it will commence with a formal investigation. This includes a risk assessment using an enforcement matrix which assists the Council in determining which course of action is appropriate. In the most serious cases, where there is clear evidence of a breach and it is in the public interest to do so, the Council will proceed with a prosecution. This will typically include cases where an owner has failed to licence their HMO, comply with management responsibilities or failed to comply with licence conditions.
- 20. In cases that impact on the health and safety of the occupants the Council will serve a notice or order where there is a serious risk of harm to health. In cases where the risk is not so serious the Council may serve a notice, for which there is a charge or order or require these matters to be addressed through licence conditions. Licence fees will be increased if this latter approach is adopted.
- 21. Another power the Council will use, where appropriate include Rent Repayment Orders, which enable the Council to claim back any housing benefit paid to tenants during a 12 month period when they were occupying an unlicensed HMO. Since the inception of the scheme the Council has claimed back around £22,000. Similar provisions exist for tenants to claim rent back after the Council has successfully prosecuted a landlord and the Council assists those tenants that wish to take this action.
- 22. Appendix 3 provides some statistics on the enforcement activity carried out in relation to HMOs since 2011.

Licence conditions that can be used and compliance checks

23. A licence must include the mandatory conditions set out in the Housing Act 2004, which cover gas and electrical safety, safety of furniture, the provision of smoke alarms and supplying to the occupiers of the house a written statement of the terms on which they occupy it. A licence may also include such conditions as the Council consider appropriate for regulating the management, use and occupation of the house concerned, and its condition and contents. Additional conditions were

included on over 90% of all the new licences issued because the council decided to inspect every HMO before issuing a licence. They are used to require property repairs, additional facilities, to prohibit rooms that were too small and tidy unsafe gardens. Landlords can challenge additional conditions when the licence is at the draft stage and can appeal to the First Tier Tribunal if the condition is imposed on the licence.

- 24. Compliance visits are typically carried out three months before a licence is due to expire and it is not unusual to find non-compliance with conditions. In cases such as this the Council adopts a risk based approach and may if appropriate carry licence conditions over onto the next licence with a shortened completion date. In more serious cases the Council will commence formal action. Failure to comply with conditions also impacts on the fees charged to the landlord as further compliance inspections are required.
- 25. The Council measures full compliance rates and has a target of 50%. So far this year the average is 46%. In many cases the outstanding issues are minor or works are in progress, so a prosecution is not warranted, but nevertheless it is an indication that pressure must be maintained on the sector to secure improvements.

Working with stakeholders - who we work with & when

- 26. The HMO Enforcement Team work with a range of stakeholders in a variety of ways. There are regular Landlord Information Exchanges to update all landlords and agents and the Council also operates an accreditation scheme which is linked to the licensing scheme and all landlords applying for accreditation are required to attend a one day training session organised by the Council.
- 27. The Oxford Community Forum was set up to work with the Asian landlord community and meets quarterly to discuss HMO licensing issues and the private rented sector.
- 28. The HMO Enforcement Team also attend residents associations meetings when requested and have been involved in area walkabouts.

New legislation – Housing & Planning Act 2016

- 29. The Housing and Planning Act 2016 is a new piece of legislation aimed at, amongst other things, rogue landlords and property agents. It provides new powers for the Council to clamp down on rogue landlords and persistent offenders. The main provisions appropriate to HMOs are those relating to banning orders; a database of rogue landlords; extending the ability to obtain rent repayment orders and introducing financial penalties so the Council can issue and retain fines of up to £30,000. The full range of powers have not yet taken effect and they will require commencement orders and regulations which are likely to be issued in October 2017. The Council are involved in the DCLG select working groups helping to develop and implement the new powers.
- 30. The Government are also consulting on proposals regarding extending mandatory licensing for Houses in Multiple Occupation following a technical discussion paper last year. DCLG has launched a further consultation on the detail of the proposals. In summary they are proposing to extend mandatory licensing to include all large HMOs regardless of the number of floors, and including flats above and below high risk business premises. The person threshold of 5 people in 2 households will remain unchanged. The Government wish to clarify that no one should sleep in a room in a licensable HMO that is smaller than the Housing Act 1985 overcrowding

standard of 6.5sq m. This will be done by inserting a new mandatory condition into the licence. They are however seeking views on how adults occupying rooms with children should be treated.

What happens at the end of the current scheme

- 31. The current scheme is due to expire on the 24th January 2021 and if the Council does not renew the designation before then the scheme will lapse. At that point only larger HMOs would require a licence. Within the Act there is a legal requirement to review the scheme "from time to time" following its operation. This review will need to take place before the expiry of the scheme.
- 32. If the Council proposes to 'renew' the scheme it must proceed through the statutory process as laid out in the Housing Act 2004 and associated regulations: This will include the need to determine whether there are a significant proportion of HMOs in the City being managed ineffectively and to consult with persons who are likely to be affected by the scheme. The matter would be subject to CEB approval at two stages, namely consideration of the results and recommendations of any review and a decision to consult on future proposals to re-designate the scheme (if appropriate).

Future plans and priorities

- 33. HMO licensing remained the top priority in the recently approved Private Sector Housing Policy 2016-2019. The focus has shifted to giving longer licences to broadly compliant landlords and focusing resources on unlicensed HMOs to ensure that the corporate target for licensing 80% of the estimated HMOs by 2018/19 is met.
- 34. Improving the applications software is another key priority. The customer service issues generated by the volume and complexity of the applications are considerable and whilst this is a national problem, a solution would significantly improve the service.
- 35. Influencing the contents of and responding to the new legislative changes proposed by the government in the Housing and Planning Act 2016 will hopefully give the HMO Enforcement Team a boost in effectiveness. The deterrent effect of banning orders, heavy fixed penalty fines, increased rent repayment orders and the transparency of a national database will enhance the impact of the service and should help improve the private rented sector in Oxford.

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List of background papers: None

Appendix 1 – Criteria for Longer Licences

One year Licence Criteria

To receive a 1 year licence you must:

Complete a valid licence application before expiry.

There are no additional pre-requisite criteria for receiving an annual licence with reinspection.

To receive an annual licence without re-inspection, all conditions must be completed and there must be no concerns over the management of the house.

All first-time licensees will have one-year licences with re-inspections initially.

Two year Licence Criteria

To receive a 2 year licence you must:

- 1. Complete a valid licence application
- 2. Provide a Fire Risk Assessment

Both items must be completed at least 28 days before your current licence expires.

Having a fire risk assessment for your HMO is a legal requirement under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, which is enforced by the Fire Authority.

We check the following when assessing two-year licence eligibility:

- Good application history on time and complete, no repeat reminders
- 'Clean bill of health' no issues with other departments e.g. Council Tax, Planning etc. within the last three years
- No outstanding licence conditions new conditions for minor works (e.g. decorative repair) may be permitted
- All safety certificates are provided up-to-date and satisfactory
- Maximum two justified service requests complaints we receive each year about property conditions etc. where we have had to take action or instigate enforcement to resolve.

Five Year (Full Scheme) Licence Criteria

To receive a five-year licence you must:

- 1. Complete a valid licence application
- 2. Provide a Fire Risk Assessment
- 3. Provide a signed self certification form

All three items must be completed at least 28 days before your current licence expires.

Having a fire risk assessment for your HMO is a legal requirement under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, which is enforced by the Fire Authority.

When signing the full scheme 'five-year' self-certification form you are confirming:

		Managing	Landlord and Agent		
Full scheme '5 year' self-certification criteria	Landlord - licence holder and manages own property	Agent - licence holder and manager (landlord uninvolved)	Landlord (licence holder)	Agent (manager)	
OCLAS Accreditation	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Adhere to the Private Rented Sector Code of Practice	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Suitable maintenance arrangements in place	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	
Agent has full management control	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Agent's employees qualified and conduct regular CPD	No	Yes	No	Yes	
Agent registered with a recognised professional association	No	Yes	No	Yes	

Additional notes

The landlord does not also need to be accredited when the managing agent is licence holder with full management control.

A Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check may be requested from the landlord in cases where the agent has full management control (irrespective of whom the licence holder is).

'Suitable management arrangements' means having arrangements in place with suitably qualified and competent tradespeople to carry out maintenance and emergency repairs. For example having ready details of a Gas Safe Registered plumber, a NICEIC registered electrician and reputable builder/handyman; or having a comprehensive emergency cover plan for your properties.

'Recognised professional associations' for agents include: ARLA, ARMA, IRPM, NAEA, RICS.

We check the following when assessing five-year licence eligibility:

- Good application history on time and complete, no repeat reminders
- 'Clean bill of health' no issues with other departments e.g. Council Tax,
 Planning etc. within the last three years

- No outstanding licence conditions
- All safety certificates are provided up-to-date and satisfactory
- No justified service requests complaints we receive each year about property conditions etc. where we have had to take action or instigate enforcement to resolve.
- Minimum E rating on EPC by law all privately rented properties must have a minimum EPC rating of E from April 2018.



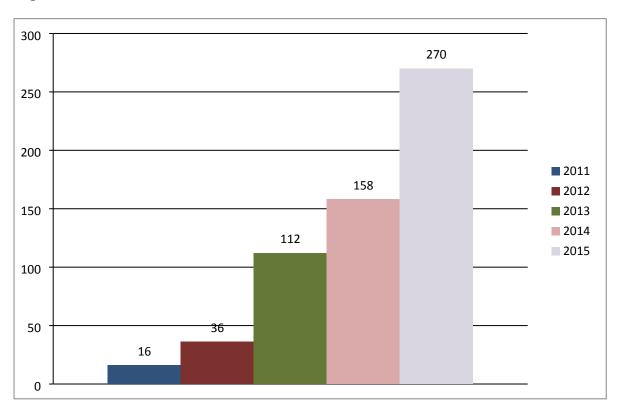
Appendix 2 – HMO Licence Applications Fees and Charges

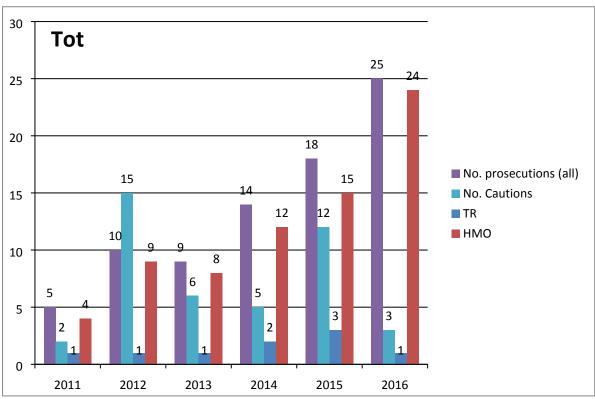
Category	Application type	Fee
A	New Application One-year licence where owner has been found to be operating an unlicensed HMO for more than 12 weeks	£999
В	New Application One-year licence where the owner comes forward to licence and is able to demonstrate property acquired and/or operating as an HMO within 12 weeks; or change of existing licence holder	£400
С	Annual Renewal No re-inspection required	£187
D	Basic Annual Renewal Annual re-inspection required	£357
E	Two-year Licence Renewal Must meet all 2 year licence criteria	£210
F	Full Scheme ('five-year') Licence Renewal Must meet all 5 year (full scheme) licence criteria	£300

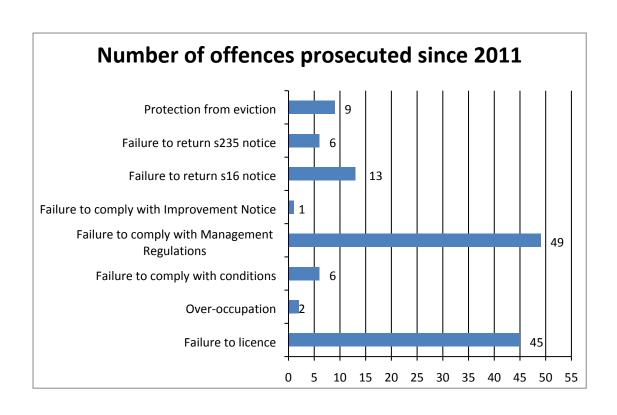


Appendix 3 – Enforcement Statistics

Figure 1 – Total number of Notices/ Orders served







Agenda Item 6



To: Housing Panel

Date: 9th November 2016

Report of: Head of Financial Services

Title of Report: Rents Performance

Summary

Purpose of report: To provide an update on rents arrears as requested by the Panel

Key decision No

Executive lead member: Councillor Susan Brown, Board Member for Customer and

Corporate Services

Report author: Tanya Bandekar, Revenue and Benefits Service Manager

Background

- 1. Following the Housing Scrutiny Panel's meeting on the 10th December 2015, this report provides an update on current and former tenant arrears as at the end of September 2016. In particular:
 - The profile of debt by age and value
 - The number of tenants in arrears who are affected by any of the benefit changes and/or direct payment rollout.

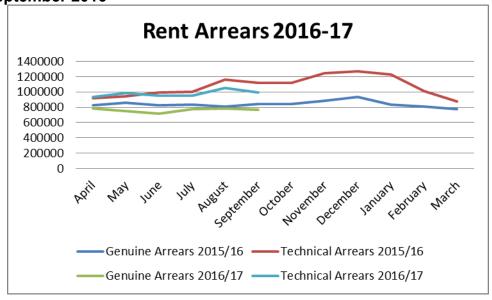
Overall Rent Collection Performance

- 2. As at 30th September 2016 the collection rate was 95.73% against a target of 95.33%. This is up on the September 2015 position (95.33%). The target collection rate at the end of 31st March 2017 is 98.25%. The target collection rate at 31st March 2016 was 98.00%.
- 3. The overall Rent roll for this year has increased by approximately £600,000 compared to the same time last year. Despite a reduction in Rent of 1% for some tenancies, new tenancies have seen Rents increased to target rent (due to the removal of the tenant rate discount, where properties were below the market rent), a further 113 new properties have been added to the rent roll, and temporary accommodation units are being charged at LHA rates.

Technical arrears versus genuine arrears

- 4. As the rent debit is raised weekly, the arrears figures are skewed by the following variables:
 - Direct Debit payment dates of the 5th,15th and end of month
 - The timing of monthly instalments. Most tenants paying their Rent by Direct Debit will pay for their annual rent in 12 equal monthly instalments.
 - In 2016/17 there are 52 weekly rent debits, which equates to 4.34 weeks
 rent being paid each month, therefore at certain points in the year the
 monthly debit is not cleared by the monthly payment. However, the
 instalment plan will ensure that each rent account will be cleared by the
 end of the financial year.
 - Direct payments of Housing Benefit are paid 4 weekly in arrears
- 5. This report adjusts the technical arrears figures to provide a 'genuine arrears' figure on a monthly basis. ('genuine arrears' take into account the timing issues related to direct debits and direct payments of housing benefit).
- 6. Table 1 below shows technical and genuine arrears from the end of March 2016 to the end of September 2016, compared to the 2015 figures. Technical arrears were £917,495 (1.94% of rent roll) at 31st March 2016. They had risen to £990,906 (2.01% of the rent roll, an increase of £73,411.57) at the end of September 2016. Genuine arrears were £779,547 at 31st March 2016 and have decreased to £771,520 at the end of September 2016, a decrease of £8,027. The trend levels in changes to arrears patterns are similar to corresponding years, which will lead to reducing levels at end of year.

Table 1: Rent arrears comparison between 2015 and 2016 to the end of September 2016



7. Table 2 below shows the profile of debt by the number of weeks in arrears. It shows there is an increase of 369 arrears cases since March 2016 predominantly in the 0-13 week bracket. However, the number of arrears cases between 13 and 52+ weeks has decreased both by value (£67,422) and volume (30).

- 8. There are 11 cases that:
 - Have been to Court for possession but an arrangement made
 - Are continually monitored by the Income Management Team so that any failure to keep to the arrangement is actioned immediately.

Table 2: Arrears Analysis for Rent

Range	Genuine Arrears March 2016	Genuine Arrears Cases	Genuine Arrears August 2016	Genuine Arrears Cases	Genuine Arrears Sept 2016	Genuine Arrears Cases
0 to 4 weeks	198,241	1316	249,361	1666	220,728	1671
4 to 13 weeks	308,820	392	341,705	414	345,729	436
13 to 26 weeks	233,175	121	162,065	87	171,369	92
26 to 39 weeks	34,856	11	34,237	11	33,695	11
39 to 52 weeks	4,455	1	0	0	0	0
52 Weeks +	0	0	0	0	0	0
	779,547	1841	787,368	2178	771,520	2210

9. At the end of March 2016 there was a single account with the equivalent of between 39 and 52 weeks Rent arrears. We had proceeded to Court for an eviction hearing but the debt was paid by a relative before eviction.

High Level Arrears (13-52+ weeks)

- 10. All cases that have more than 13 weeks of rent arrears have either been taken or are in the process of going to court to seek a legal agreement to pay the rent arrears. The Income Team are members of the court user group and judges have requested that we work with tenants early in the arrears process so any orders or judgements made are realistic for the tenant to adhere to payments.
- 11. We are aware that the smaller debts are increasing however to tackle this we are implementing an escalation policy in early November which will automate reminder letters for the lower level debts and free up staff to tackle the higher value debt.

Arrears Engagement Activity

12. Table 3 below shows the last three years of agreement and court activity highlighting a potential increase in legal activity in the current year. This outlines the team's endeavours to contact tenants early in the arrears process and resolve debt problems before they escalate. It also shows that tenants are adhering to long term agreements or payment plans.

Table 3: Arrears Actions for all Tenants

Arrangement Type	2014/2015	2015/2016	April 16- Sep-16
Agreements	996	734	468
Court Orders	125	114	86

- 13. Tenants in arrears are contacted by the Incomes Team in the first instance to make an agreement. If this agreement is not adhered to, or we are unable to make contact with the customer, then the case is escalated to a court hearing. At the court hearing the judge will make a determination based on the individual case presented, and will either grant possession, or suspend possession based on an agreement being maintained via a court order, or adjourn the case subject to a payment arrangement being agreed and maintained. The team can make their own judgement on whether or not to vary this arrangement and refer back to the Court in these cases.
- 14. The team has evicted 15 tenants in the current year; this is significantly higher than previous years but comparable to other organisations in our benchmarking group where the average is approximately 20 per year. The number of evictions has increased because effective action is being taken to tackle the problems earlier, which in some cases means eviction is the right option.

Engagement with tenants

- 15. In July 2016 the whole Council achieved full compliance for the Customer Service Excellence assessment, and the Rents Team who undertook the assessment the previous year achieved three compliance pluses for;
 - Developing customer insight about our customer groups to better understand their needs and preferences.
 - Empowering and encouraging all employees to actively promote and participate in the customer-focused culture of the organisation.
 - Demonstrating how insight and experience from customer-facing staff is incorporated into internal processes, policy development and service planning.
 - Further work around Customer Insight is underway in conjunction with Tenancy Involvement Officers

Former Tenant Arrears (FTA's)

16. Current Former Tenant Arrears figures for the current year are detailed below:

Starting Balance April 2016	£350,875
Balance at September 2016	£398,490

- 17. This financial year the focus has been on targeting new tenants when they sign their tenancy agreement with a view to stopping arrears building up in the early stages of the tenancy. The team have also been tackling medium level arrears and the increase in high level debts to stop the escalation of arrears.
- 18. Former tenants' arrears are currently dealt with on a case by case basis with accounts being pursued but fewer write offs being completed than last year.
- 19. The Council has procured a new Enforcement Agency and Debt Collection Agency contract for the collection of Council debts which came into force in September 2016. The Debt Collection Agency will be engaged to collect income where efforts by the team have been unsuccessful. We have selected two agencies that will provide competition and we can measure performance against

each. The Enforcement Agencies will only be used as a matter of last resort in an attempt to collect the debt, failing which the debt will be written off.

Debt Analysis by Value

20. Table 4 below shows the profile of debt by value. Since 1st April 2016 the number of arrears cases has increased by 369, however, the arrears have decreased (£8,027).

Table 4: Rent Debt Analysis by Value of Debt

Range	Genuine Arrears March 2016	Genuine Arrears Cases	Genuine Arrears August 2016	Genuine Arrears Cases	Genuine Arrears Sept 2016	Genuine Arrears Cases
£0 to £100	25,662	492	32,419	715	37,414	811
£100 to £250	82,263	566	93,046	617	85,087	579
£250 to £500	110,934	307	125,946	343	114,533	319
£500 to £750	98,564	161	122,459	202	118,379	194
£750 to £1000	75,524	87	88,683	102	89,868	103
£1000 +	386,600	228	324,815	199	326,239	204
	779,547	1841	787,368	2178	771,520	2210

Welfare Reform

Universal Credit

- 21. Out of a total of 7,645 tenants, there are 60 tenants who are now in receipt of Universal Credit (UC). 48 of these cases have had an arrears increase of an average of £682 since they have been in receipt of Universal Credit.
- 22. We have applied for a total of 13 Alternative Payment Arrangements (APA), where the housing element of Universal Credit is paid directly to the Council, and the Department for Work and Pensions have agreed 11 of these.
- 23. There have been several issues in dealing with the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) to ensure tenants receive timely assessments and communicate the information required.
- 24. Of the 60 tenants that have received UC payments, five were part of the direct payment demonstration pilot.

Direct Payments

- 25. We currently have 719 tenants who are receiving direct housing payments. These tenants are now monitored for non-payment using the standard Income Team procedure.
- 26. We have also amended our procedures to ensure we capture as many tenants as possible onto direct payments at tenancy sign-up.

Bedroom Tax

- 27. There are 297 tenants currently affected by the bedroom tax, this is a reduction of 363 cases from 660 tenants with bedroom tax deductions when the policy was introduced in April 2013.
- 28. Out of these tenants there are 44 that are being supported by Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP).

Benefit Cap

- 29. There are a further 10 tenants in receipt of DHP affected by the Benefit Cap which was introduced in April 2013.
- 30. Current data suggests that a further 136 City Council tenants will be affected by the proposed reduction in the benefit cap in 2016. Of those 136, 17 are already subject to the current Benefit Cap and will be further affected by the new one. The Welfare Reform Team is currently working with 17 of those affected now by the existing benefit cap and are contacting those remaining affected tenants to inform them of the likely impact and invite them to engage with the Team in order to help prepare for the changes.

Benchmarking data:

31. The Benchmarking data provided by HouseMark for the 12 months to 31st March 2016 which compares data for the City Council with similar local authorities that have retained their Housing stock is not available until mid-November (this scrutiny report is earlier than last year). Once available it can be circulated to the Panel with details of our position.

Service Improvement

- 32. Actions completed from the last report
 - Promoting Direct Debit as our preferred payment method- we now offer this as the preferred payment option and current take up is almost 50% of total tenants (not including those on full Housing Benefit)
 - We are looking at how we can work with Northgate, our Housing system provider to offer a range of additional Direct Debit dates for arrangements
 - We continue to review processes and procedures on a regular basis and have reviewed all letters sent to customers from initial contact through to serving notice, improving efficiency and communication through tenant and staff consultation. We are currently reviewing the letters and statements sent at the start of the year
 - We have been using new software for a year now which has allowed us to highlight specific areas of the city where there has been a growth in arrears. Using historical payment data for the tenants in that area we can divert resources to specific tenancies to tackle arrears.
 - We are introducing an automated procedure of letter generation for our two initial contact letters to better improve early notification to the tenant of non-payment but also allow staff resources to review notice of possession creation. This will assist with the collection of smaller rent arrears
 - Arrears prevention at sign up of tenancy- we have a dedicated officer who
 has built on and improved the process, and this has been incorporated into

- our business as usual procedures going forward. This, along with getting Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction forms completed at the same time provides an improved customer experience.
- Former Tenant Arrears collection- we have re focused attention on higher level arrears this year and management of those former tenant arrears by cleansing accounts and proposing to send those viable for recovery to our Enforcement Agents now the contract is in place.
- Process review- from start to finish we have completed our work with a number of other teams in Housing, Welfare Reform, Customer Services to journey map the processes we have with tenants from the initial contact with us to the end of a tenancy. We developed an action plan and completed the remaining actions at our October 2016 meeting.
- Universal Credit implementation- we have 60 tenants on Universal Credit and continue to work with Job Centre Plus and the Welfare Reform and Benefits Team to ensure a smooth transition. We are awaiting further information on roll-out for additional tenants.
- We are working with the Customer Contact Centre, giving additional training and advice, to ensure that these staff can resolve the customer enquiry at first point of contact.
- The team were highly commended in the Team of the Year category at this year's staff awards.

Name and contact details of author:-

Name Tanya Bandekar

Job title: Service Manager, Revenues and Benefits Service Area / Department Financial Services

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Version number: v4



Agenda Item 7



Initial Scoping of Review

Service Area:	Housing & Property Services Tower Block Refurbishment Programme.
Rationale:	During the TSP meeting on 28 th April 2016 the members and OCC officers first discussed the potential of carry out a review on the Tower Block Refurbishment project, due to it being OCC's largest investment. In addition there has been a Tower Block Tour, meeting with WDES (the contractor), feedback from the OCC Resident Liaison Coordinator and further TSP meetings. From this the TSP have agreed that a formal review would be worthwhile.
Objective of review.	 To determine that the Tower Block Refurbishment Programme produced an end product worthy of the major financial cost involved. a) To recognise good practices and communication during the partnership of WDES, OCC and residents and recommended that they be incorporated in any future projects. b) Ensure residents are all fully informed on how to use new heating & updated hot water system efficiently. To monitor the experience for residents throughout the refurbishment cycle and determine how unexpected problems were rectified to a satisfactory conclusion for all stakeholders. Where resolution was not achieved recommendations are being made to avoid these situation reoccurring. To establish at all stages of the project, transparency is maintained to ensure that WDES produce the expected final product. To ensure that all ongoing maintenance costs have been fully recognised and that they have had procedures put in place to cover the financial costs involved. To identify any areas which could improve community cohesion for future high rise housing developments. Review respite requirements and how provision can be met for current and future projects. Assess the environmental impact including pollution (noise, airborne & waste) as a result of the works.
Indicators of success.	 Evidence of high levels of resident satisfaction throughout the five tower blocks. Evidence that the project has fully met the requirements set up by the Request for Tender. Recommendations of best practice to OCC, for future large scale projects. Recommendations on how strong working partnerships can be best



	 developed and have benefits to all stakeholders. 5. Ensuring delivery of good standards of service. 6. Evidence that recommendations made to OCC are considered to be of practical use in developing future projects.
Methods to gather evidence.	 This list will be fully populated upon completion of the Desk Top Review. Initial consideration has been given to undertake: Officer presentation of report (see Request for Information). Commission independent/tenant led customer satisfaction surveys with TSP designed check lists. TSP members shadow work as necessary with TSP designed checklist. Investigate condition of communal areas, after works have been completed. TSP attend TB Residents led meeting on 20th July 2016 (14:00 – 16:00). TSP build relationships and involve both existing and newly recruited Tower Block Representatives through coffee mornings and other events. Staff/focus group Q&A sessions (Questions to be presented in advance to avoid waiting for any information of the meeting by TSP). Consultation with residents. Review how the communications strands work between WDES, Oxford City Council and residents. Review complaint process, in relation to works and WDES staff/subcontractors. Including visiting WDES (site office). Visit flat and blocks in their entirety pre and post works. (Post works to include any landscaping whether provided by WDES or OCC).
Documents.	See Request for Information.
How will information about the review be publicised, and when?	 Articles in TinT (Tenants in Touch) on: a) An introduction to TSP starting the review and why (October Edition). b) Ongoing update (each edition thereafter). Overview of your findings/recommendations (TBC). Tenant Involvement webpages and facebook (as above). Attending/updates Housing Panel meetings.
Timetable for review and key	The TSP review will focus on one block at a time, with a report submitted after each block. To be realistic, the reports will not focus on all five blocks, rather the



likely be required.		
	milestones.	 Windrush Tower (Blackbird Leys) Hockmore Tower (Cowley) Plowman Tower (Northway) Please note: This is not an extensive list and additional meetings will
 Receive information by: 7th October 2016 Staff presentation: October 2016 Desk top review to be completed by: October 2016 Next TSP meeting completed (including reality checking schedule) Reality checking: Ongoing Suggested 3rd meeting – to consider and analyse evidence gather 		 Submission of request for information form by: 20th September 2016. Receive information by: 7th October 2016 Staff presentation: October 2016 Desk top review to be completed by: October 2016 Next TSP meeting completed (including reality checking schedule): Reality checking: Ongoing Suggested 3rd meeting – to consider and analyse evidence gathered:
TBC 8. Reporting drafting completed by: TBC 9. 4 th meeting by: TBC 10. Submit report to Oxford City Council by: TBC 11. Presentation week commencing: TBC		 8. Reporting drafting completed by: TBC 9. 4th meeting by: TBC 10. Submit report to Oxford City Council by: TBC
Review Time and scope for a rereview. 1. Initial scoping completed: 11.08.2016 2. Report submission week commencing: 10 th October 2016 2. Report submission week commencing: 10 th October 2016	Time and scope for a re-	2. Report submission week commencing: 10 th October 2016
Methods for tracking. To be agreed during process of review, but could include: 1. Monthly TSP meeting. 2. Updates from OCC at meetings and via email/letter.		1. Monthly TSP meeting.



Tenant Scrutiny Panel – Request for Information

Housing & Property Services					
Service Area to be Reviewed.	Tower Block Refurbishment Programme.				
Objective of Review	 To determine that the Tower Block Refurbishment Programme produced an end product worthy of the major financial cost involved. A) To recognise good practices and communication during the partnership of WDES, OCC and residents and recommended that they be incorporated in any future projects. Ensure residents are all fully informed on how to use new heating & updated hot water system efficiently. To monitor the experience for residents throughout the refurbishment cycle and determine how unexpected problems were rectified to a satisfactory conclusion for all stakeholders. Where resolution was not achieved recommendations are being made to avoid these situation reoccurring. To establish at all stages of the project, transparency is maintained to ensure that WDES produce the expected final product. 				
	 To ensure that all ongoing maintenance costs have been fully recognised and that they have had procedures put in place to cover the financial costs involved. To identify any areas which could improve community cohesion for future high rise housing developments. Review respite requirements and how provision can be met for current and future projects. Assess the environmental impact including pollution (noise, airborne for current) as a regult of the works. 				
Documents Requested	 airborne & waste) as a result of the works. The Tenant Scrutiny Panel (TSP) request a report which includes the following information: The key objectives of the refurbishment project. Break down of project cost. Full list of refurbishments works for each block. Full list of works leaseholders are being charged for per block. Detail on how the leaseholder recharges have been calculated per block. Overview on how and when OCC have communicated with Leaseholders regarding their recharges, including repayments options and the future plan of action. 				



	Tower Block monthly update report.
	 Staff/job titles who formed the TB Project Board.
	 Staff/departments that formed the original TB Project Team
	and details of when this was formed.
	 List of sub groups and overview of their objectives.
	 Explanation for why solar panels are not being installed on
	blocks and whether this was considered.
	 Information on where/how pollution has been taken into
	account and how this is being monitored.
	 Were asbestos surveys carried out and what where the
	findings.
	Why cladding needs cleaning and how often OCC will
	contract cladding/communal windows to be cleaned and
	clarity on how this cost will be covered.
	 As above, what are the implications of rising costs to this
	cleaning and will leaseholders be charged.
	 Is glass to communal windows self-cleaning.
	Overview of how New River (Leaseholder) is being involved
	and the impact of the TB project on the proposed Templar
	Square shopping centre refurbishment.
	WDES tender documentation.
	■ WDES Contract.
	Copy of profiling document for leaseholders to sign.
	In addition, the Tenant Scrutiny Panel request the provision of
	the following information (outside of the above report):
	Presentation of procurement process (from Procurement
	Team).
	Overview of consultation process and the results.
	OCC tower block newsletters.
	Existing/known external factors that are affecting the resident
	base of the five blocks, such as ASB issues.
	Results of the residents satisfaction surveys.
	NB: The TSP would be grateful for your support in identifying
	any other documentation, which could support them in delivering
	the objective of this review.
Required Format:	
	1. 1 x copy report per member.
	2. 1 x copy of each additional information requested per
	member
	3. Officer presentation at next Scrutiny Panel Meeting on 2016
Data of Dogger	20th Courtour bour 2010
Date of Request	20 th September 2016



Date for receipt of requested information	7 th October 2016
Signed TSP	Pin
Signed (OCC)	Stepne Clark



SCRUTINY WORK PLAN November 2016 - May 2017

Published on: 26/10/16

The Scrutiny Committee agrees a work plan every year detailing selected issues that affect Oxford or its inhabitants. Time is allowed within this plan to consider topical issues as they arise throughout the year as well as decisions to be taken by the City Executive Board. This document represents the work of scrutiny for the remainder of the 2016-17 council year and will be reviewed monthly by the Scrutiny Committee.

The work plan is based on suggestions received from all elected members and senior council officers. Members of the public can also contribute topics for inclusion in the scrutiny work plan by completing and submitting our <u>suggestion form</u>. See our <u>get involved webpage</u> for further details of how you can participate in the work of scrutiny.

The following criteria will be used by the Scrutiny Committee to evaluate and prioritise suggested topics:

- Is the issue controversial / of significant public interest?
- Is it an area of high expenditure?
- Is it an essential service / corporate priority?
- Can Scrutiny influence and add value?

Some topics will be considered at Scrutiny Committee meetings and others will be delegated to two standing panels. Items for more detailed review will be considered by time-limited review groups.

The Committee will review the Council's <u>Forward Plan</u> at each meeting and decide which executive decisions it wishes to comment on before the decision is made. The Council also has a "call in" process which allows decisions made by the City Executive Board to be reviewed by the Scrutiny Committee before they are implemented.

Scrutiny Committee and Standing Panel responsibility and membership

Committee / Panel	Remit	Nominated councillors		
Scrutiny Committee	Overall management of the Council's scrutiny function.	Cllrs Azad, Chapman, Coulter, Fry, Gant (Chair), Hayes, Henwood, Pegg, Simmons, Taylor, Tidball & Wilkinson		
Finance Panel	Finance and budgetary issues and decisions	Cllrs Fooks, Fry, Simmons (Chair) & Taylor		
Housing Panel	Strategic housing and landlord issues and decisions	Cllrs Goff, Henwood (Chair), Pegg, Sanders, Thomas & Wade, Geno Humphrey (tenant co-optee)		

Current and planned review groups

Topic	Scope	Nominated councillors		
Budget review 2017/18	To review the Council's 2017/18 draft budget and medium term financial strategy	Cllrs Fooks, Fry, Simmons (Chair) & Taylor		
Devolution plans for Oxfordshire	To scrutinise devolution proposals for Oxfordshire	Cllrs Coulter, Gant, Hayes, Simmons & Tidball (Chair)		
Language schools	TBC	TBC		

Indicative timings of 2016/17 review panels

Scrutiny Review	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May
Devolution plans for Oxfordshire										
Budget review 2017/18										
Language schools (TBC)										

Scoping
Evidence gathering
Reporting

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

7 NOVEMBER 2016 - PROVISIONAL REPORTS

Agenda item	Decision	Description	CEB Portfolio	Report Contact
Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)	Yes	This is the City Council's 12th AMR to assess the effectiveness of planning policies contained within	Planning and Regulatory	Rebekah Knight, Planner
2015/16		Oxford's Local Development Plan.	Services	T Idillioi
Air Quality	No	To consider data on air quality in the City and ways of improving air quality in the worst areas (e.g. the city centre).	Climate Change and Cleaner Greener Oxford	Mai Jarvis, Environmental Quality Team Manager
Discretionary Housing Payments spend	No	To monitor Discretionary Housing Payments spend mid-way through the year.	Customer and Corporate Services	Paul Wilding, Programme Manager Revenue & Benefits
Digital Strategy	Yes	Sets out the City Council's vision and strategy for delivering a world-class digital city, supported by an action plan to articulate how the strategy will be delivered.	Customer and Corporate Services	Neil Lawrence, Digital Development Manager

6 DECEMBER 2016 - PROVISIONAL REPORTS

Agenda item	Decision	Description	CEB Portfolio	Report Contact	
Recommendation Monitoring - Cycling	No	To monitor progress and implementation following the recommendations of the Cycling Review Group to the City Executive Board in September 2015.	and Cleaner	Sophie Hearn, Contracts Manager	
Safeguarding Language School Students	Yes	Update on safeguarding arrangements for foreign language students studying in Oxford.	Community Safety	Richard Adams, Community Safety & Resilience Manager	

Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP) for Oxford	Yes	This report will request approval of our aims, objectives and emission reduction target for the City and adoption of the action plan.	Climate Change and Cleaner Greener Oxford	Mairi Brookes, OxFutures Programme Manager
Sustainability Strategy 2017	Yes	The report will provide the revised Oxford Sustainability Strategy, which will set out the vision for Oxford's sustainable future and steps we are required to take to deliver it. The report will recommend approval of the draft strategy for public consultation.		Mai Jarvis, Environmental Quality Team Manager
Performance monitoring - quarter 2	No	Quarterly reports on Council performance against a set of corporate service measures chosen by the Committee.	Corporate Strategy and Economic Development	Andrew Brown, Scrutiny Officer

30 JANUARY 2017 - PROVISIONAL REPORTS

)	Agenda item	Decision	Description	CEB Portfolio	Report Contact
	Update on the Corporate Plan 2016- 2020	Yes	To present an update report on the progress of the Corporate Plan 2016-2020.	Corporate Strategy and Economic Development	Caroline Green, Assistant Chief Executive
	Leisure Performance Update	No	To receive an update report following questions raised by the Committee in July 2016.	Leisure, Parks & Sport	lan Brooke, Head of Community Services
	Recommendation monitoring - Recycling rates	No	To receive an update on the monitoring of recycling rates and the impacts of the Blue Bin Recycling League following a site visit to the Waste Services Team.		Jeff Ridgley, wasste Services Business Development & Fleet Manager
	Grant Allocations to Community and Voluntary Orgs 2017/2018	Yes	This report is for the City Executive Board to make decisions on the allocation of grants to the community and voluntary organisations for 2017/2018.		Julia Tomkins, Grants & External Funding Officer

28 FEBRUARY 2017 - PROVISIONAL REPORTS

Agenda item	Decision	Description	CEB Portfolio	Report Contact
Graffiti prevention	No	To consider the appreciative inquiry and focus group around graffiti and other initiatives to solve the issues long term.	Climate Change and Cleaner Greener Oxford	Liz Jones, Interim ASBIT Team Leader
Workplace parking levies	No	To consider the pros and cons of the proposed introduction of workplace parking charges in Oxford.	Corporate Strategy and Economic Development	Andrew Brown, Scrutiny Officer
Performance Monitoring - quarter 3	No	Quarterly reports on Council performance against a set of corporate service measures chosen by the Committee.	Corporate Strategy and Economic Development	Andrew Brown, Scrutiny Officer

27 MARCH 2017 - PROVISIONAL REPORTS

Agenda item	Decision	Description	CEB Portfolio	Report Contact
Recommendation Monitoring - Guest Houses	No	To monitor progress and implementation following the recommendations of the Guest Houses Review Group to the City Executive Board in December 2015.	Corporate Strategy and Economic Development	Richard Adams, Community Safety & Resilience Manager
Assessing disabled impacts in planning	No	To consider how the Council fulfils its duty to assess the impacts on disabled people of new developments and changes of use, including for businesses and private and social sector housing.	Planning and Regulatory Services	Patsy Dell, Head of Planning & Regulatory Services
Waterways Public Space Protection Order	Yes	The report will contain a proposal to the CEB to introduce a Public Spaces Protection Order for certain behaviours on the waterways within Oxford City's local authority boundary. • It was submitted to CEB in January 2017 for approval pre-consultation.	Community Safety	Richard Adams, Community Safety & Resilience Manager

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Safeguarding Report	Yes	An annual report to monitor the progress made on	Finance, Asset	Val Johnson, Policy
2017/18		Oxford City Council's Section 11 Self-assessment	Management and	and Partnerships
		Action Plan 2016-2017 and to approve the Action	Public Health	Team Leader
		Plan for 2017-2018.		

2 MAY 2017 - PROVISIONAL REPORTS

Agenda item	Decision	Description	CEB Portfolio	Report Contact
Recommendation monitoring - Local economy	No	To monitor progress and implementation following the recommendations of the local economy review group to the City Executive Board in June 2015.	Corporate Strategy and Economic Development	David Edwards, Executive Director City Regeneration and Housing
Fusion Lifestyle's 2017/18 Annual Service Plan for the management of the council's leisure facilities.	Yes	The report will recommend that the City Executive Board endorse Fusion Lifestyle's Annual Service Plan for the management of the Council's leisure facilities for 2017/18.	Leisure, Parks and Sport	Lucy Cherry, Leisure and Performance Manager

JUNE 2017

Agenda item	Decision	Description	CEB Portfolio	Report Contact
Design Review Panel	No	To consider the work and effectiveness of the Oxford Design Review Panel.	Planning and Regulatory Services	Patsy Dell, Head of Planning & Regulatory Services
Local Plan Preferred Options	Yes	Progress of the review of the Local Plan	Planning and Regulatory Services	Sarah Harrison, Senior Planner

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - TO BE SCHEDULED

Agenda item	Decision	Description	CEB Portfolio	Report Contact
Public Spaces Protection Orders	No	To monitor the impacts of PSPOs the city, including the numbers and types of early interventions and enforcement actions.	Community Safety	Richard Adams, Community Safety & Resilience Manager
Disabled Students' Allowance	No	To consider the impacts of cuts to Disabled Students' Allowance on disabled students in the City.	Corporate Strategy and Economic Development	Andrew Brown, Scrutiny Officer
Health and Wellbeing Board update	No	To consider the work of Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board. This could include a specific focus on the City Council's role in addressing health inequalities following the publication of the Board's report into health inequalities in Oxfordshire.	Finance, Asset Management and Public Health	Val Johnson, Policy and Partnerships Team Leader
Police and Crime Panel update	No	To receive an update on police and crime scrutiny activities by the Council's representative on Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel (PCP).	Community Safety	Andrew Brown, Scrutiny Officer

FINANCE PANEL

8 DECEMBER 2016 - PROVISIONAL REPORTS

Agenda item	Decision	Description	CEB Portfolio	Report Contact
Budget monitoring -	No	To monitor the Council's finances at the end of	Finance,	Nigel Kennedy, Head
quarter 2		quarter 2 2016-17 (September).	Corporate Asset	of Financial Services
			Management and	
			Public Health	
Gross Budgeting	No	To monitor gross income and expenditure data by	Finance,	Nigel Kennedy, Head
		service ahead of the annual budget review.	Corporate Asset	of Financial Services
			Management and	
			Public Health	
Treasury	Yes	This performance monitoring report on the	Finance, Asset	Bill Lewis, Financial
Management		Treasury Management Strategy: Annual Report	Management and	Accounting Manager
Performance: Annual		and Performance 2016/17 is submitted twice a	Public Health	
Report and		year.		
Performance 2016/17				
Feasibility study for	Yes	To present a feasibility study for the development	A Clean and	Geoff Corps, Cleaner
the development of a		of a site to operate a Council managed transfer	Green Oxford	Greener Services
site for a Transfer		station for City collected co-mingled recyclables,		Manager, Fiona
Station for Recycled		green waste, street arisings and engineering		Piercy, Partnership &
Material		works spoil.		Regeneration Manager

16 JANUARY 2017 - PROVISIONAL REPORTS

Agenda item	Decision	Description	CEB Portfolio	Report Contact
Service reviews	No	To consider the outcomes of comprehensive reviews of a number of service area budgets undertaken as part of this year's budget setting	Management and	Nigel Kennedy, Head of Financial Services
		process.		

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Funding mechanisms	No	To consider alternative and innovative models for	Finance, Asset	Nigel Kennedy, Head
for affordable housing		financing new affordable housing.	Management and	of Financial Services
			Public Health	
Scrutiny Budget	No	To agree recommendations following the annual	Finance, Asset	Nigel Kennedy, Head
Review 2017/18 -		scrutiny budget review.	Management and	of Financial Services
recommendations			Public Health	

1 FEBRUARY 2017 - PROVISIONAL REPORTS

	Agenda item	Decision	Description	CEB Portfolio	Report Contact
	Scrutiny Budget Review 2017/18	No	Review of the Councils draft budget for 2017/18 and medium term financial strategy.	Finance, Asset Management and Public Health	Nigel Kennedy, Head of Financial Services
7	Capital Strategy 2017/18	Yes	To consider the Council's Capital Strategy for 2017/18.	Finance, Asset Management and Public Health	Nigel Kennedy, Head of Financial Services
	Treasury Management Strategy 2017/18	Yes	Treasury Management Strategy for 2017/2018, including prudential indicators. The post-consultation draft report will be submitted to CEB in February 2017.	Finance, Asset Management and Public Health	Bill Lewis, Financial Accounting Manager
	Divestment	No	To consider an ethical policy on divestment.	Finance, Asset Management and Public Health	Nigel Kennedy, Head of Financial Services

29 MARCH 2017 - NO REPORTS CURRENTLY SCHEDULED

HOUSING PANEL

9 NOVEMBER 2016 - PROVISIONAL REPORTS

Agenda item	Decision	Description	CEB Portfolio	Report Contact
Housing performance - quarter 2	No	To consider mid-year Council performance against a set of housing service measures chosen by the Panel.	Housing	Stephen Clarke, Head of Housing and Property
Universities land management	No	To invite representatives of universities to discuss their approach to land management in the City.	Corporate Strategy and Economic Development	David Edwards, Executive Director City Regeneration and Housing
Houses in multiple occupations (HMOs)	No	To consider the licensing of HMOs in the City including member oversight of HMO planning decisions (currently delegated) and rules around the numbers of rooms and the number of HMOs in the street etc.	Planning and Regulatory	Ian Wright, Service Manager Environmental Health
Rent performance	No	To monitor the Council's rents performance including current and former tenant arrears.	Housing	Tanya Bandekar, Service Manager Revenue & Benefits
Tower block refurbishment	No	To receive a progress update on the Tenant Scrutiny Panel's review of the tower block refurbishment project.	Housing	Stephen Clarke, Head of Housing and Property

1 MARCH 2017 - PROVISIONAL REPORTS

Agenda item	Decision	Description	CEB Portfolio	Report Contact
Housing performance - quarter 3	No	To consider a report on Council performance against a set of housing service measures chosen by the Panel.	Housing	Stephen Clarke, Head of Housing and Property

Access to the private rented sector	No	To receive a briefing on Council support to people in receipt of Housing Benefit in accessing the private rented sector, including the rent guarantee scheme, Home Choice pilot and 'real lettings' property investments.	Housing	Dave Scholes, Housing Strategy & Needs Manager
Rough sleeping	No	To consider how the Council deals with people sleeping rough including those with no recourse to public funds.	Community Safety, Housing	Ossi Mosley, Rough Sleeping & Single Homelessness Officer
Allocation of Homelessness Prevention Funds	Yes	To agree the allocation of the homelessness prevention funds with the purpose of meeting the objectives of the homelessness strategy	Housing	Ossi Mosley, Rough Sleeping & Single Homelessness Officer

3 MAY 2017 - PROVISIONAL REPORTS

	Agenda item	Decision	Description	CEB Portfolio	Report Contact
•	Great Estates update	No	To receive an update on progress made in developing masterplans for estates and working up and delivering a rolling programme of priority improvement schemes.	Housing	Stephen Clarke, Head of Housing and Property
	Empty garages and former garage sites	No	To receive an update on how the Council is dealing with empty garages and former garage sites.	Housing	Martin Shaw, Property Services Manager
	Empty Property Strategy	No	To receive a briefing on the Council's approaches to dealing with empty properties in the City ahead of a refresh of the Council's Empty Property Strategy 2013-18.	Housing	Melanie Mutch, Empty Property Officer (Private Sector)
	Leaseholder relationships	No	To consider Council relationships with leaseholders including the views of individual leaseholders.	Housing	Stephen Clarke, Head of Housing and Property

HOUSING PANEL - TO BE TAKEN DURING THE BUDGET REVIEW

Agenda item	Decision	Description	CEB Portfolio	Report Contact
Housing Revenue Account Business Plan	Yes	To pre-scrutinise a decision on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) business plan, which sets out projected income (from rents, service charges etc.) and expenditure on the Council's housing stock.	Management and	Stephen Clarke, Head of Housing and Property
Oxford Housing Company Business Plan	Yes	To pre-scrutinise any decisions on funding the Housing Company for Oxford and monitor progress in the Company's first year of operation.	Housing	David Edwards, Executive Director City Regeneration and Housing

HOUSING PANEL - TO BE SCHEDULED

	Agenda item	Decision	Description	CEB Portfolio	Report Contact
,	Private Sector	Yes	To pre-scrutinise any decisions on proposals to	Planning and	Ian Wright, Service
)	Licensing		extend private sector licensing to non-HMO	Regulatory	Manager
			properties.		Environmental Health
	Pay to stay	Yes	To pre-scrutinise any decisions on the local implementation of government plans to increase rents for council and housing association tenants with incomes over £30,000 a year. This is known as "Pay to Stay", and it is expected to start in April 2017 for council tenants.	Housing	Bill Graves, Landlord Services Manager
	Flexible tenancies	Yes	To pre-scrutinise any decisions on the local implementation of government plans to prevent local authorities in England from offering secure tenancies for life to new council tenants in most circumstances.		Bill Graves, Landlord Services Manager

Agenda Item 9

HOUSING PANEL (PANEL OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE)

Wednesday 5 October 2016

HOUSING PANEL MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors Henwood (Chair), Pegg, Sanders and Wade, Geno Humphrey (Co-optee).

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillor Rowley (Housing).

OFFICERS PRESENT: Andrew Brown (Scrutiny Officer), Bill Graves (Landlord Services Manager), Deborah Haynes (Energy Efficiency Projects Officer) and Tom Porter (Allocations Manager)

63. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Goff and Thomas and from Stephen Clarke (represented by Bill Graves).

64. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations.

65. HOUSING PERFORMANCE - QUARTER 1

The Landlord Services manager introduced the report. He said that most measures were on track and commented on the following:

- NI156: use of temporary accommodation this target had been breached and there were big concerns about homelessness in the City.
- DS012: gas and responsive repairs completed on time there was a marginal dip in performance.
- BV066a: percentage of rent collected performance was good, particularly as the 1% annual reduction in rents made this target harder to achieve.
- HC004: homelessness cases prevented there were big pressures due to high rent levels and landlords reducing the availability of accommodation, which resulted in some customers having to leave the private rented sector.

In response to a question about mitigating the impacts of the buoyant private rented sector on homelessness, the Allocations Manager explained that the Council had lobbied Government for a higher Local Housing Allowance rate that better reflected the market in Oxford. The Council used some general needs stock as temporary accommodation, was decommissioning sheltered accommodation blocks as demand was low and could provide Discretionary Housing Payments but not for the life of a tenancy. It was not uncommon for the Council to have to place people outside the County due to the lack of available and affordable accommodation.

The Panel questioned whether people in temporary accommodation were typically singles or families. The Panel heard that the majority of cases involved dependent children or pregnancy. Most were housed within a year but those with a need for 5 or 6 beds could have to wait years. Single cases didn't tent to have the same level of vulnerability and the Council's duty in those cases was to provide advice rather than accommodation. From April 2018 singles under the age of 35 would only receive a room-based rate, which was likely to be at least £20 per week short of what would be required to rent a room in Oxford. One future option the Council could explore was possibility of providing Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) accommodation.

The Panel noted the distinction between single homeless cases and rough sleepers, who were very visible in the City. The Panel heard that some rough sleepers were not classed as street homeless because they had accommodation and noted concern about the impacts of cuts to complex needs services for these groups.

66. CHOICE BASED LETTINGS REFUSAL REASONS

The Allocations Manager introduced the report. He said that the Council had made 766 offers of housing, which involved a lot of work and of these about one sixth had been refused. He said that there would always be different views on what was suitable and gave examples of what types of refusal reasons were considered to be reasonable (e.g. a documented need for adaptions) and unreasonable (e.g. décor). People would be penalised after two unreasonable refusals.

The Panel questioned how the Council ensures that people on the transfer register who wanted to downsize were not penalised for refusing offers. The Allocations Manager said that 18 refusals were from people in this situation which would have otherwise been treated as unreasonable. However, six of these had later re-bid and downsized, so it was worth making this exception.

In response to a question about whether relocation was a reasonable ground for refusing an offer of private rented accommodation, the Panel heard that Choice Based Lettings was the system for allocating social housing. In these cases people did have a right of appeal and if someone required hospital treatment or had dependent disabled relatives in the City, they would not be placed out of the area. The Panel asked what happens if someone lost their out of area private rented accommodation through no fault of their own. The Allocations Manager said that the Council had a duty to house people for two years, after which that duty would pass to the local authority for the area in which they lived.

The Panel considered the information available to people bidding for properties through the Choice Based Lettings scheme and questioned whether it would be possible to describe the sizes of rooms. The Allocations Manager said that his team did not always know the exact layout of properties. Three bedroom properties were assumed to have too double bedrooms and one single bedroom but some properties had quirky layouts and the size of other rooms such as kitchens could vary quite a lot. The team tried to gather as much information as possible but most properties were advertised before they became vacant. After a viewing, people may be given overnight to consider whether to accept a

property but the time properties were vacant had a direct cost to the Council in rent foregone

The Panel questioned whether the Council was being too harsh in the way it judges refusals for families. Officers reassured the Panel that this was not the case.

Councillor Wade left the meeting at the end of this item.

67. UNDER-OCCUPATION IN THE COUNCIL'S HOUSING STOCK

The Landlord Services Manager introduced the report which provided an update on a report presented to the Panel in February 2015. He said that the incentives for downsizing were largely unchanged and remained among the most generous in the country but demand was not changing. Only 10% of over 60s were found to be open to considering downsizing despite the incentives on offer.

Overall 60% of Council properties were under-occupied but there had been a fairly significant drop of 140 under-occupied properties. Some of these were due family members moving in to avoid the bedroom tax. The Council had written to under-occupiers and a home-swapper event had raised the profile of mutual exchanges but had not resulted in any people downsizing.

The Panel commented that the suitability of available accommodation was a big factor and that older people wanted to remain close to friends, family and amenities. The Panel questioned whether people could have the opportunity to view and assess properties, perhaps staying overnight, with a view to potentially downsizing. The Landlord Services Manager said that this could hold up properties and cause void losses. A show home was potentially an option, perhaps using sheltered stock, but he had not come across this idea elsewhere. The Panel also noted that the neighbourhood was likely to be a big factor for people.

The Panel noted that the Council was waiting for information from Government on the policy of introducing flexible tenancies, which was expected to include the introduction of five year tenancies for new social tenants, successions and some transfers, after which there would be mandatory grounds for possession. It was hoped that exceptions could be made for people fleeing domestic violence, downsizers and people in regeneration areas and this case was being put to Government.

The Panel questioned how these changes were being communicated to tenants and heard that there had been a piece in the Tenants in Touch magazine but that the publicity wouldn't start until the details of the policy were clearer. The Panel noted that some people may exercise their right to buy in advance of the flexible tenancy and pay to stay policies coming in. In response to a question, the Panel heard that these changes would affect over 60s as well as working age questions but despite higher rents for many households, staying put was likely to remain the cheapest option for them.

The Panel noted that any decisions on the local implementation of Flexible Tenancies and Pay to Stay are on the Panel's work plan for pre-decision scrutiny.

68. ENERGY STRATEGY - HOUSING & PROPERTY

The Energy Efficiency Projects Officer provided a presentation of the Council's Energy Strategy 2016-20 (published as a supplement to the main agenda) and offered to provide a written response to Councillor Wolff's submission (also published as a supplement to the main agenda). She said that the Council used the affordable warmth definition of fuel poverty and that the health impacts of fuel poverty were huge.

The Panel heard that the Council was evaluating the work of the two Energy Advice Officers, who were being employed for two years and were aiming to make contact with all Council tenants. £37k of savings had already been identified from people accessing the Warm Homes Discount but it was not possible to quantify everything, for example the benefits of referrals to the Citizens Advice Bureau for financial advice. Officers had found that some households and in particular older tenants had refused to switch from electrical to gas heating, either because they had reservations about gas or because they did not want intrusive work taking place in their homes for a week or more.

The Panel questioned how thermal efficiency was measured and heard that SAP calculations were used. SAP calculations did not tell you everything but their use was a statutory requirement and the Council had no funding to develop an alternative. In addition, Home Quality Marks could be considered, housing stock data was being added to a national database and the Council's surveyors had excellent local knowledge which all helped.

In response to a question about the use of heat pumps, the Panel heard that there were three different kinds; ground source, air source and water source. They were run on electricity so they were not renewable but they could act as the reverse of a fridge. If well installed and used correctly, heat pumps could provide a 3:1 ratio of heat output to electricity used, which represented a good deal. However, heat pumps did not always perform and there were high risks around relying on them as a main source of heat. There were some heat pumps in use across the Council's housing stock but some had had to be removed. The Council would continue to evaluate where their use may be an appropriate solution.

69. HOUSING PANEL WORK PLAN

The Panel noted the work plan and agreed that:

- Cllr Thomas would be asked to suggest a tighter scope for the university land management for the Chair to approve between meetings.
- The HMO item would include a focus on the rules around determining the numbers of HMOs allowed in a given area and whether more information could be included on the weekly planning lists.
- Geno Humphrey would provide a verbal update on the scope and progress of the Tenant Scrutiny Panel's review of the Tower Blocks Project.
- The Leaseholder relationships item should be taken when the court proceedings relating to the Tower Block Project have concluded.

The Landlord Services Manager provided a verbal update on the current state of leaseholder relationships. He said that previously these relationships, which were largely financial, had not been great but that overall they were much improved since the appointment of a Leasehold Management Officer some 15 months ago who acted as an advocate for leaseholders. Leaseholders affected by the Tower Block Project were unhappy with the size of the bills they had received for refurbishment works.

In response to a question about the duration of the court proceedings, the Landlord Services Manager advised that they were likely to conclude after Christmas.

70. NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Noted.

71. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Panel agreed to move the meeting scheduled for 3 May 2017 to 26 April 2017 to avoid the County Council elections.

The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 7.15 pm

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