

# Agenda

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## Scrutiny Committee

Date: **Tuesday 6 November 2018**

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Time: **6.00 pm**

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Place: **St Aldate's Room - Oxford Town Hall**

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For any further information please contact:

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# Scrutiny Committee

## Membership

<b>Chair</b>	Councillor Andrew Gant
<b>Vice Chair</b>	Councillor David Henwood
	Councillor Mohammed Altaf-Khan
	Councillor Lubna Arshad
	Councillor Nadine Bely-Summers
	Councillor Hosnieh Djafari-Marbini
	Councillor Alex Donnelly
	Councillor James Fry
	Councillor Pat Kennedy
	Councillor Mark Lygo
	Councillor Dr Joe McManners
	Councillor Craig Simmons

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

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# AGENDA

## Pages

**1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**3 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**4 MINUTES**

7 - 14

**Recommendation:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 08 October 2018 be APPROVED as a true and accurate record.

**5 WORK PLAN AND FORWARD PLAN**

15 - 24

The Scrutiny Committee operates within a work plan which is agreed at the start of the Council year. The Work Plan is reviewed at each meeting so that it can be adjusted to reflect the wishes of the Committee and take account of any changes to the latest Forward Plan (which outlines decisions to be taken by the City Executive Board or Council). The Committee is asked to review and note its work plan for the 2018/19 council year.

**6 REPORT BACK ON RECOMMENDATIONS**

25 - 26

The City Executive Board met on 16 October and considered the Committee's recommendation in relation to Energy Statements for residential developments of less than 5 units. A copy of the Board Member's response is attached.

**7 NO LOCAL CONNECTION REVIEW GROUP - DRAFT REPORT**

27 - 94

The 'No Local Connection' Review Group was established by the Scrutiny Committee on 3 July 2018. The purpose of the review was to consider the Council's approach to applying local connection criteria as a means of defining entitlement to access the Adult Homeless Pathway, and make recommendations for service improvement where necessary.

The Committee is asked to endorse the report and agree that it be submitted to the City Executive Board for consideration at its meeting on 14 November 2018.

## 8 ANNUAL WORKFORCE EQUALITIES REPORT

At its meeting on 14 November 2018, the City Executive Board will consider a report which seeks approval for the publication of the Annual Workforce Equalities Report and an associated Action Plan to improve the diversity of the Council's workforce and make it more representative of the community it serves.

This is an opportunity for the Scrutiny Committee to make recommendations to the Board beforehand.

## 9 HOUSING PANEL VACANCY

On 5 June 2018, the Scrutiny Committee agreed to appoint seven Councillors to the Housing Scrutiny Panel (four Labour, two Liberal Democrat and one Green). One of the seats allocated to the Liberal Democrat Group has become vacant and the Committee is asked to consider any nominations for this seat.

## 10 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meetings of the Scrutiny Committee and its panels are scheduled as follows:

### Scrutiny Committee

- 04 December
- 14 January 2019

### Standing Panels

- Housing Standing Panel: 12 November
- Finance Standing Panel: 06 December, 8 January, 9 January
- Companies Panel: 13 November, 11 December, 03 January 2019

All meetings start at 6.00 pm

## **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.

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## Minutes of a meeting of the SCRUTINY COMMITTEE on Monday 8 October 2018

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### Committee members:

Councillor Gant (Chair)

Councillor Henwood (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Arshad

Councillor Bely-Summers

Councillor Cook (for Councillor Djafari-Marbini)

Councillor Donnelly

Councillor Kennedy

Councillor Lygo

Councillor Simmons

### Officers:

Patsy Dell, Head of Planning, Sustainable Development & Regulatory Services

Adrian Arnold, Development Management Service Manager

Sarah Harrison, Team Leader (Planning Policy)

Amanda Ford, Principal Planner

Paul Adams, HR & Payroll Manager

Stefan Robinson, Scrutiny Officer

John Mitchell, Committee and Member Services Officer

### Also present:

Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Board Member for Planning and Transport

Councillor Nigel Chapman, Board Member for Customer Focused Services

### 41. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Djafari-Marbini (substitute Councillor Cook), Councillor Fry and Councillor Altaf-Khan

### 42. Declarations of interest

None.

### 43. Chair's Announcements

The Chair noted with regret the passing of Councillor Angie Goff who had, among other things, been a member of the Committee's Housing Panel. A vacancy would remain on the Panel for the time being. A minute's silence would be held in her memory at the next Council meeting.

The Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Board Scrutiny Panel had met. He had been elected as its Chair and Councillor Henwood as its Vice Chair.

Patsy Dell, Head of Planning, Sustainable Development & Regulatory Services, attending this meeting of the Committee, was leaving in a few weeks' time. He paid tribute to the valuable contribution she had made during her time with the Council.

#### **44. Minutes**

The Committee resolved to APPROVE the minutes of the meeting held on 06 September 2018 as a true and accurate record subject to changing "positive" to "limited" in minute 37.9.

#### **45. Work Plan and Forward Plan**

The Scrutiny Officer introduced the item. The report on the East Oxford Community Centre Improvement Centre, originally destined for CEB in the Autumn had been postponed until March 2018; Scrutiny consideration had therefore been postponed until then.

The "No Local Connection" review was in its final stages and the resultant report would come to the next meeting of the Committee.

The last meeting of the Committee had questioned the reasons for the removal of some key performance indicators (KPIs). Some KPIs are no longer being measured at service level and have been replaced by others. The Committee had before it an expanded list of indicators and members were asked to consider which it wished to monitor in the future (views to be passed to the Scrutiny Officer).

The impact of the Westgate Shopping Centre was scheduled for the next meeting of the Committee. The Director of the Centre had been due to attend this meeting but was now unable to do so. The Committee agreed to postpone this item until the following meeting in the hope that the Director could attend the revised date.

#### **46. Report back on recommendations**

The Chair was pleased to note that the Board Member had given a verbal assurance that there would be an audit to address the matters which had been identified by the Committee. He agreed to seek confirmation at the next meeting of the City Executive Board that there was clarity about the nature of the audit sought by the Committee.

#### **47. Oxford Local Plan**

The Chair introduced the item by reminding the Committee that this was the third phase in production of the Local Plan, following preliminary public consultations in 2016 and 2017. The principal purpose of this phase was not to look at detailed aspects of the plan but, rather, to consider if the plan met the necessary test of soundness before submission to the Secretary of State.

Councillor Hollingsworth agreed that while the principal purpose was not, at this stage, to look at detail, if either the Committee or the City Executive Board made compelling cases for detailed changes they would of course be given serious consideration. He paid tribute to the work of officers in preparation of the plan, with particular reference to



the contributions of Sarah Harrison (Team Leader (Planning Policy)) and Amanda Ford (Principal Planner).

Councillor Hollingsworth went on to set out the overarching purpose of the plan with reference to its foreword. The plan sought to contribute to a better society for all and to strike the right balance between the competing pressures that Oxford and its people face. Oxford is a wonderful city, with a beauty and a history and is a centre of learning and innovation on a global scale much of which it can be rightly proud. But it is also a city where inequality is stark - where decent and affordable housing is out of reach for so many of its citizens, and where poor air quality damages the lives of many more. The plan will seek to respect the city of previous generations while shaping the city for those to come.

The plan can only address matters within the City's borders and within which the amount of land suitable for housing development is very limited. The plan will address this by look at opportunities for higher buildings and increased density of housing. Warehouses within the City do not represent a good use of space and would be discouraged.

The plan seeks to provide a framework for the future with as much of a qualitative element as a quantitative one which should, in turn, lead to more subtlety in planning decision making.

The Chair asked why a new calculation of housing need based on the Government's methodology set out in the National Policy Framework was not undertaken (para 2.29 of Appendix 2ii). It was explained that this methodology reduced the City's unmet housing need to zero, contrary to previous projections and despite the clear need for affordable housing; very high housing costs; and Government recognition that Oxford was set to make a significant contribution to the economic growth of the Country. The Government had also indicated, just a few days after their publication, that the recent household projection figures would be revised. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment undertaken in 2014 remained a sound basis for calculating future housing demand in the City and had been adopted, also, by other parties to the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal.

The consultation process to date was welcomed but there was disappointment that the plan was so rigidly structured, and a suggestion that a more flexible 'place making' approach would be preferable. Councillor Hollingsworth said that the qualitative rather than quantitative approach addressed this issue to some extent (for example in relation to the threshold policy for shops). The Team Leader (Planning Policy) said it was hard to pull together the many themes woven through the plan without recourse to some formal structure and an eye had to be kept on its ultimate use by, among others, Building Control.

The Principal Planner confirmed that, in relation to transport matters, the plan was closely aligned with the County Council as the local Highway Authority and its proposals flowed from a jointly commissioned study.

The reference to the development of the Cowley Branch line was welcome but the Committee expressed concern that the absence of a reference to other alternative

means of transport (tram or cable car for example) might subsequently be interpreted as the Council having dismissed such alternatives. Councillor Hollingsworth was clear that this was not the intention but agreed the some wording should be added to the introduction to make it clear.

In response to the review of Green Belt land, it was confirmed that the eight specific sites that would be de-designated only constituted 1.45% of the total Green Belt land inside the City boundary. It was noted that a considerable proportion of Green Belt within the City was incapable of being built on. The land to be released was only that in relation to which the landowners had indicated a willingness for it to be developed. Sites in relation to which development would be regarded as detrimental were not being taken forward. Some 50% of those Green Belt sites within the City boundary which were developable were not being taken forward.

A question was asked about the possibility of introducing another park and ride for the City. While this was superficially an attractive proposition, it ran counter to the County Council's longer term objective of situating park and ride car parks beyond the City boundary and in addition to which it would not represent the most effective use of land available to the City.

It was noted that Policy SP66 relating to William Morris Close Sports Ground had the potential to exacerbate the travel/congestion issues that already existed in relation to the nearby school. Councillor Hollingsworth said this provided a good example of the distinction between planning policy and a planning application; a potential developer would have to demonstrate that they had addressed all relevant policies, including those that related to the transport consequences of an application.

The importance of ensuring affordable transport to the City Centre was noted, the costs of which could be prohibitive for families (particularly given the eventual introduction of a zero emission zone in the city centre). The City Council, however, had no direct control over rail or bus fares. An enhanced partnership with the bus companies would provide opportunities to address the issue. This question did raise the issue of personal versus community decision making. There was no cost to an individual deciding, for example, to drive into the City centre and, in doing so, contributing to making air quality worse. There were, however, considerable costs to the community associated with poor air quality, such as poor health, links to dementia and reduced educational attainment. The contribution to collective decision making, as exemplified by the plan, always had to be for the greater good.

In relation to Policy RE1 (Sustainable design and construction) it was suggested that the requirement for an Energy Statement to be submitted for any scheme of 5 or more residential dwellings should be extended to all dwellings, or perhaps, in the lighter touch form of an Energy Performance Certificate. Councillor Hollingsworth agreed that this suggestion should be considered and the outcome reported back to the City Executive Board. He noted however that care would need to be taken not to incorporate something too prescriptive which might be challenged by the inspector.

The plan seeks to protect the Covered Market, wishing to maintain, enhance and promote its character, recognising the need to look to the future as well as the past.

In relation to Policy G4 (Allotments and community food growing) it was suggested that the ability to provide “new community food growing space” as part of the open space provision should be made a requirement. The Team Leader (Planning Policy) said that the wording reflected the need to be able to respond appropriately to different developments. It had to be recognised that, for some developments such a growing space would be impractical.

In relation to SP61, about which there was a very brief discussion, Cllr Lygo stated for openness that he lives on Valentia Road.

The Chair thanked Councillor Hollingsworth and officers for their contribution to this important debate.

#### **48. Update report on progress with the Planning and Regulatory Service Improvement Plan**

The Head of Planning, Sustainable Development & Regulatory Services introduced the report which provided the Committee with its latest update on the Planning and Regulatory Service. There had been a continuous programme of improvement since her arrival three years ago and she was grateful for the Committee’s interest in the service over that time. She was pleased to confirm that Adrian Arnold, the Development Management Service Manager would take over her role following her departure in a few weeks’ time.

Oxford was a great place for planners to work but also, of course, a very expensive place to live which, as for other areas of work, had significant consequences for recruitment and retention. The service set great store by its successful apprentice programme and a wish to ‘grow their own’.

The service’s performance as measured by key indicators exceeded national standards and the service was not, therefore, subject to government scrutiny as it otherwise would be. There was a higher level of enforcement activity than hitherto.

The Committee were pleased to note the continuing improvement and particularly the steps taken to address the staffing difficulties with particular reference to the apprenticeship programme.

The difference in response times to deal with enforcement matters was asked about. The time taken to respond would depend on the circumstances, history and complexity of a case and these could be significantly different. The use of a generic contact number for enquiries was intended to ensure that no delays were caused by the temporary absence of a particular officer.

The introduction of work placements for young people up to the age of 16 was not viable because of the levels of supervision required under the council’s safeguarding policies, something which was not sustainable in such a busy team. Future work placements for those older than 16 could however be given consideration and accommodated where capacity exists.

In discussion about the future, it would be important to secure the necessary resources to ensure the resilience of the service; developing in-house capacity and being innovative would be key.

Councillor Hollingsworth reiterated the importance of resilience. The transition to the current service structure had, inevitably, been disruptive and had had an effect on performance. The challenge was to ensure that the current systems and processes can cope with disruption however caused.

The Development Management Service Manager said that account was taken of anticipated applications over a 3-4 year horizon so that steps can be taken to ensure that projects are adequately resourced when they come on stream.

The Committee were grateful for the update and agreed that it would be helpful to have a further one in a year's time.

#### **49. Staff Absence and Wellbeing**

Councillor Chapman, in his capacity as Board Member for Customer Focused Services, introduced the report which had been triggered by discussion earlier in the year. The story was one of improvement for the first part of the year but care should be taken not to draw too many conclusions before the year end given the likelihood of increased levels of sickness and absence in the Winter months. The service was providing a lot of good work with a few members of staff on long term sick leave and whose absence can distort the overall picture to some degree.

The HR & Payroll Manager said that the Council's position is currently a little out of kilter with that of the rest of the UK where sickness absence levels are at their lowest for the last 10 years.

It was suggested that it might be helpful to record vacancy levels in a service area alongside absence rates; this would enable any correlation between the two to be identified.

The Committee noted that, the Council sickness absence data no longer included those relating to colleagues working in Oxford Direct Services.

Reference was made to the increase in the number of those experiencing mental ill health and the importance of appropriate interventions in relation to something that was not necessarily immediately visible.

The HR & Payroll Manager said that considerable efforts were made to work with colleagues who had significant attendance issues, with the aim of supporting the employee's return to work and termination of employment as a very last resort.

The 10th October was World Mental Health day, it was suggested that, in future, consideration might be given to an event in the workplace to mark it.

In discussion it was agreed that different management styles might contribute to levels of sickness and attendance and that good practice should be celebrated and serve as a model for others.

**50. Dates of future meetings**

The next meetings of the Scrutiny Committee and its panels are scheduled as follows:

**Scrutiny Committee**

- 06 November
- 04 December
- 14 January (provisional)

**Standing Panels**

- Housing Standing Panel: 11 October, 12 November
- Finance Standing Panel: 06 December
- Companies Panel: 13 November, 11 December, 03 January 2019

All meetings start at 6.00 pm

**The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 8.00 pm**

**Chair .....**

**Date: Tuesday 6 November 2018**

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# SCRUTINY WORK PLAN

## September 2018 - December 2018

Published on: 29/10/18

The Scrutiny Committee agrees a work plan every year detailing selected issues that affect Oxford or its people. 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 2018-19 council year and will be reviewed at each meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.

The work plan is based on suggestions received from all elected members and senior officers. Members of the public can also contribute topics for inclusion in the scrutiny work plan by completing and submitting our [suggestion form](#). See our [get involved webpage](#) 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 consideration of the issue timely?
- Is it a corporate priority?
- Is the issue of significant public interest?
- Can Scrutiny influence and add value?
- Is it an area of high expenditure, income or savings?

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

The Committee will review the Council's [Forward Plan](#) 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	Membership
Scrutiny Committee	Overall management of the Council's scrutiny function.	Councillors; Andrew Gant (Chair), David Henwood (Vice-Chair), Mohammed Altaf-Khan, Lubna Arshad, Nadine Bely-Summers, Hosnieh Djafari-Marbini, Alex Donnelly, James Fry, Pat Kennedy, Craig Simmons, Mark Lygo.
Finance Panel	Finance and budgetary issues and decisions	Councillors; James Fry (Chair), Mohammed Altaf-Khan, David Henwood, Chewe Munkonge, Craig Simmons, Roz Smith.
Housing Panel	Strategic housing and landlord issues and decisions	Councillors; David Henwood (Chair), Lubna Arshad, Nadine Bely-Summers, Richard Howlett, Mike Gotch, Dick Wolff and Geno Humphrey (tenant co-optee).
Companies Panel	To scrutinise shareholder decisions relating to wholly Council-owned companies.	Councillors; James Fry (Chair), Tiago Corais, David Henwood, Tom Landell-Mills, Chewe Munkonge, Craig Simmons.

## Current and planned review groups

Topic	Remit	Membership
No Local Connection Review Group	To review the Council's Local Connection Policy in relation to homelessness, and how services could be improved for those without a local connection.	Councillors; Nadine Bely-Summers (Chair), Shaista Aziz, Paul Harris, Richard Howlett, Tom Landell-Mills, Craig Simmons
Budget Review 2019/20	To review the 2019/20 budget proposals.	Finance Panel Membership
Tourism Management	To review how increasing tourism is being managed in the City, and new ways of improving the Oxford experience for both tourists and residents.	Councillors; Andrew Gant (Chair), James Fry, Pat Kennedy, Alex Donnelly, Paul Harris and Dick Wolff.

## Indicative timings of review groups

	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April
<b>No Local Connection</b>	Evidence Gathering			Reporting					
<b>Budget review</b>					Scoping	Evidence Gathering	Reporting		
<b>Tourism Management</b>							Evidence Gathering		



## SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

### 6 NOVEMBER 2018 - PROVISIONAL REPORTS

Agenda item	Decision	Description	CEB Portfolio	Report Contact
Workplace Equalities	Yes	To consider the diversity of the council's workforce, and strategies in place to promote workplace equalities.	Customer Focussed Services	Helen Bishop, Head of Business Improvement
Report of the 'No Local Connection' Review Group	No	To endorse the draft report and recommendations of the Review Group for submission to the City Executive Board.	Housing and Leisure	Stefan Robinson, Scrutiny Officer

### 4 DECEMBER 2018 - PROVISIONAL REPORTS

Agenda item	Decision	Description	CEB Portfolio	Report Contact
Impact of the Westgate Shopping Centre	No	To consider the impact the re-opening of the Westgate has had on the local economy and the visitor experience.	Economic Dev and Partnerships / Culture and City	Laurie-Jane Taylor, City Centre Manager
Annual Monitoring Report 2017-2018	No	The AMR monitors the implementation of policies in the Core Strategy 2026 and the Sites and Housing Plan 2011-2026. Performance against Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal Targets is also assessed.	Planning and Transport	Amanda Ford, Principal Planner
Quarter 2 Council Performance 2018/19	No	To consider the Council's performance for Quarter 2 of 2018/19, including fusion data with officer attendance.	Various	Liz Godin, Corporate Governance Manager

### 14 JANUARY 2019 - PROVISIONAL MEETING

Agenda item	Decision	Description	CEB Portfolio	Report Contact
Customer Services, Digital and ICT Strategy	Yes	To consider the draft Customer Services, Digital and ICT Strategy.	Customer Focused Services	Rocco Labellarte, Chief Technology and Information Officer
Monitoring grants to Community/Voluntary Organisations 2017/18	Yes	To monitor the reported achievements resulting from Community and Voluntary Grant allocations for 2017/18.	Supporting Local Communities	Julia Tomkins, Grants & External Funding Officer

## 5 FEBRUARY 2019 - PROVISIONAL REPORTS

Agenda item	Decision	Description	CEB Portfolio	Report Contact
Review of Financial Inclusion Strategy	Yes	A report reviewing the first year of the three year Strategy agreed in 2017.	Supporting Local Communities	Paul Wilding, Programme Manager Revenue & Benefits
Graffiti prevention and removal 2018	Yes	To consider the issue of graffiti including removal and preventative projects.	Safer, Greener, Environment	Liz Jones, Interim ASBIT Team Leader

## 5 MARCH 2019 - PROVISIONAL REPORTS

Agenda item	Decision	Description	CEB Portfolio	Report Contact
East Oxford Community Centre - Improvement Scheme	Yes	To present an improvement scheme for the East Oxford Community Centre following public consultation.	Supporting Local Communities	Vicky Trietline, Development Project Management Surveyor
The Sustainability Strategy	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.	Safer, Greener, Environment	Mai Jarvis, Environmental Quality Team Manager
Quarter 3 Council Performance Report 2018/19	No	To consider the Council's performance for Quarter 2 of 2018/19.	Various	Liz Godin, Corporate Governance Manager

## FINANCE PANEL

### 6 DECEMBER 2018 - PROVISIONAL REPORTS

Agenda item	Decision	Description	CEB Portfolio	Report Contact
Quarterly Integrated Report, Finance & Performance Q2	Yes	Quarterly Integrated Report for Finance, Performance and Risk	Deputy Leader / Finance / Asset Management	Anna Winship, Management Accountancy Manager
Monitoring social value	No	To consider the case and opportunities for monitoring social value through integrated financial, social and environmental accounting.	Finance, Asset Management	Nigel Kennedy, Head of Financial Services

### 8 AND 9 JANUARY 2019 – (BUDGET REVIEW GROUP)

### 16 JANUARY 2019 - PROVISIONAL REPORTS

Agenda item	Decision	Description	CEB Portfolio	Report Contact
Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2019/20 (post consultation)	Yes	To review the Council Tax Reduction Scheme	Leader, Economic Development and Partnership	Paul Wilding, Programme Manager Revenue & Benefits

### 30 JANUARY 2019 - PROVISIONAL REPORTS

Agenda item	Decision	Description	CEB Portfolio	Report Contact
Council Tax Exemption Monitoring	Yes	To consider a report on the effectiveness of council tax exemption monitoring, and understand how rigorous the process is.	Leader, Economic Development and Partnership	Paul Wilding, Programme Manager Revenue & Benefits
Quarterly Integrated Report, Finance & Performance Q3	Yes	Quarterly Integrated Report for Finance, Performance and Risk	Deputy Leader / Finance / Asset Management	Anna Winship, Management Accountancy Manager

## HOUSING PANEL

### 12 NOVEMBER 2018 - PROVISIONAL REPORTS

Agenda item	Decision	Description	CEB Portfolio	Report Contact
Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) preparation	No	To consider what provision is in place for Rough Sleepers in severe winter weather. A further update report will be considered on 4 March 2019 concerning how well SWEP has worked for rough sleepers, and any lessons learnt and areas for improvement.	Leisure and Housing	Stephen Clarke, Head of Housing
Trailblazer Homelessness Programme	No	To consider the outcome of the Trailblazer Homelessness Programme	Paul Wilding	Paul Wilding, Systems Change Manager (Homelessness Prevention)
Q2 Housing Performance	Yes	To consider performance against a set of housing indicators for the period July-September	Leisure and Housing /Housing	Stephen Clarke, Head of Housing Services

### 4 MARCH 2019 - PROVISIONAL REPORTS

Agenda item	Decision	Description	CEB Portfolio	Report Contact
Options for a Council Owned Letting Agency	No	To consider options for the establishment of a council owned letting agency.	Housing / Leisure and Housing	Stephen Clarke, Head of Housing
Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) review	No	To consider how well SWEP has worked for rough sleepers, and any lessons learnt and areas for improvement.	Leisure and Housing	Stephen Clarke, Head of Housing
Q3 Housing Performance	No	To consider performance against a set of housing indicators for the period October - December.	Housing / Leisure and Housing	Stephen Clarke, Head of Housing Services

## COMPANIES PANEL

The Companies Panel will meet prior to meetings of the Shareholder Groups. Provisional dates for the Companies Panel are outlined below.

**13 NOVEMBER 2018 (RESCHEDULED FROM 25 OCTOBER 2018)**

**12 DECEMBER 2018**

**3 JANUARY 2019**

## FORWARD PLAN

### CEB: 14 NOVEMBER 2018

<b>ITEM 2: ID: I020059</b>	<b>WORKPLACE EQUALITIES REPORT AND ACTION PLAN</b> Report Status: Provisional: Awaiting further information, advice or input.
To seek approval for the publication of the Annual Workforce Equalities Report and for the resulting Action Plan to improve the diversity of the City Council's workforce and make it more representative of the community we serve	

<b>ITEM 3: ID: I020101</b>	<b>OXFORD NORTH</b> Report Status: Provisional: Decision reliant on another action or process
To allocate CIL and Homs England Housing Infrastructure Funds related to the Oxford North Development.	

<b>ITEM 4: ID: I020041</b>	<b>CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT AWARD</b> Report Status: Provisional: Decision reliant on another action or process
Report to seek approval to direct award a construction contract through a framework agreement	

### COUNCIL 26 NOVEMBER

### CEB: 18 DECEMBER 2018

<b>ITEM 5: ID: I019077</b>	<b>QUARTERLY INTEGRATED REPORT, FINANCE &amp; PERFORMANCE Q2</b> Report Status: Confirmed for this meeting
Quarterly Integrated Report for Finance, Performance and Risk	

<b>ITEM 6: ID: I019467</b>	<b>OXPENS LANE REDEVELOPMENT UPDATE</b> Report Status: Confirmed for this meeting
The report is an update position on the redevelopment of the Oxpens Lane key City Centre site; the required delivery structure to take the project forward and the procurement of a preferred development partner. The City Council has formed a joint venture company, OxWED, with Nuffield College to progress the delivery of this scheme	

<b>ITEM 7: ID: I019079</b>	<b>DRAFT CONSULTATION BUDGET 2019/20</b> Report Status: Confirmed for this meeting
Draft budget for consultation for 2019/20	

<b>ITEM 8: ID: I019413</b>	<b>ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2017-2018</b> Report Status: Confirmed for this meeting
The AMR monitors the implementation of policies in the Core Strategy 2026 and the Sites and Housing Plan 2011-2026. Performance against Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal Targets is also assessed.	

<b>ITEM 9: ID: I020060</b>	<b>HOUSING ASSISTANCE AND DISABLED ADAPTATION POLICY</b> <b>Report Status: Confirmed for this meeting</b>
Minor updates to Policy implemented in Jan 2018, due to contract changes	

<b>ITEM 10: ID: I020283</b>	<b>MARSH ROAD CAR PARK</b> <b>Report Status: Provisional: Decision reliant on another action or process</b>
To introduce a parking scheme at Marsh Road car park.	

<b>ITEM 11: ID: I020215</b>	<b>SUMMERTOWN AND ST MARGARET'S NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN</b> <b>Report Status: Confirmed for this meeting</b>
To consider the Examiner's Report, approve modifications to the Summertown and St Margaret's Neighbourhood Plan and agree that it should be submitted to a referendum.	

## **CEB: 22 JANUARY 2019**

<b>ITEM 13: ID: I014681</b>	<b>MONITORING GRANTS ALLOCATED TO COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS 2017/18</b> <b>Report Status: Provisional</b>
To monitor the reported achievements resulting from Community and Voluntary Grant allocations for 2017/18	

<b>ITEM 14: ID: I019542</b>	<b>CUSTOMER SERVICES, DIGITAL AND ICT STRATEGY</b> <b>Report Status: Provisional: Awaiting further information, advice or input.</b>
<p>At a time when then existing Customer, Digital and ICT strategies are due to be refreshed, we are taking the opportunity to develop a unified strategy.</p> <p>Underlying this is our aspiration to make it easier for our customers (residents, businesses, visitors) to engage with the Council and to continue to provide cost effective services.</p> <p>Alongside the customer dimension, a digital action plan will reflect how we will use technology to deliver quality services, better.</p> <p>The ICT aspects of the strategy exist to ensure we keep up to date and 'fit for the future', making good use of technology for the benefit of our customers and the Council as a whole.</p>	

<b>ITEM 15: ID: I019691</b>	<b>COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2019.20</b> <b>Report Status: Confirmed for this meeting</b>
A report setting out changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2019/20	

<b>ITEM 16: ID: I020193</b>	<b>REVIEW OF TRAILBLAZER PROGRAMME (HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION)</b> <b>Report Status: Confirmed for this meeting</b>
A Review of the first year of the two year Trailblazer Programme to support homelessness prevention across Oxfordshire.	

## **COUNCIL 28 JANUARY**

## CEB: 12 FEBRUARY 2019

<b>ITEM 17:</b> <b>ID: I017048</b>	<b>OXFORD RENT GUARANTEE SCHEME PILOT REVIEW</b> <b>Report Status: Provisional: Awaiting further information, advice or input.</b>
Review of the two year pilot to know if this pilot is to continue	

<b>ITEM 18:</b> <b>ID: I019081</b>	<b>CAPITAL STRATEGY</b> <b>Report Status: Confirmed for this meeting</b>
Capital strategy update	
<b>Is this a Key Decision?</b>	Not Key

<b>ITEM 19:</b> <b>ID: I019080</b>	<b>BUDGET 2019/20</b> <b>Report Status: Confirmed for this meeting</b>
Budget 2019/20	

<b>ITEM 20:</b> <b>ID: I019078</b>	<b>QUARTERLY INTEGRATED REPORT, FINANCE &amp; PERFORMANCE Q3</b> <b>Report Status: Confirmed for this meeting</b>
Quarterly Integrated Report: Finance, Performance and risk	

## COUNCIL 13 FEBRUARY

### CEB: 13 MARCH 2019

<b>ITEM 21:</b> <b>ID: I020323</b>	<b>CORPORATE ENFORCEMENT POLICY</b> <b>Report Status: Provisional: Decision reliant on another action or process</b>
The Council's Corporate Enforcement Policy covers a range of regulatory services delivered by the Council. It was adopted in 2015 and requires reviewing and updating as necessary..	

<b>ITEM 22:</b> <b>ID: I015275</b>	<b>EAST OXFORD COMMUNITY CENTRE - IMPROVEMENT SCHEME</b> <b>Report Status: Provisional : Decision needs further consideration or information</b>
To present an improvement scheme for the East Oxford Community Centre following public consultation.	

<b>ITEM 23:</b> <b>ID: I015077</b>	<b>SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY 2017</b> <b>Report Status: CEB: Provisional: Decision needs further consideration or information</b> <b>Council: Provisional: Decision needs further consideration or information</b>
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.	

## CEB: 10 APRIL 2019

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**Appendix 1 – City Executive Board response to recommendation of the Scrutiny Committee made on 8 October 2018 concerning Local Plan Environmental Standards**

**Draft response provided by the Board Member for Planning and Transport**

<b><i>Recommendation</i></b>	<b><i>Agree?</i></b>	<b><i>Comment</i></b>
That as part of the Local Plan, the Council extends the requirement for an Energy Statement to be submitted for residential developments of less than 5 units.	Yes	The policy applies to all new residential developments other than householder applications, and information would be needed to support this. Therefore, adding a requirement for an energy statement, proportionate in detail to the scale of development, would help to add clarity.

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# **Supporting Rough Sleepers with No Local Connection**

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**Report of the No Local Connection Review Group**  
Commissioned by Oxford City Council's Scrutiny Committee

October 2018

# Contents

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<b>Chair's Foreword</b>	3
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction</b>	4
<b>Chapter 2 Methodology</b>	5
<b>Chapter 3: Homelessness and the Local Connection</b>	6
The National Context	6
The Local Context	7
Defining a Local Connection	9
International Perspectives	12
Homelessness: The Risks	13
Funding for Homelessness support services in Oxford	14
<b>Chapter 4: Findings and recommendations</b>	17
Part 1: Redefining the Local Connection	17
Part 2: Reconnecting People	33
Part 3: Allocating Housing	37
Part 4: Commissioning and Budget Setting	39
Part 5: Communicating What We're Doing	46
<b>Chapter 5: Conclusion</b>	50
<b>Appendices</b>	
Appendix 1: Scope of Oxford Living Wage Review	
Appendix 2: Themes of Review Group Meetings	
Appendix 3: Review Group Report: Local Authority Survey Response	
Appendix 4: Review Group Report: Homeless Focus Group Meeting	
<b>Figures</b>	
Figure 1: UK Areas with Highest Rates of Rough Sleepers per 10,000 households	
Figure 2: Oxford official street count and estimate of rough sleepers 2012-2017	
Figure 3: Homeless Health Check (Homeless Link Health Audit Results 2014)	
Figure 4: Estimated cost to services of a person sleeping rough for 7+ months	
Figure 5: Safe Connections Delivery Model: Developed by Phil Hennessy	
Figure 6: Number of empty units in Oxford (Over 6 months)	

## Foreword by the Chair of the No Local Connection Review Group



The No Local Connection Review Group originated from hours of volunteering and numerous meetings with campaign groups and homeless charities. It came about from acute concerns from the general public bearing witness to the misery of our most vulnerable citizens sleeping out in the streets throughout a long and harsh winter.

The rising levels of homelessness experienced nationally have been shaped by public policy choices concerning housing supply, affordability, welfare cuts and eligibility for housing assistance. There has been further impact in Oxford due to reductions in national and county-level funding and average house prices being unaffordable.

Policy decisions can cause, prevent or resolve homelessness. Since austerity took hold a decade ago, homelessness has increased in the UK by 169% and by more than 400% in Oxford in half that time (based on November 2017 data). In Oxford, there has been an increase in the number of people sleeping rough with no local connection (as currently defined), with 69% of all people counted in 2017 having no identifiable connection to any of the Oxfordshire districts. As Oxford City Council applies a Local Connection approach to most of its accommodation based commissioned services, these people will not be offered somewhere permanent to live, or be able to access a full pathway of support.

The Homeless Reduction Act took effect in April 2018 which brought about more responsibilities for local councils. Within this new context the Review Group carried out an in depth review, the first of its kind, into the specific impact the Local Connection Policy has on people without a local connection. The review has been very positive, stimulated lots of debate and shed light into this complex social and political issue. It also created links among the various stakeholders who passionately want homelessness to end.

The Review Group has presented a total of 26 recommendations for the Scrutiny Committee's endorsement, and hopefully the backing of the City Executive Board. I would in particular like to highlight the Review Group's request for the local connection criteria to be extended to be more realistic about how and when people have established a local connection; a view that was supported widely by contributors to this review.

I want to thank all members of the Review Group for their contributions. In particular, special thanks go to Councillor Richard Howlett for facilitating the meeting with people experiencing homelessness, Councillor Shaista Aziz for her important work on female homelessness and Councillor Craig Simmons for accompanying me on the visit to Croydon. I can't thank them enough for their excellent contributions and dedication. I also want to thank Stefan Robinson, our Scrutiny Officer, who compiled this report for his outstanding contribution.

I would like to give a big thank you to our council officers and to all our guests who contributed their time freely to provide evidence and make this review possible. I would also like to thank the Gatehouse who provided an open and inclusive space so that our guests with lived experiences of homelessness were able to speak freely.

I hope this crucial work will bring about beneficial changes that make a tangible difference to the lives of some of our most vulnerable residents.

**Councillor Nadine Bely-Summers, Chair of the No Local Connection Review Group**

# Chapter 1: Introduction

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1. The role of Oxford City Council's Scrutiny Committee is similar to the role of UK Parliamentary Select Committees. Scrutiny is led by councillors who are not on the City Executive Board (the main council decision making body) and is empowered to question council decision makers and make recommendations to them about policy decisions. Scrutiny can also investigate any issue that affects the local area or its residents, whether or not it is the direct responsibility of the Council.
2. The Scrutiny Committee established the No Local Connection Review Group in July 2018 to investigate concerns regarding the increasing number of people sleeping rough in Oxford without a deemed local connection to the area. The Council's Corporate Plan sets out an ambition that there will be fewer rough sleepers and homeless people, and despite receiving the National Practitioner Support Service 'Gold Standard' award in recognition of its efforts to tackle homelessness, the number of people rough sleeping has continued to rise at a greater rate than the national average.
3. Critically, the vast majority of people living on the City's streets are not considered to have a local connection to the area, which would otherwise enable them to access the Council's Commissioned Adult Homeless Pathway. The Scrutiny Committee tasked the Review Group to engage with partners to examine the Council's Local Connection Policy, and develop recommendations for the Council that might improve or broaden the level of support available to rough sleepers without a local connection.
4. The review also aims to shed light on the impact that recent national and county level cuts to services have had in reducing the provision of appropriate wrap-around support services, and wider mental health services. The delivery of these wider services is vital in providing longer term personable support to help people remain in stable housing.
5. Further uncertainty around future funding from these bodies will likely place greater pressures on maintaining a throughput of people in the Adult Homeless Pathway, and this in itself is worthy of a full review. In this context, the Review Group understand that the Local Connection Policy is just one aspect of this area of work, and the recommendations in this report are not presented as a panacea for tackling homelessness altogether.
6. The Review Group has cross-party membership comprising of the following City Councillors:
  - Councillor Nadine Bely-Summers (Chair)
  - Councillor Shaista Aziz
  - Councillor Paul Harris
  - Councillor Richard Howlett
  - Councillor Tom Landell-Mills
  - Councillor Craig Simmons
7. The purpose of this report is to set out in detail the work undertaken by the Review Group, together with their conclusions and recommendations. Each recommendation is supported by an evidence base gathered from a wide variety of sources as part of the Review Group's work. In producing this report, the Review Group considered:

- a) Evidence submitted by nine Council Officers
  - b) Evidence submitted by 13 local authorities
  - c) Evidence submitted by 13 local frontline service professionals
  - d) Evidence submitted by two national policy experts
  - e) Evidence submitted by 18 people currently experiencing Homelessness
8. The Review Group would like to place on record its thanks to all of the people who contributed to the review, which have enabled the recommendations in the report to be made.

## Chapter 2: Methodology

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9. The Review Group's work involved seven meetings between July 2018 and October 2018. The aim of this work was to evaluate the specific impact of the current Local Connection Policy on those without a local connection, and determine what opportunities were available for improving services to those individuals. Key themes the Review Group sought to explore, as set out in its scoping document (**Appendix 1**), included:
- Existing service provision for rough sleepers without a local connection
  - How homelessness services are funded
  - The reconnection process for those without a local connection.
  - The implications of relaxing the Local Connection Policy.
  - National best practice and the legal background to homelessness prevention
  - Fact checking misconceptions about the provision of services.<sup>1</sup>
10. The Review Group's findings and recommendations have been informed by verbal and written evidence provided by a range of witnesses including people experiencing homelessness, other local authorities and national and local policy experts. Their verbal and written testimony, together with the Review Group's own research, support the conclusions and recommendations made.
11. The Review Group's seven meetings considered a range of evidence from internal and external policy experts, services providers and service users. Contributors to the review included:
- 13 local authorities<sup>2</sup> and up to 18 people experiencing homelessness<sup>3</sup>
  - Matthew Downie, Crisis National Director of Policy and External Affairs
  - Professor Nicholas Pleace, Centre for Housing Policy
  - Kate Cocker, Director of Crisis Skylight Oxford
  - Rob Rogers, ACT Outreach Team Manager
  - Richard, ACT Housing Support Officer
  - Dr James Porter, Luther Street Medical Centre
  - Yvonne Pinner, Oxfordshire Community Foundation
  - Sue Jackson, Oxford Street Population Outreach Manager
  - Elizabeth Edwards, the Big Issue and Homes4All Oxfordshire
  - Paul Roberts, Aspire Oxfordshire
  - Paul Read, Aspire Oxfordshire
  - Boo Sagoo Davies, Aspire Oxfordshire
  - Jan Bailey – Gimme5
  - Claire Dowan, Homeless Oxfordshire
  - Charlotte Blake, Homeless Oxfordshire

The content of the seven meetings held by the Review Group are set out in **Appendix 2**:

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<sup>1</sup> Oxford City Council No Local Connection Review Group, 2018. Review Scope. Available at: <http://mycouncil.Oxford.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=513&MId=4992&Ver=4>

<sup>2</sup> Oxford City Council No Local Connection Review Group, 2018. External Contributions. Available at: <http://mycouncil.Oxford.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=513&MId=5035&Ver=4>

<sup>3</sup> Oxford City Council No Local Connection Review Group, 2018. Homelessness Focus Group Report. Available at: <http://mycouncil.Oxford.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=513&MId=5036&Ver=4>



# Chapter 3: Homelessness and the Local Connection

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## The National Context

12. Local Authorities in England were until recently required under the Housing Act 1996 to secure accommodation for unintentionally homeless households who are considered to be in 'priority need'. This excluded homeless couples without children and single people. Recently, with the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, local authorities are now required to help all eligible households at risk of losing accommodation, regardless of whether they are in priority need or considered to be intentionally homeless.
13. Whilst official statistics and recording practices continue to be disputed by organisations including Crisis and Shelter, there is a clear indication that rough sleeping cases, the most dangerous form of homelessness, have risen dramatically over the past decade. This trend has been seen most prominently in the South East, in alignment with the increasing unaffordability of housing in the region.
14. Official estimates of rough sleepers have risen every year since 2010, and in 2017 there were understood to be 4751 people sleeping rough in England.<sup>4</sup> However, several charities estimate the number to be more than double this figure<sup>5</sup>. The number of families in temporary accommodation has also risen significantly from 50,000 in 2010 to 78,000 in 2017. A similar rise can be seen in the number of children nationally who are in temporary accommodation.<sup>6</sup>
15. Together with a myriad of structural and personal circumstances that can lead to homelessness, the National Audit Office recently identified a particular challenge in relation to the Government's approach to welfare reforms:

*Homelessness in all its forms has significantly increased in recent years, and at present costs the public sector in excess of £1 billion a year. It appears likely that the decrease in affordability of properties in the private rented sector, of which welfare reforms such as the capping of Local Housing Allowance are an element, have driven this increase in homelessness (p. 10).<sup>7</sup>*

16. There is general consensus among the research community that "A country with more social housing, more generous welfare systems, more generous health provision has less homelessness, less poverty than one that does not."<sup>8</sup> Importantly, solving the homelessness crisis is best addressed through partnership working focussed on providing appropriate resources and integrating support systems offered by regional and national governments and public service providers.

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<sup>4</sup> Homeless Link, 2018. Rough Sleeping: Explore the Data. Available at: <https://www.homeless.org.uk/facts/homelessness-in-numbers/rough-sleeping/rough-sleeping-explore-data>

<sup>5</sup> House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts, 2017. Homeless households: eleventh report of session 2017-2019. House of Commons.

<sup>6</sup> The Guardian, 2017. More UK children homeless or in temporary housing than during the crash crisis. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/dec/06/more-children-homeless-or-in-temporary-housing-than-during-crash-crisis>

<sup>7</sup> National Audit Office. Homelessness, 2017. Available at: <https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Homelessness-Summary.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Pleace, 2018. Women and Homelessness: key messages from research in Europe. European Observatory on Homelessness. (p.9)

17. This is not an issue that one local authority can solve on its own. Cuts to support services have been significant in recent years, including cuts to: Housing Benefit, the Supporting People Fund, mental health, social care, police and probation services. There have also been a similar number of challenges presented by the gradual roll out of Universal Credit. Accordingly, a recent study published in the British Medical Journal explains that “Austerity policies have meant that, since 2010, the funding available for supporting vulnerable people with their housing has been cut by 59% in real terms.”<sup>9</sup>
18. The Communities and Local Government Select Committee’s inquiry into homelessness in 2016 found that the level of service offered to homeless people and those at risk of homelessness varied significantly across local authorities,<sup>10</sup> highlighting the discretionary nature of the homelessness support offer at a local level. Following a separate inquiry by Crisis, the Committee concluded that there was a greater need for preventative work in supporting those at risk of homelessness. This perspective contributed to the development of the recent Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, which extends the duties owed by local authorities to those at risk of homelessness from 28 days to 56 days.
19. The Government recently pledged to end rough sleeping by 2027. However, structural pressures continue concerning housing affordability and availability, reductions in welfare benefits, and a rise in zero hours employment contracts. The House of Commons Public Accounts Committee noted that “Welfare reforms have reduced the value of housing benefit paid to lower income families to subsidise housing costs;”<sup>9</sup> a challenge that is most significant in the context of Oxford’s housing market.
20. Whilst estimates continue to change, Crisis estimates that:
- 83% of rough sleepers are men,
  - 41% of rough sleepers have served a prison sentence
  - 15% are non-UK nationals
  - The average age people become homeless is just 22<sup>11</sup>

## The Local Context

21. Oxford is widely cited as the most unaffordable city in the UK in which to live. Compared to 54 other cities in the UK, Oxford has the highest average house prices in the country when compared to local earnings. The average house price is 16.7 times higher than the average annual earnings,<sup>12</sup> which is more than double the average ratio in all other cities within the UK. Oxford also has the highest percentage (30%) of residents living in private rented accommodation (this is partly attributable to the large student population).
22. The Homelessness Act 2002 requires that all local authorities have a strategy in place which sets out their housing vision, how it will prevent and tackle homelessness, and meet housing need in the area. As part of this duty, Oxford City Council agreed in January 2018 to adopt a new 2018-21 Housing and Homelessness Strategy. The

<sup>9</sup> Fransham, M. and Dorling, D, 2018. Homelessness and public health, The British Medical Journal. (p.3)

<sup>10</sup> Communities and Local Government Committee, 2016. Homelessness. Third Report of Session 2016-17.

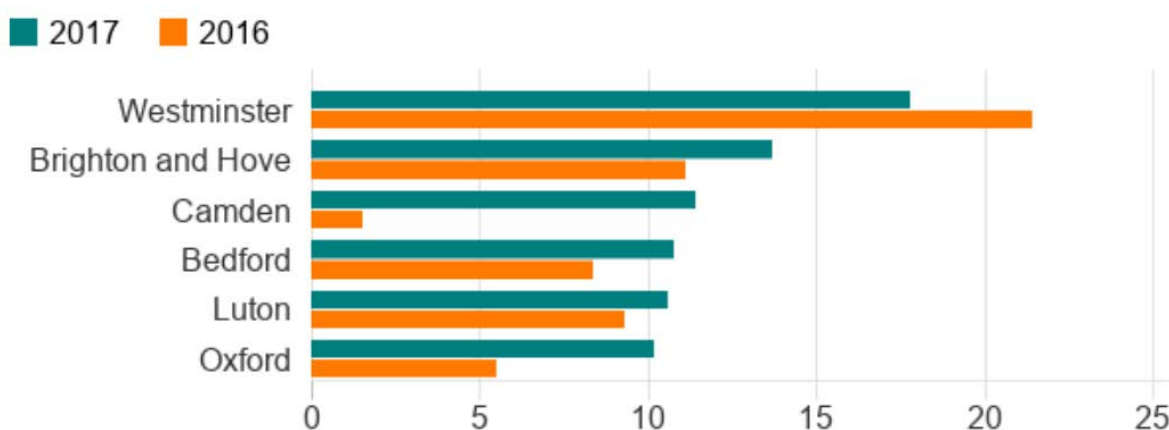
<sup>11</sup> Crisis, 2014. Nations Apart? Experiences of single homeless people across Great Britain. Available at: [https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/20608/crisis\\_nations\\_apart\\_2014.pdf](https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/20608/crisis_nations_apart_2014.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> Financial Times, 19 January 2018. How One London Neighbourhood is worth more than Liverpool. Available at: <https://www.ft.com/content/5abfee38-f634-11e7-a4c9-bbdefa4f210b>

Strategy aims to help all interested parties to understand what the Council is trying to achieve and how it intends to work with a broad range of partners to tackle the breadth of housing and homelessness challenges being faced by the City.

23. The City Council’s official street count of people sleeping rough, which uses a nationally recognised methodology for counting, identified that in November 2016 there were 33 people sleeping rough, a slight decrease from 39 in November 2015. However, in November 2017, the street count identified 61 people sleeping rough. Overall there has been a 400% increase in the number of people sleeping rough since 2012 (see Figure 2). The Council recognises however that the actual number of people sleeping rough on one specific night could be higher. The Council therefore carries out an estimate of rough sleepers which is monitored by Oxfordshire’s Health and Wellbeing Board. In November 2017 the estimated street count in the City was 89.<sup>13</sup>
24. Over the course of 2017/18, 536 different people were verified as rough sleeping in Oxford, 301 of which were verified for the first time. Successful interventions were made with 304 individuals, supporting and enabling 283 people to access the sit-up service, hostel or other accommodation (some of the 283 people may have accessed more than once and more than one type of accommodation).<sup>14</sup> Nationally, Oxford continues to be recognised an area with high rates of homelessness, as illustrated in the graph below.<sup>15</sup>

**Figure 1: Areas with Highest Rates of Rough Sleepers per 10,000 households**



69% of the rough sleepers identified in the City’s 2017 street count did not have an identifiable or known connection to any one of the local authorities in Oxfordshire.<sup>16</sup> At that proportion, scaled up across the year for the amount of people recorded as rough sleeping, it could be estimated that approximately 370 (of 536) people who slept rough in 2017/18 did not have an identifiable local connection to Oxfordshire. Of those, only 19 were successfully reconnected to another area.<sup>14</sup> 21% of the City’s street count had an identifiable local connection to one of the other district councils in the County. 10% had an identifiable local connection to Oxford City. Due to the chaotic and transient nature of rough sleeping, many do not have a tangible connection to anywhere, making access to support services and accommodation very difficult.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Oxford City Council Housing and Homeless Strategy Evidence Base, 2018.

<sup>14</sup> Oxford City Council, 2018. Housing Needs Performance: How did we do? Available at: [https://www.oxford.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/4809/housing\\_needs\\_performance\\_2017-18.pdf](https://www.oxford.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/4809/housing_needs_performance_2017-18.pdf)

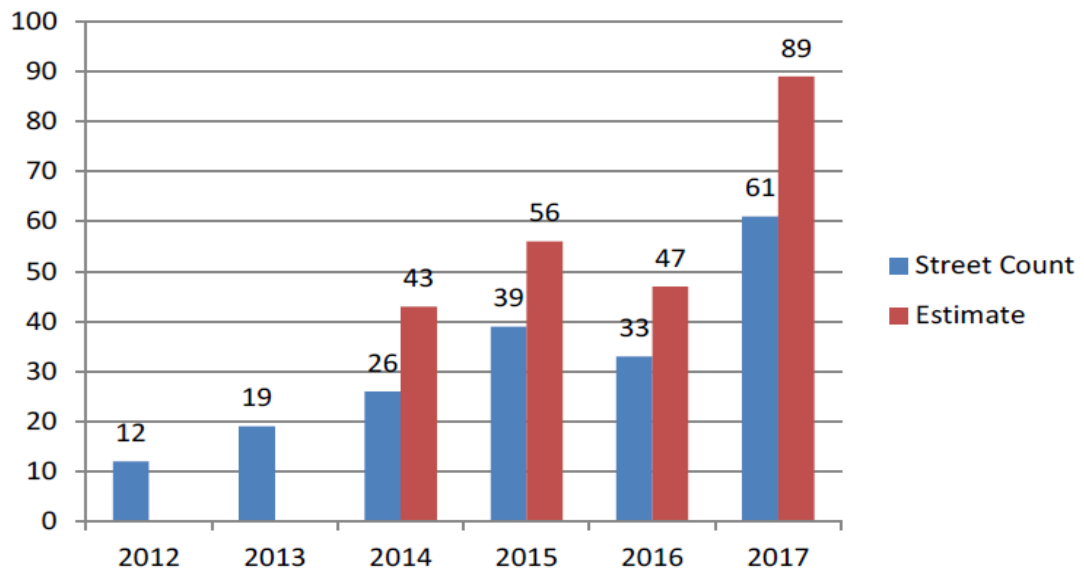
<sup>15</sup> Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government. 2017. Rough Sleeping Statistics Autumn 2017.

<sup>16</sup> Oxford City Council Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2018 – 21, 2018.

25. Data gathered from the November 2017 City Conversation event shows:
- 21 people known at the time of the count had no connection to Oxfordshire,
  - 12 had rough slept in the city for over 1 year.
  - 61 people were identified as sleeping rough on the night of the count,
  - 55 people found were already known to services
  - Most had high level support needs including 25 who had mental ill health issues (10 of these 25 known drug users), 24 who misuse drugs, and 20 alcohol.
  - 22 had slept rough in the City for over 6 months
  - The Oxford Street Population Outreach Team (OxSPOT) recorded 243 rough sleepers between July 2017 and September 2017.<sup>17</sup>

26. The common perception of homelessness tends to be about individuals seen sleeping rough. However, homelessness is a complex issue which affects individuals and families, and much of the good work that goes on is rarely seen by the public. There are numerous reasons why people may lose their home which is often through no fault of their own.

**Figure 2: Council’s official street count and estimate of rough sleepers 2012-2017**



27. Most recently in September 2018, there was a notable decline in the number of people counted as sleeping rough. The cross- service count team counted 36 people as being bedded down, under the same methodology as used in November 2017. This is nearly half the level observed in the previous year. Of these 36 people, 6 had no local connection, 8 had an unknown connection, 5 were being investigated for their connection and 3 had connections to other place in the UK. This represents a total of 19 of 36 people (61%) having no confirmed local connection to Oxfordshire.

28. Locally, since 2014/15, the most common causes of homelessness (loss of last settled accommodation) for accepted homelessness applications have been the loss of rented accommodation (where the main reason is the ending of an Assured Shorthold Tenancy), followed by family and friends no longer being willing or able to accommodate, and thirdly, relationship breakdown. The groups most at risk of homelessness include: young people leaving the care of a local authority; those leaving

<sup>17</sup> City Conversation, 2017. Rough Sleeping Data. Available at: <https://cityconversation.org/rough-sleeping-data/>

prison; people suffering from domestic violence, a mental health problem, or substance or alcohol misuse problems.<sup>16</sup>

29. The City Council recently supported the establishment of the City Conversation event and steering group in recognition that that the homelessness issue cannot be solved by one organisation alone. The City Conversation is a key forum in which to provide a partnership led response and importantly find other funding sources for new services, rather than relying solely on the Council for funding a wide range of services.

## **Defining a Local Connection**

30. Having a local connection to Oxford guarantees one's entry into the Adult Homeless Pathway, and the Housing Register (to access social housing). In order to access the Adult Homeless Pathway and the Housing Register, an individual must meet local connection criteria as set out in the Oxfordshire Adult Homeless Pathway Common Operational Protocol and the Housing Allocations Scheme respectively. At present, the definition of a local connection is broadly aligned in both of these policies.
31. Oxfordshire District Council have agreed to establish a common definition and process for determining a Local Connection for access to the Adult Homeless Pathway, which is referred to as a pathway connection. This is a less strict set of criteria than the local connection as defined in legislation. Individuals will also need to be in receipt of benefits (and so have recourse to public funds). The purpose of the Adult Homeless Pathway is to offer people a course of progression through services to enable them to secure long term social housing or other move-on opportunities. Some commissioned services can be accessed by people without a local connection or recourse to public funds, including a sit-up service (where the individual is engaging with services) and day centre services.
32. The Council has a duty to support those individuals that are considered to have a local connection, as defined in section 199 of the Housing Act 1996 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. The Act considers an individual to have a local connection with a local housing authority "if they have a connection with it:
- a) because he is, or in the past was, normally resident there, and that residence is or was of his own choice,
  - b) because he is employed there,
  - c) because of family associations, or
  - d) because of special circumstances."
33. According to Shelter, residence is defined as being a 'residence of choice' in an area for at least 6 months, and street homelessness may be considered grounds for normal residence.<sup>18</sup>
34. To help coordinate prevention and relief work across Oxfordshire, the six Oxfordshire Councils have developed the Oxfordshire Common Operational Protocol. This document sets out the criteria that must be met before individuals can be considered to have a local connection, and therefore enter the Adult Homeless Pathway. Importantly,

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<sup>18</sup> Shelter, 2018. Local Connection. Available at:  
[http://england.shelter.org.uk/legal/homelessness\\_applications/local\\_connection#\\_ednref14](http://england.shelter.org.uk/legal/homelessness_applications/local_connection#_ednref14)



local authorities owe a duty to any person who is deemed to have a connection to an area under section 199 of part 7 of the Housing Act 1996. Shelter (2011) explains:

*If you are homeless, eligible for assistance, in priority need, not intentionally homeless, and have a local connection, the council owes you the full housing duty. It must continue to accommodate you until it provides you with, or finds you, settled accommodation.*<sup>19</sup>

35. The 1996 Housing Act sets out the reasons someone can be considered to have a local connection, and the Oxfordshire the Common Operational Protocol provides more detail on how the legislation will apply in Oxfordshire. This is paraphrased below:

**Residency** – Evidence of living at an address within the local authority boundary as their main and principal home (6 out of the last 12 months or 3 out of the last 5 years). Time spent rough sleeping/sofa surfing, in the Single Homeless Pathway, in rehab, in prison or in hospital, in a bail hostel or other supported accommodation, is not considered grounds for a Pathway Connection.

**Close Relatives** – Having a connection is restricted to a Mother, Father, Sister, Brother or adult children. Relatives need to have lived in the area for a minimum of 5 years and there must be frequent contact, commitment and dependency immediately prior to the application.

**Employment** – To establish a connection via employment this needs to be a paid permanent job i.e. not transient, nor very occasional.

**Exemptions** – There are specific exemptions for individuals that do not have a local connection, in circumstances where:

- There is a clear connection to the County, but they have lived in different areas
- It would be unsafe for someone to return to an area they are connected with
- Rough sleepers are exempt under a military covenant
- The client is a care leaver
- The client has no local connection to any other local authority area.

36. The Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities explains however that “Referrals are discretionary only, and housing authorities are not required to refer applicants to other authorities.” In these circumstances, local authorities are given the discretion to choose to provide services for those they do not refer. However, within the context of the limited local government finance envelope, all UK authorities currently seek to reconnect people to other local authority areas, where there is a clear connection, and it is safe and appropriate to do so. A 2015 Crisis report suggested however that:

*A much broader debate needs to be had as regards the appropriateness of using the Code of Guidance local connection criteria to restrict rough sleepers’ eligibility for accommodation and other building based services.*<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Shelter, 2011. *Do I have a Local Connection?* Available at: <https://www.rbc-homes.org/choice/uploads/doihavealocalconnection.pdf>

(p.1)

<sup>20</sup> Crisis, 2015. *The Reconnection of Rough Sleepers within the UK.* (p.xiii)

37. Under the current Common Operational Protocol, “reconnection will be discussed assertively with all people [rough sleepers] within the scope of this policy.”<sup>21</sup> Nationally, reconnection policies vary significantly, which means that the criteria used to assess whether an individual has a better connection with one area over another is inconsistent. The same variations can also be seen in the way that local authorities define intentionality criteria.<sup>22</sup> The same report also criticises how local authorities vary the definition of ‘priority need’ status, which Shelter suggests is driven by the level of resources available, rather than a national consensus on how ‘priority need’ is applied.

38. Within the Oxfordshire Common Operational Protocol, any person deemed by the Outreach Team as being a rough sleeper will be assessed, including whether they have a local connection to the area.

*If a client does not co-operate with the assessment and or reconnection process and an assessment therefore cannot be completed, the client may not be able to use O’Hanlon House day services and/or use the ‘sit-up service’ (excluded form services) or any services as applicable in District authorities (p.31).<sup>21</sup>*

39. Where rough sleepers do not have a local connection to the county, an alternative service offer will be developed which reconnects them to an area where they do have a local connection. Provision for a sit-up-service will be made whilst a reconnection is made. The Common Operational Protocol explains:

*Clients who already have secure accommodation in another area will be given 24 hours from when outreach teams have clarified that it is deemed safe and appropriate, to return. They will then be excluded from services (p.33).<sup>21</sup>*

40. This practice is identified as common among local authorities.<sup>20</sup>

## **International Perspectives**

41. The European Observatory on Homelessness (EOG) carried out a research study into the application of local connection criteria across Europe as a means of defining access to support services. The report explains that local connection criteria are used widely across Europe to define who receives what level of support.<sup>23</sup> However, local connection criteria are defined and applied with varying levels of strictness. For the most part, the UK is seen to have significant local authority control over local connection rules, compared to other European countries. This has resulted in a wide variation of policies and a ‘postcode lottery’ for people that are homeless.

42. The EOH highlights that the UK’s social housing supply is so acute, that in some areas, there is evidence of maladministration of the homelessness laws, with entitled applicants turned away because little social housing is available. The lack of social housing has led to what the EOH defines as extreme interpretations of English law, where rough sleepers, squatters, prisoners and those in temporary accommodation are not considered to have a local connection, despite having been within the local authority boundaries for an extended period of time.

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<sup>21</sup> Oxfordshire Adult Homeless Pathway Common Operational Protocol, 2018. Unpublished.

<sup>22</sup> Shelter, 2007. Policy Report: Rights and Wrongs. Available at:

[http://england.shelter.org.uk/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0015/48012/Briefing\\_Rights\\_and\\_Wrongs\\_Nov\\_2007.pdf](http://england.shelter.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0015/48012/Briefing_Rights_and_Wrongs_Nov_2007.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> European Observatory on Homelessness, 2015. Local Connection Rules and Access to Homelessness Service in Europe.

43. Residence in an institutional setting (such as hospital, rehab and prison) within a UK local authority area is often not taken as evidence of a local connection, which is different to how some European countries operate. However, many of the European countries that give more concessions in defining a local connection are not in the grip of a housing crisis in the same way as England, notwithstanding the pinnacle of unaffordability that is Oxford. More broadly, the challenge of rising homelessness is a pan-European issue, with Finland being the only country to reduce homelessness in recent years; widely attributed to nationwide investment in the housing first principle.
44. The EOH report asserts that complex local connection criteria can often obstruct fast reconnections, access to essential services and be expensive. However, the EOH balances this position by recognising the benefits of local connection criteria:

*[Local connection criteria] provide a mechanism for preventing the abuse of public resources through 'freeloading'. They can provide a protection for localities which decide to offer a high level of social support from having to bear the social costs of neighbouring areas which, for instance, reduce local taxes by refusing to invest in such services. But they are also a way of rationing access to accommodation and support (p.5).<sup>23</sup>*

45. The report concludes by recommending that local connection criteria take account of the support needs of those who are most vulnerable and at risk:

*Suspending local connection requirements for high need groups, particularly long-term and recurrently homeless people with significant support needs, may be the simplest solution... suspending or abolishing local connection rules under certain circumstances may be the best way forward (p.63)... Many homeless people whose homelessness is sustained or recurrent, and who are most likely to have high and complex support needs, may be least likely to be able to demonstrate a local connection and quite often face barriers to emergency accommodation (p.59).<sup>23</sup>*

46. However, this conclusion has been made in the context of an international study, and its recommendations may be more or less applicable to specific countries. Importantly, within the UK context of a severely restricted housing supply, and the consequent unaffordability of housing, the enforcement of a prioritised support scheme through stricter local connection rules can serve to manage 'priority' need, within the context of limited resources.

## **Homelessness: The Risks**

47. Rough sleepers are much more likely to suffer ill-health and violence than the wider population.<sup>24</sup> According to the Homeless Health Needs Audit:

- 86% of rough sleepers reported having a mental health issue
- 41% reported recovering from an drug problem
- 27% reported recovering from an alcohol problem.<sup>25</sup>

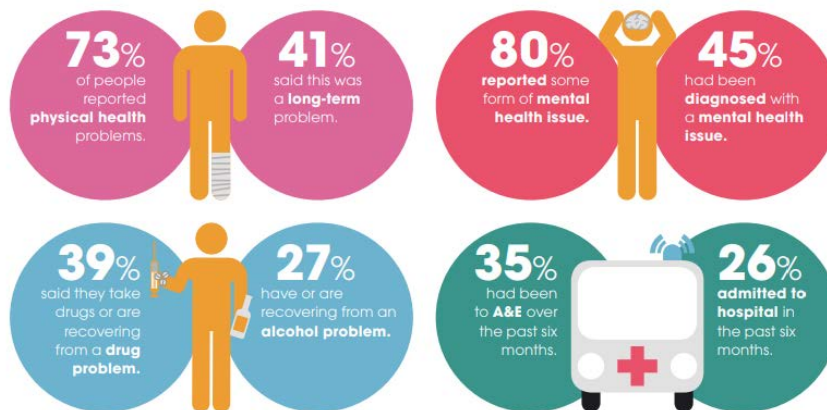
<sup>24</sup> Crisis, 2012. Homelessness Kills: An analysis of the mortality of homeless people in early twenty-first century England.

<sup>25</sup> Homeless Link, Homeless health Needs Audit. Available at: [https://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/Homeless%20Health%20Needs%20Audit%20toolkit\\_0.pdf](https://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/Homeless%20Health%20Needs%20Audit%20toolkit_0.pdf)



48. Other studies report significant variances in this data, such as higher levels of drug and alcohol dependency. However, there is consensus among the research community that rough sleepers suffer from significantly disproportionate addiction and dependency issues, and experience much higher health risks. These challenges, coupled with high risk living circumstances, are all matters that contribute towards the low life expectancy of a rough sleeper at just 47 years of age.<sup>24</sup> Between October 2017 and October 2018, a study found that 449 people in the UK had died whilst experiencing a period of homelessness, and significant number of which were sleeping rough.<sup>26</sup> Even once rough sleepers are housed, their housing conditions are often such that they remain at much higher risk of respiratory conditions, depression, anxiety and unintentional injury.<sup>9</sup>
49. Drug and alcohol abuse are particularly common causes of death among the homeless population, accounting for just over a third of all deaths. Suicide, traffic incidents and infections also pose an elevated risk to rough sleepers.<sup>27</sup> A national survey of outreach workers by St Mungo's in 2011 showed that relationship breakdown, domestic violence and mental health issues were the primary causes of rough sleeping, which only serve to exacerbate existing health problems.<sup>28</sup>
50. Dr Nigel Hewitt at Pathway Healthcare explains that "Homeless people in the UK do not die from exposure. They die from treatable medical conditions."<sup>29</sup> There is a common misconception that rough sleepers must have a fixed address to access GP services. This is not the case, and one's immigration status is also irrelevant. Organisations such as the Healthy London Partnership and Groundswell have worked to deliver educational programmes about this fact, to encourage people who are homeless to access local health services. Luther Street Medical Centre in Oxford is an award-winning GP surgery that has a history of providing healthcare to people experiencing homelessness.

**Figure 3: Homeless Health Check (Homeless Link Health Audit Results 2014)<sup>29</sup>**



### Funding for Homelessness services in Oxford

51. On 19 February 2018 Oxford City Council agreed its Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan for the period 2018-19 to 2021-22 which included a base budget for homelessness services of £941k per annum. A further commissioning budget was also

<sup>26</sup> BBC, 2018. Homeless Deaths: At least 449 reported in the past year. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-45797223>

<sup>27</sup> NHS, 2011. Homeless die 30 years younger than average. Available at: <https://www.nhs.uk/news/lifestyle-and-exercise/homeless-die-30-years-younger-than-average/>

<sup>28</sup> St Mungos, 2011. Battered, beoken, bereft: Why people still end up sleeping rough. Available at: <https://www.mungos.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/2011-Battered-Broken-Bereft-report.pdf>

<sup>29</sup> 80 Pathway, 2018. Pathway Services. Available at: <http://www.pathway.org.uk/about-us/>

made available from the Council's own grant budget of £442,279. The budget for 2018/19 was further enhanced by £161,700 allocated from reserves, accumulated from 2016/17 to support the Council's participation in the countywide Adult Homeless Pathway.

52. The strategic framework within which these funds are allocated remains the same, providing a total budget for 2018/19 of approximately £1,834,853; a total increase of approximately £100,000 on 2017/18. The City Council also has an ear-marked homelessness reserve which could be draw down as needed, which was projected to be in the region of £800,000 by March 2019, from the February 2018 budget. However, this money can only be spent once and should not be used to sustain services.
53. Supported accommodation for rough sleepers and single homeless people has historically been funded by Oxfordshire County Council through Housing Related Support funds (formerly Supporting People). In February 2016, Oxfordshire County Council made a decision to cut their Housing Related Support Funds by 100%, starting to implement phased cuts from 1 April 2017, with no further funds available from 1 April 2019.
54. In response, the six Oxfordshire councils and the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group agreed to enter into a pooled budget arrangement in order to preserve some of the supported accommodation for rough sleepers and single homeless people. All parties are contributing financially to the pooled budget over the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2020. The European Commission on Homelessness highlights that these types of pooled systems help mitigate against barriers to accessing support services.
55. These new arrangements have required a reconfiguration of the co-ordination for access to the homeless pathway, as a certain number of bed spaces are now available to each local authority. From 1 April 2017 and going forward, rough sleepers and single homeless people will only be able to access accommodation that is funded by and for the local authority where the person has a confirmed connection.
56. It has been estimated that Oxford City needs at least 150 beds to meet demand, based on snapshot counts of use of the pathway from 2015 to 2017. Whilst there has been a significant increase in the number of people sleeping rough on the City's streets, a high proportion of these people do not have a local connection to Oxford City. They are therefore not eligible to access the Adult Homeless Pathway, and would not therefore be included in any needs assessment.
57. In June 2018, the Council was awarded £503,000 in Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) funding to help prevent and reduce rough sleeping in the winter. The Council expressed its intention on receipt of these funds to support 64 new bed spaces for rough sleepers – including some beds for people who are not currently eligible for the homeless pathway. The funding will also be used to support the development of a multi-agency service hub in the City Centre, and additional staff posts within the Street Population Outreach Team. In addition to the £503,000 of MHCLG funding, the Council has most recently been awarded a further £511,000 for 2019/20, which is conditional on the successful delivery of the funded programme for 2018/19.

# Chapter 4: Findings and Recommendations

## Part 1: Redefining the Local Connection

### Broadening the Local Connection Exemption Criteria

58. As part of its research, the Review Group contacted 29 Local Authorities, initially with tailored emails about their local connection policies. This included a question on whether they would consider someone to have a local connection in circumstances where they had slept rough within their boundary for six or more months. The findings were weighted towards London borough authorities with unitary status and other large metropolitan cities, which were identified as having good practice. The purpose of this work was to understand how criteria varied across different authorities, and what support was in place to support people without a local connection.
59. Most of the 12 local authorities that responded said they took a discretionary approach to service provision for people who are homeless or rough sleeping. Local connection criteria were considered a useful tool for reconnecting people, resolving cross boundary disputes and prioritising service resources. In some cases where there was no local connection, it was often left to the discretion of a senior manager to decide what level of service should be offered. This approach was also championed by Croydon Council, which the Review Group visited as part of its work.
60. Discretion was applied to varying levels across the responding local authorities, but it often involved applying discretion to offer overnight accommodation, access to support pathways, and move-on support. The emphasis in the responses concerned getting people off of the street, before offering other services including reconnection.
61. Several local authorities were of the view that a strict 'one-size-fits-all' Local Connection Policy was not appropriate, and did not account for the diversity of needs and vulnerabilities experienced by people sleeping rough in particular. Whilst some said they would offer a local connection to people who had been sleeping rough for more than six months, others took what they described as a more 'pragmatic' approach.
62. Most suggested that each case must be considered on its own merits, with the health, safety and vulnerability of a rough sleeper being the priority. Colleagues from the Centre for Housing Policy also responded to the Review Group's call for evidence, and they explained that not recognising six months sleeping rough as residency creates a backlog of people left on the streets, for which there are examples elsewhere in the UK.

*The priority is always to reconnect rough sleepers to an area where they have a better connection. However, outreach workers are given the discretion to judge whether someone should be entitled to supported accommodation, where it is clear that their poor health [mental, physical, addiction] and vulnerability, and the barriers to reconnection are so significant, that they need immediate support.*  
**London Borough, Supported Housing Commissioner**

63. Some local authorities said that local connection criteria can limit people's ability to act in support of the most vulnerable. Many said that they did not have (or were not willing to

share) policy or guidance in this area, and instead tailored their support based on factors including:

- Someone's physical and mental health
- Someone's level of dependency on drugs and/or alcohol
- Someone's risk of experiencing violence
- Whether someone's rough sleeping habits were entrenched (which does not necessarily relate to the amount of time sleeping rough, but also attitudes)
- The barriers posed to reconnecting someone to another area

64. These criteria broadly align with the Review Group's perspective on cases that should be considered for exemption from the Local Connection Criteria.

*Whether someone has been on the streets for one day or six months is irrelevant in these circumstances. The level of time spent on the street does not equal the level of need. **London Borough, Supported Housing Commissioner***

*We operate a discretionary approach meaning we sometimes overlook an absence of local connection where a viable solution can be found. If someone has 6 months rough sleeping contacts in the City this would certainly be the case. **London Borough, Homeless Service Manager***

*There is no difference between the level of support between someone with a local connection based on more than 6 months in settled accommodation, and someone who has been rough sleeping in the area for 6 months. **London Borough, Homeless Manager***

*In the case of people having been frequently and consistently reported and recorded as rough sleeping on the streets for 6 months or over, it would be highly likely that they would gain a local connection and indeed there are numerous examples of that. **London Borough, Outreach Worker***

*London boroughs take a more practical case-by-case approach that is focussed on helping rough sleepers off the streets as quickly as possible – and that might mean helping some people with no clear connection to their area. **London Borough, Homeless Service Coordinator***

65. Exceptions can be made to the Local Connection Policy, particularly in 'special circumstances' as set out in the Homelessness Code of Guidance. One of the special circumstances specifically referenced by the Code concerns the need to be near specialist medical or support services. Given the concentration of specialist services including Luther Street Medical Centre and the John Radcliffe Hospital, the Review Group wish to emphasise the need to promote exemptions to the Local Connection Policy particularly on medical grounds.

*A 'full' local connection criteria based on the ability to prove a close and supportive family relationship or being named on a tenancy for a specific amount of time within recent years seems to discriminate against homeless people, especially if they have more complex or enduring issues – meaning they are even less likely to meet the criteria. **Staff Feedback from O'Hanlon House Hostel, Oxford***

66. The Review Group recognise that Oxford City Council employs discretion in its approach to accepting people without a local connection. However, members believe this could be more explicit within the Council's policies and better communicated to the public.

### **Critiques of the Local Connection Approach**

67. The UK is recognised as having a high degree of control over its local connection rules in comparison to other European countries.<sup>23</sup> The EOH report into cross-Europe local connection policies explains that the more vulnerable a person is, and the more support needs they have, the less likely they are to be able to provide evidence of a local connection. The provision and availability of documents is one of the primary barriers for helping people out of homelessness and making effective reconnections. The Review Group heard from a focus group of 12 people experiencing homelessness in Oxford and other contributor that it can be challenging to secure:

- a) Records or proof of domestic abuse and the risk of violence
- b) Personal identification documents
- c) Proof of residence
- d) A bank account

68. The EOH report states that complex local connection criteria can often obstruct fast reconnections, access to essential services and be expensive. The Review Group similarly heard from Matthew Downie, Crisis National Director of Policy and External Affairs, that a significant amount of money is spent nationally to ensure criteria are enforced, rather than providing support. Some of the people in the Review Group's focus group with 12 people experiencing homelessness told of their experiences in dealing with the City Council, which highlight potential barriers which the Review Group believe could be overcome.

*When you go into Crisis, the first thing they say is "how can we help?" When you go into the Council, they put up barriers and use a wrong definition for local connection. The Council is adversarial in its approach and it needs to change.*

***Person Experiencing Homelessness in Oxford***

*You talk to someone different at the Council every time so you have to explain everything over and over again so they understand your case. Also, some people are less strict than others.*

***Person Experiencing Homelessness in Oxford***

69. The EOH and Crisis are recognised as leading organisations in supporting and reducing homelessness. Their resource and funding has enabled the commissioning of various pieces of research specifically looking at the issue of local connection. Most recently in 2018, Crisis have called for local connection criteria for rough sleepers to be scrapped:

*Until local connection is more widely reformed, so it no longer presents a barrier to assistance for anyone at risk of homelessness, it should be scrapped for rough sleepers... This does not, however, rule out responsible reconnections (p.195).<sup>30</sup>*

<sup>30</sup> Crisis, 2018. Everybody In: How to End Homelessness in Great Britain. Available at: [https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/239346/everybody\\_in\\_how\\_to\\_end\\_homelessness\\_in\\_great\\_britain\\_2018.pdf](https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/239346/everybody_in_how_to_end_homelessness_in_great_britain_2018.pdf)

70. The same report highlights that the establishment of a regional protocol on this issue could also be implemented, such as an Oxfordshire wide relaxation of the local connection rules:

*Until local connection rules are scrapped by national governments, they should be suspended between local authorities in different regions (p.149).*

71. The EOH similarly says:

*Suspending local connection requirements for high need groups, particularly long-term and recurrently homeless people with significant support needs, may be the simplest solution... suspending or abolishing local connection rules under certain circumstances may be the best way forward (p.63).<sup>23</sup>*

72. This view is broadly supported by Professor Suzanna Fitzpatrick and Barrister Liz Davies within the Crisis report (p.389). They suggest that should a net inward flow of people result as a consequence of abolishing local connection criteria, then it may be appropriate to reapply it. This is why the Review Group proposes that a pilot be undertaken to understand the impacts of changes to the Local Connection Policy, if a permanent change to the Policy is not amenable to the City Executive Board or is not considered to be financially feasible in the short term (see recommendation 7).

### **Addressing the ‘Magnet’ Effect**

73. The Review Group were not convinced that a ‘magnet’ effect of people coming to Oxford to make use of Council services would ensue, if the Council relaxed its Local Connection Policy. In speaking to other local authorities, and hearing from expert guests, the Review Group believe that any influx of people with no local connection would be minimal. Housing practitioners within the Review Group’s research suggested that there were more significant pull factors than local councils’ policies.

*I think only a small number of people come here specifically to make use of our overnight services. Instead, the vast majority come here because there is a high footfall, begging opportunities and voluntary help. No matter what your policy, these factors will weigh heavily on whether people migrate to a City.*

**Northern Metropolitan City, Homelessness Manager**

Several community and faith sector partners provide food handouts that can attract rough sleeping to the borough and also, due to its night time economy, the area is an attractive prospect for people to come and beg – this can lead to people choosing to stay and be sustained in the borough for the longer term.

**South Eastern Borough, Pathway Manager**

*We cannot make the link between our policy and the rise in the number of people sleeping rough, as this has been seen nationally in all cities, regardless of how strict their policies are... The evidence that people come here because we have a more relaxed policy is anecdotal. I think it is only a small percentage.*

**Northern Metropolitan City, Homelessness Manager**

74. The Council's Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2018-21 references the notion of a 'magnet' effect, if the Local Connection Policy were to be relaxed:

*There is a high risk that a large number of people from across the country, without a local connection to that local authority would go there, or be referred from other areas of the country. This would result in that local authority facing disproportionate burdens and cost – a burden that would fall on local tax-payers (p.56).<sup>16</sup>*

75. The Review Group believe that more evidence is needed before this can be proven. It was noted by the focus group of people experiencing homelessness that:

*Oxford is a haven for the homeless in comparison to other areas because there are good support services, things to do and a good community of people.*  
**Person Experiencing Homelessness in Oxford**

76. The Review Group believe that in line with the comments expressed by homeless service professionals above, Oxford's status as a 'haven' for people experiencing homelessness already exists, and that it is a result of much wider circumstances than the influence of the Council's policy. Furthermore, colleagues from the Centre for Housing Policy suggested that it is difficult to know whether relaxing the Local Connection Policy would have a 'magnet' effect. However, the lack of agency and ability to travel for homeless people was expressed as a reason for why people would not be drawn to the area. The EOH report similarly highlights the need for further research.

*There is scant evidence of significant geographical mobility among homeless people in the UK; there are examples of highly mobile individuals and internal migration to major cities, but the presumption that homelessness in towns, rural areas and cities is largely the result of homeless people coming from outside the area is not supported by research (p.31).<sup>23</sup>*

77. The Review Group also wish to address the second part of the Housing and Homelessness Strategy comment concerning the 'risk' of people being referred by nationwide support services to Oxford, in light of any policy relaxation. The Review Group believe that relaxing the Local Connection Policy would not remove the duty of other local authorities to help people that have a connection to their area, and they support the view that any person who can reasonably be reconnected to another area should be supported to do so.

### **Long Term Rough Sleepers as Residents**

78. Under the Oxfordshire Common Operational Protocol a person can gain a residency connection if they have evidence of living at an address within the local authority boundary as their main and principal home (for 6 out of the last 12 months or 3 out of the last 5 years). Time spent rough sleeping/sofa surfing, in the Single Homeless Pathway, in rehab, in prison or in hospital, in a bail hostel or other supported accommodation, is not considered grounds for a Pathway Connection. The Protocol reads:

*If a client has been unsettled or not had a main and principal home, including: rough sleeping/sofa surfing, in the Single Homeless Pathway, in rehab, in prison or in hospital, in a bail hostel or other supported accommodation, this period will not*



*be considered for a Pathway Connection. In these cases any assessment based on residency will start from the last time the client held settled accommodation or had a main and principal home, even if that was some years previously (p.18).*

79. However, the Homeless Code of Guidance for Local Authorities advises that:

*'Normal residence' is to be understood as meaning 'the place where at the relevant time the person in fact resides.' Residence in temporary accommodation provided by a housing authority can constitute normal residence of choice and can contribute towards a local connection. If an applicant has no settled accommodation elsewhere, and from inquiries the authority is satisfied that they do in fact reside in the district, then there will be normal residence for the purposes of the 1996 Act.*

80. The Review Group believe the Common Operational Protocol does not align with the Code of Guidance, given that street homelessness can be considered grounds for normal residence.<sup>18</sup> The Review Group ask that the Local Connection Policy allows for people sleeping rough on Oxford's streets to be considered residents of the City, where they meet the usual six months residency requirement. This should also be extended to people who are known by the Council to be 'sofa surfing.'
81. The Review Group recognise that the total abolition of the Local Connection Policy, which in principle they would want to support, is not realistically implementable without national sign up to the issue. However, to help support the most vulnerable people sleeping rough within the City, the Review Group believe the local connection criteria should be extended.
82. The Adult Homeless Pathway Common Operational Protocol could provide more clarity and be explicit about the additional circumstances in which a local connection could be offered. This would help practitioners in applying their discretion, and also people experiencing homelessness themselves, who find it hard to understand the current policy or have misconceptions about it. This proposal was supported by the majority of local contributors to the review.
83. The Review Group note that there is already discretion applied within the Council's approach, but it needs to be communicated more explicitly and publically, particularly to rough sleepers who's outcomes may be influenced by the use of this discretion. A positive narrative about our inclusive approach to discretion within the Policy would therefore be welcome.
84. Implementing a more broadly-defined Local Connection Policy would no doubt contribute to the national discussion. Crisis supports the abolition of such a policy, and it was implied during the review process that they would offer support to the City Council in devising and implementing such a policy; the outcome of which would be valuable to practitioners nationally. The Review Group heard from Crisis that there may be opportunities to secure funding from MHCLG for this.



**Recommendation 1: That the Council extends the exemption criteria within the Local Connection Policy to provide a more comprehensive narrative and make clear that discretion may be used to offer a local connection to a person in circumstances where:**

- a) They are known by the Council to have slept rough or ‘sofa surfed’ in Oxford for a continuous period in excess of 6 months, with no clear prospect of reconnection to another local authority area.**
- b) Their long term physical or mental health condition (including substance misuse) poses a significantly elevated risk to that person’s health and safety, beyond that experienced by other rough sleepers.**
- c) They are known by the Council to be fleeing violence from another area within the UK, with no clear prospect of reconnection to another local authority area that is considered safe.**

### **Lifetime Local Connections**

85. In speaking to 12 people experiencing homelessness, it was clear that many felt they did have a genuine connection to Oxford, but the nature of these connections would not currently entitle them to support under the Local Connection Policy. Members of the Review Group also felt that some of these people did have a genuine connection to Oxford in their judgement, and that they should not be excluded from the Adult Homeless Pathway on this basis.
86. Crisis recommends that councils’ should, “*improve and extend the statutory definition of the current local connection rules to be more generous and realistic about how and when people have established a local connection*”<sup>30</sup> (p.390). Accordingly, the Review Group believe that the Council’s own Policy could be more open to offering a local connection to more people who have a connection to the area.
87. The Review Group recognise that deciding whether someone has a local connection to an area or not is an entirely subjective exercise, and the current Local Connection Policy attempts to qualify this through its criteria, the minimum standards of which are set nationally. However, the statutory definition used by the council does not account for other connections that people have to Oxford, some of which are arguably more distinct. One contributor to the review highlighted that a person’s connection to an area is better defined by the communities they engage with and their friendship groups, rather than their residency; though, this is clearly harder to quantify.
88. Some participants in the meeting explained that they were born in Oxford, grew up in Oxford, and in some circumstances lived in the City in excess of 20 years. However, they had left the City previously for a variety of reasons, and found on their return they had lost their local connection, and therefore their access to the Adult Homeless Pathway.
89. Violence and relationship breakdown were presented by people experiencing homelessness as a common experience when they had left Oxford to live with a partner, and those who experienced it said the Local Connection Policy was unfair to them. The Review Group note however that provision is already made to offer exemptions to the

Local Connection Policy where it would be unsafe to refer a person back to a local authority. However, the suggestion from people that the Review Group spoke too was that they were not offered an exemption in these circumstances. There was a consensus in the feedback that someone who was born in Oxford, and grew up in Oxford, should have a lifelong local connection.

*I moved away with my partner. After the relationship broke down, I came back to Oxford and had no local connection.*

*We are in a situation where someone whose birth certificate reads “born in the JR” can be denied a local connection. I think that is ridiculous.*

*Through no fault of my own, I now have no local connection even though I have lived here in the past. I moved here with a purpose to start again, and I have signed up to the doctors and the hospital. That should give me a local connection.*

**People Experiencing Homelessness in Oxford**

90. The views of participants in the Review Group’s own research is similarly reflected in a study undertaken elsewhere in the country this year:<sup>31</sup>

*I was born five minutes up the road ... And yet I had no local connection when I came back [after living away]. My connection is here, do you know what I mean?*

**Person Experiencing Homelessness Elsewhere in the UK**

91. There is no definition of what constitutes special circumstances for exemptions to local connection policies in the homelessness legislation. However, an example given in the Local Authority Code of Guidance is where a person is seeking to return to an area where s/he was brought up or had lived for a considerable length of time. The Review Group believes the Local Connection Policy could take better account of people who have a history of living in Oxford, but have not in recent years. This would help people who return to Oxford and become homeless following a relationship breakdown, for example.
92. The Review Group believe that people who have a connection to the City through their childhood should be offered a local connection. One way to do this may be to offer local connections to all people who were born in hospitals within the City. Another approach would be to offer a local connection to people who went to school in the City for a number of years, although such a system may be more difficult to administer. It is recognised however that where people have a more recent local connection to another Oxfordshire District, it may be more appropriate to refer them to those authorities for support.

**Recommendation 2: That the Council grants a lifetime local connection to people who were born in Oxford, where no period of absence from the City would invalidate their connection, except in circumstances where they have a more appropriate local connection to another Oxfordshire district.**

<sup>31</sup> Johnsen, Fitzpatrick and Watts, 2018. Homelessness and social control: a typology. *Housing Studies*. 1-21. DOI: 10.1080/02673037.2017.1421912

## Volunteers as Locally Connected

93. The Review Group heard from Crisis Skylight Oxford and ACT Housing that a significant number of their service users were either in paid work, or volunteering in the City. Research carried out by Shelter shows that 55% of families in temporary accommodation are in work,<sup>32</sup> and this reflects the fact that many people experiencing homelessness in Oxford have skills and qualities that benefit the City.
94. The Review Group notes that for the purposes of the Housing Act 1996, employment refers to “both paid and unpaid employment”<sup>33</sup> and that unpaid work can give rise to a local connection.<sup>18</sup> People who are in paid work on a non-casual basis are immediately given a local connection under the Council’s Local Connection Policy, but volunteers are not.
95. Offering a local connection to people who have sustained a volunteering role for a significant period of time (e.g. six months) is something that was supported by contributors to their review and explicitly championed by Aspire. The current policy could better reflect the value added by people in voluntary roles. Importantly, people with experience of homelessness may be more inclined to work for charities within the City that previously supported them, and this could help them to progress into paid employment and strengthen the local volunteer base. The Council may want to develop a set of criteria or ‘approved employers’ to help evidence someone’s period of voluntary work.

**Recommendation 3: That the Council grants a local connection to people confirmed as sustaining a contracted voluntary role within the City for a period of 6 months.**

## Extending the Close Relatives Connection

96. At the focus group meeting with people experiencing homelessness, some participants said they had family in Oxford, or very near to Oxford, and that they were not able to gain a local connection. It was also highlighted that due to challenging relationships and family breakdown, some Oxford residents in settled accommodation would not verify their relationship with a person experiencing homelessness. Some people had a long history of their family being settled in Oxford, and were frustrated that the Council’s policy did not take broader account of their family history and the wider family network.

*I grew up in Oxford. I moved away for five years, and when I came back, the Council wouldn’t offer me a local connection. They said my aunt and uncle were not close enough relatives.*

*While I was away from Oxford, my mum died, which meant I lost my local connection.*

***People experiencing homelessness in Oxford***

<sup>32</sup> Shelter, 2018. Over half of homeless families in England are in work, shock new figures show. Available at: [https://england.shelter.org.uk/media/press\\_releases/articles/over\\_half\\_of\\_homeless\\_families\\_in\\_england\\_are\\_in\\_work\\_shock\\_new\\_figures\\_show](https://england.shelter.org.uk/media/press_releases/articles/over_half_of_homeless_families_in_england_are_in_work_shock_new_figures_show)

<sup>33</sup> R. v Ealing LBC Ex p. Fox (1998) 95(11) L.S.G. 35

97. The Homelessness Code of Guidance explains that:

*Family association can include with other family members such as step-parents, grandparents, grandchildren, aunts or uncles... the actual closeness of the family association may count for more than the degree of blood relation.*

98. The Review Group recognise that there is reference to deceased family members within the Common Operational Protocol as providing a local connection, but one participant said that discretion to accept a local connection was not applied in their case. Also as part of their evidence gathering meetings, the Review Group also heard an example of a parent, who had children living in Oxford, being offered accommodation over 80 miles away. The Review Group recognise that each person's application must be judged on a case-by-case basis, but they feel discretion could be applied more generously in some of these cases, particularly where there are high and complex needs involved.

**Recommendation 4: That the Council extends the close relatives connection criteria to include first cousins, grandparents and grandchildren. Deceased family members in the immediate family (mother, father, brother, sister or children) should also be explicitly referenced in the policy as providing a connection.**

#### **Admission into Prison, Hospital or Rehab**

99. Under the current Local Connection Policy, time spent in hospital, rehab or prison is not counted towards local connection residency. Under the current policy, if someone with a local connection to Oxford were to enter an institution for an extended period of time, they would lose their local connection. However, the Review Group believes that admission into these institutions should not invalidate a person's local connection.

100. As two services which incur significant costs as a result of homelessness, the Council should be working to expedite and streamline the process of transitioning people into the adult homeless pathway from Prison and Health Services. Individuals who spend time in these institutions are more likely to have greater support needs. A lack of support to transition into accommodation may lead to a further deterioration of health outcomes and reoffending. As a Home Office report explains "Ex-prisoners who are homeless upon release are twice as likely to re-offend as those with stable accommodation."<sup>34</sup>

101. Homeless Link reported in 2014 that approximately 36% of people experiencing homelessness nationally were directly discharged from hospital onto the street, without underlying health problems or housing being addressed.<sup>35</sup> The Review Group heard specific case examples of this happening in Oxford. As with hospitals, older research suggests that 30% of people leaving prison did not have a place to live,<sup>36</sup> and this is known to be happening from HMP Bullingdon also.

102. Oxford City Council recently undertook to monitor the number of people entering and leaving Bullingdon Prison with no fixed address. Over a 4 month period, 27% of

<sup>34</sup> Home Office and Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2005. ' Guide to Housing and Housing Support Options for Offenders and People at Risk of Offending.

<sup>35</sup> Homeless Link, 2014. The unhealthy state of homelessness: Health Audit Results 2014. Homeless Link.

<sup>36</sup> Niven S and Stewart D (2005) Resettlement outcomes on release from prison, Home Office Findings 248

prisoners entered prison with no fixed address, and 38% left with no fixed address. The Review Group were pleased to note work being progressed in this area as part of the Trailblazer Programme, where key workers are in place to better support housing transitions and reintegration.

103. In discussions with people experiencing homelessness, the Review Group heard that reform was needed to ensure that people in prison or hospital are not disadvantaged by the Local Connection Policy. Importantly, if immediate support is not available to people being discharged from prison and hospital, their support needs will only be picked up through cost to other services, likely when their homelessness situation becomes more entrenched. Crisis explain:

*[With] the prison system or hospital discharge, the state withdraws responsibility and assistance at an arbitrary point. This is regardless of whether alternative accommodation has been secured or homelessness prevented (p.115).<sup>30</sup>*

104. Indeed, a person's long term admission to an institution provides an opportunity for services to engage with clients and seek transfers back to appropriate services.
105. One person in the homeless focus group explained "Someone can spend their whole life in Oxford, but if they go to prison, they can lose their local connection." This is an issue that was also highlighted by ACT, which supports people exiting prison. One participant suggested that "People with criminal records are let down by the system because they can't get a job or tenancy." This is part of a wider issue concerning how the system penalises people with criminal convictions further, when their debt to society should be considered repaid.
106. The Review Group are of the view that there is little rationale for a local connection expiring on the basis of an institutional stay, given that they are likely to have the most complex needs, and that the circumstances leading to their admission may not necessarily be of their own choosing. The EOH goes as far to say that the exclusion of people from local connection criteria on the basis of an institutional stay in an "extreme interpretation" of English homelessness law.<sup>23</sup> It is therefore recommended that the Local Connection Policy be revised to ensure that an institutional stay does not affect a person's period of residency for the purposes of obtaining or maintaining their local connection.

**Recommendation 5: That a person's stay into institutions such as hospital, prison or rehab should not invalidate their local connection. Specifically, time spent in these institutions should not affect a person's residency connection time (six out of the last twelve months or three out of the last five years), and entry and exit into these institutions should 'freeze' the accounting period.**

### Local Connections for City Boundary Residents

107. Oxford City's boundary has not changed since 1991,<sup>37</sup> and has broadly remained the same since the inclusion of Blackbird Leys in 1957.<sup>38</sup> Since then, the City's relationship with bordering communities has become more significant, as housing and employment

<sup>37</sup> The Oxfordshire (District Boundaries) Order, 1991.

<sup>38</sup> Victoria County History, 1979. A History of the City of Oxford. London.

land has expanded to meet growing demand. From feedback received at the focus group meeting, some residents believe that areas such as Botley and Kennington should be considered part of the City's identity. Accordingly, they suggested that people living in those areas should be offered a local connection to Oxford, and this is a principle that the Review Group agrees with.

108. It is recognised that there may be other areas where people assume more of a connection to Oxford, despite living outside of the City boundaries. There is no doubt administrative challenges to progress this idea, but the Review Group believe that where people in these close neighbouring areas identify as having a connection to Oxford, they should be entitled to it. More practically, they are likely to want access to their nearest services which will be in the City.
109. There may be opportunity to negotiate funding arrangements with neighbouring district authorities for taking on this responsibility, if it is considered mutually beneficial. This is something that is recommended by Crisis, as they suggest that local authorities should:

*Make allowances for money/resources to follow people, so that applicants can apply as homeless wherever they wish to, but local authorities can reclaim costs from each other where they accept applicants whose local connection lies elsewhere (p.389).<sup>30</sup>*

110. To save on any significant administrative burdens, the Council may wish to develop more informal arrangements with the Oxfordshire Districts for offering a local connection to people that identify with the City, on a case-by-case basis. The Review Group recognise that appropriate funding would need to follow from the respective areas for this, and that the statutory homelessness duties would remain with the referring district.

**Recommendation 6: That the Council negotiates terms with neighbouring district councils to grant an Oxford local connection to people with a connection to areas adjoining, or very close to, the city boundary such as Botley and Kennington, where it is requested.**

### **Piloting Changes to the Local Connection Policy**

111. The Review Group wants to be bold in its proposals, and believes that whilst these first six recommendations only serve to reprioritise support for a wider group of people, the expansion of the criteria and championing of discretion will allow more people with the highest vulnerabilities currently living on Oxford's streets to access support. It is noted that this may disadvantage people who are currently locally connected with lower needs, if more bed spaces are not made available.
112. The recommended changes to the Local Connection Policy represent a menu of options which the City Executive Board is asked to consider. It may be that the Board take forward some of the suggested changes to the Policy, and not others. The Review Group ask that in light of the evidence, the changes set out in recommendations one to six be made to the Local Connection Policy on a permanent basis.
113. It is recognised however that the City Executive Board may want to reserve the right to withdraw these changes, depending on how they impact demand and pressure on local

services, which will likely create budgetary implications for the Council. It is recognised that changes to the Local Connection Policy will impact the level of demand on services.

114. Accordingly, if some of these changes are not amenable, then the Review Group asks that they be taken up on a piloted basis for a period of 1 year. The value of developing a pilot is set out further in the supporting text for recommendation eight.

**Recommendation 7: That where any changes to the Local Connection Policy (set out in recommendations 1-6) are not amenable to the City Executive Board on a permanent basis, a 12 month pilot should be taken up to provide insights into the level of demand, cost and effectiveness of introducing such changes.**

### **Evaluating the Impact of Changes to the Local Connection Policy**

115. The Review Group were pleased to note the willingness of local and national partners to engage with their work. In responding to the call for evidence, the Centre for Housing Policy highlighted the importance of partnership working “The essential message is a coordinated, integrated strategy which has dedicated resources and involves as many partners as possible [will be most effective].” Therefore, it is recommended that in carrying out and reviewing any changes to the Local Connection Policy, partners should be involved.
116. During the review process, Matthew Downie, Crisis National Director for Policy and External Affairs, said his organisation would be keen to support the Council in piloting and evaluating innovative changes to its policies and practices, and this should be capitalised on. He also expressed MHCLG’s current willingness to support new initiatives that try something ‘different’ and help to contribute evidence for national policy development. Mr Downie agreed that there would be value in piloting a period of policy change and monitoring the impact both financially, and in terms of social value, within Oxford.
117. In order for the implementation of recommendations 1 – 6 to be meaningful, there needs to be a full review of their advantages and disadvantages, and their longer term budgetary implications. The Review Group particularly welcome an assessment after 1 year of the savings that might have been achieved to other public services as a result of the Council’s intervention. This may help the Council’s bargaining position in bolstering pooled budgets between public services, and help inform future policy discussions. The Review Group heard that the Council had previously pooled money with other services such as the NHS and Police and it had worked well. It is understood that the Council’s Trailblazer Programme work may result in such a case for pooled funding being made.
118. Research carried out by Pleace and Culhane in 2016<sup>39</sup> showed that people who experience homelessness for three months or longer on average cost £2,099 per person to mental health services, £4,298 to NHS services, and £11,991 to the criminal justice system. Earlier research by Pleace<sup>40</sup> found that the overall cost to public services of

<sup>39</sup> Pleace, N and Culhane, D, 2016. *Better than Cure? Testing the case for Enhancing Prevention of Single Homelessness in England*. London: Crisis.

<sup>40</sup> Pleace, N, 2015. *At what cost? An estimation of the financial costs of single homelessness in the UK*. London: Crisis.

someone sleeping rough was approximately £20,000 each year, whereas successful intervention only costed £1,400 on average; though this does not account for the cost of unsuccessful interventions.

119. The same research looked at the costs associated with those who had been rough sleeping for 700 days on average, and it shows the increasing costs associated with entrenchment, set out below.

**Figure 4: Estimated cost to services of a person sleeping rough for 700 days<sup>34</sup>**

Cost	Estimated average per person
Drug/alcohol services	£1,320
Mental health	£2,099
NHS	£4,298
Criminal justice	£11,991
Homeless services	£14,808
Total	£34,518

120. PricewaterhouseCoopers’ analysis of Crisis’ 2018 report on how to end homelessness claimed that the total cost of ending homelessness between 2018 and 2041 was £19.3bn (at 2017 prices), but this would deliver discounted benefits to public funding of £53.9bn<sup>41</sup> The report concludes that for every £1 invested in the solutions recommended by Crisis, £2.80 will be generated in benefits. It is expected that the applicability of such savings would translate to local interventions also.
121. Data such as this supports the view that the Review Group would like the Council to take with regards to rough sleepers; that they should not be considered a costly ‘problem’ but as a potential asset to the City. Many of those who currently find themselves without a roof over their head can – and do - go on to contribute economically and culturally to the life of the City (see recommendation 22).
122. The Review Group heard that female homelessness is rising nationally, and that it is underreported in comparison to male homelessness (see recommendation 16). In addition to assessing the financial impact of any changes to the Policy after one year, the Review Group would like to see an evaluation of the equalities impacts of the revised Local Connection Policy. Specifically, in hearing case examples of the challenges experienced by women and people who are LGBT+, the assessment should take account of how services may better take account of the specific needs of these individuals.

### **Demand on the Adult Homeless Pathway**

123. Given that expanding the local connection criteria would provide more people with a local connection to Oxford, and therefore widen access to Oxford funded beds within the Adult Homeless Pathway, the assessment would need to take account of how much additional demand is generated as a result of supporting people who may also have a connection to other Oxfordshire districts. The Review Group are therefore

<sup>41</sup> PricewaterhouseCoopers (2018) *Assessing the costs and benefits of Crisis’ plan to end homelessness*. London: PwC.



recommending that the assessment should evaluate the benefits that may be experienced by neighbouring district councils as a result of any policy change by Oxford City Council.

124. Council officers advised the Review Group that studying and forecasting the likely impact of any changes to the Local Connection Policy before they are implemented would be preferable, given the likely impact on resources. There are several unknowns related to the level of demand for services that changes to the Policy could generate. However, the Review Group believe that whilst more funding would be preferable to manage a likely increase in demand on the Pathway, these changes should still be implemented to refocus and highlight the discretion offered within the policy, and provide a service that is more needs-focussed (i.e. vulnerability driven).
125. People sleeping rough in Oxford, local connection or not, draw on the resources of a number of local services. This demand already exists for OxSPOT, the Police and Health Service, which do not operate local connection policies. The Review Group believe that making the changes set out in recommendations 1 - 6 is a way of acknowledging a demand that is already present.
126. The Review Group has stopped short of recommending increasing the number of beds in the Pathway but note the advice of Council officers that there would need to be a focus on how to fund increased capacity within the Pathway and how to improve outcomes upon exit from the Pathway. It is clear that Oxfordshire County Council cuts to floating support services, together with reductions in funding for mental health services, have reduced the opportunities for effective move-on. It is the view of the Review Group that these issues should be the subject of a separate but complementary piece of work.
127. The review process has drawn attention to possible funding sources from MHCLG and the Homelessness Reserve which may allow for detailed work to be undertaken to better understand the level of demand on the Pathway, either before or after changes are made to the Policy. One way to do this in the short term would be to model the expected impact of policy changes based on current rough sleeping data for the City, to assess how applicable it might be to individuals who currently have no official local connection.
128. There would need to be a relative increase in the move-on opportunities available for people exiting the pathway if it is to cope with increased throughput. Accordingly, if there were opportunities to speed up move-on from the Pathway and better understand the outcomes of those exiting it, this would be most welcome.
129. It is noted by the Review Group that the Council has a duty to secure best value and “make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.”<sup>42</sup> The Review Group believe that the adoption of a more flexible Local Connection Policy may provide savings to local tax payers, in light of the cross-service savings that can be expected as set out in this section of the report. This is likely to be particularly evidential in high needs cases of people with no local connection, the most entrenched, and for those who refuse to reconnect; although such savings may not necessarily be ‘cashable’.

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<sup>42</sup> Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 (as amended by s137 of the Local Government & Public Involvement in Health Act 2007).

**Recommendation 8: That the Council partners with Crisis and other partners (e.g the City Conversation) to undertake a full assessment of the social and economic impact of any changes to the Local Connection Policy after 1 year of implementation (or piloting). The outcome of the assessment should be reported to the Scrutiny Committee and the City Executive Board, and should include data and conclusions concerning:**

- a) The demand for bed spaces within the pathway**
- b) The proportion of people rough sleeping with a connection to Oxford**
- c) The estimated savings and expenditure for other public services**
- d) Any impact on equalities, with a specific focus on gender and sexuality**
- e) How any changes have impacted on neighbouring district councils.**

## **Working with Partners**

130. Oxford City Council already has strong partnership arrangements in place with the Oxfordshire districts to help coordinate homelessness support, such as the Common Operational Protocol, jointly commissioned services and bed 'lending' practices. This notion of lending bed spaces between local authorities was identified as common and good practice among local authorities, particularly in London.
131. In having contributions from London authorities, the Review Group noted that they trade, swap and lend support between one another to adjust for demand and specific cases of homelessness. For example, where there were cases of people not wanting to reconnect, local authorities would sometimes trade responsibilities for supporting different people, which strengthened the agency of people to choose where they had a connection.

*Borough 'A' will take on a rough sleeper whose local connection lies with borough 'B,' but who has been rough sleeping in borough 'A' for a long time, and is reluctant to return to borough 'B.' They will do this in turn for borough 'B' offering a space in a specialist hostel in their area that might meet that needs of a rough sleeper from borough 'A'. **London, Homelessness Service Commissioner***

132. In Oxfordshire, each neighbouring district council funds a different number of bed spaces within O'Hanlon House Hostel for people with a local connection to their area. The Review Group heard from senior staff at Homeless Oxfordshire that the process of lending beds between each authority in circumstances of fluctuating need was a drawn out process, involving approvals from various partners.
133. Homeless Oxfordshire said the current pathway structure means they can no longer operate as a service based on priority need, because each district has different levels of availability for move-on options, with Oxford having the most opportunities for move-on (Connection City, Mayday, Simon House, Project 41). Evidence was submitted to suggest that rough sleepers from neighbouring districts spend more time in O'Hanlon House because they lack move-on opportunities, and there was a particularly acute need for bed spaces for people with complex needs from the surrounding districts. The Review Group believe that the Council should make clear to neighbouring districts

through appropriate channels that more funding is needed to support their clients with complex needs. This may be done through the Health Improvement Board, for example.

134. The Review Group was concerned to hear of some circumstances where people were vulnerable and in need, and there were bed spaces in O'Hanlon House that could not be taken up because of connection criteria. The Review Group ask that the partnership considers how to ensure that no bed spaces go unallocated when people are in need. Given the importance of partnerships in this process, the Review Group also asks that the Council lobbies neighbouring district councils to sign up to any revised local connection criteria, to ensure it is uniformly applied across Oxfordshire.

**Recommendation 9: That the Council makes representations to the other Oxfordshire District Councils to:**

- a) Increase their funding for bed spaces in O'Hanlon House, particularly for those individuals with complex needs.**
- b) Adopt any changes agreed to Oxford's Local Connection Policy, and that any agreed changes be updated in the Oxfordshire Adult Homeless Pathway Common Operational Protocol.**
- c) Collectively review the system for allocating bed spaces to remove procedural barriers to 'lending' beds between the Oxfordshire District Councils, to adjust for varying demand between the localities.**

## Part 2: Reconnecting People

### Refusal to Engage or Reconnect

135. Reconnection is defined in as "the process by which people sleeping rough who have a connection to another area... are supported to return to this area in a planned way."<sup>20</sup> The Review Group heard from contributors that where reconnections are made on a voluntary basis, they are generally successful. However, Matthew Downie, Crisis National Director of Policy and External Affairs, highlighted that there are many barriers that exist to effective reconnections nationally including:

- a) The use of one way tickets, without support packages for reconnecting*
- b) Refusing reconnection can 'burn bridges,' resulting in exclusion from services*
- c) Reconnections did not take account of peoples social and support networks*
- d) Disputes between local authorities in accepting reconnections*
- e) A lack of choice, agency and assistance in the reconnection process*
- f) Money was sometimes spent on creating and maintaining barriers to support.*

*These are policy choices to manage resources, lacking focus on human outcomes.*  
**Matthew Downie, Crisis National Director of Policy and External Affairs**

136. One of the key themes emanating from evidence gathered from 12 local authorities was that reconnections would always be sought, except in exceptional circumstances. For

those with significant vulnerabilities, reconnection was generally sought after work had been done to stabilise that person's situation (i.e providing shelter and support).

137. Some pathway managers took advice from outreach workers on whether to reconnect someone, and others had dedicated reconnection officers responsible for linking people with services in other areas. Reconnection work was highlighted as resource intensive, and the participating local authorities indicated that they had increased their focus on this in recent years.
138. Some authorities were asked what would happen in situations where a person refused to reconnect. This question was asked in light of challenges highlighted by Crisis concerning the use of a 'single service offer', "wherein rough sleepers who refuse to comply are denied access to homelessness services in the identifying area."<sup>20</sup> This adds to the 'burning of bridges' concern highlighted by Matthew Downie.
139. Most local authorities said they would work with that person to understand why they refused to reconnect, and apply discretion on whether that was a valid reason, but no policies were forthcoming on this issue. In one example, where someone refused a connection, the outreach team would monitor them at 'arm's length' and judge whether their situation was deteriorating to the extent that they required the support of the homeless pathway.

*If people refuse to connect to a different area, we will make a judgement on their reasons for refusing to reconnect, and sometimes allow them onto our pathway.*  
**London Borough, Homelessness Manager**

140. Another challenge highlighted by a 2015 Crisis report is that some authorities fail to recognise that people have moved to their area because they lack connections and support networks in their origin locality. Consequently, any non-voluntary return to that area would be unlikely to improve that person's circumstances.
141. The advice from Crisis is that "Reconnection should generally only be pursued when rough sleepers have meaningful connections."<sup>20</sup> Homeless Link similarly advocate that reconnection offers should be credible and realistic, based on preventing a person's return to rough sleeping, and "Where a person refuses the reconnection offer, multi-agency work should take place to repeat the offer when they come into contact with services."<sup>43</sup> Under the Oxfordshire Common Operational Protocol section concerning reconnection, it states:

*If the client does not engage with the process (lack of willingness to engage and/or refusal of the service offer), outreach teams may exclude a client from any services they may be accessing e.g. the day centre at O'Hanlon House, or sit-up (p.32).*

142. The Review Group heard from its external contributors that people need agency and choice in the reconnection process if it is to benefit them, and a Single Service Offer limits that choice. An ultimatum of this nature may serve to the detriment of that person if they are excluded from services. Accordingly, Crisis recommends that individuals' views and preferences as to where they have connections should not be over-ridden by rigidly enforced local connection criteria.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Homeless Link, 2014. Assessment and Reconnection Toolkit. Available at: [https://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/Reconnection%20toolkit%20Dec%202014\\_0.pdf](https://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/Reconnection%20toolkit%20Dec%202014_0.pdf)

143. One of the primary barriers for helping people out of homelessness and making effective reconnections is the provision and availability of documents. This in turn can make it difficult to prove a local connection, or in circumstances where violence is involved, difficult to evidence reasons for not wanting to return to another local authority area. Because there are many genuine and sincere reasons for not reconnecting, which cannot always be evidenced, the Review Group believe that a person's refusal to reconnect should not indefinitely affect their entitlement to support, or their ability to access the sit up service.

**Recommendation 10: That an individual's refusal to engage with the Council, or to reconnect to another area, should not restrict their access to the sit-up service, except in circumstances where they pose a risk to the safety or progress of other people using the service.**

### Establishing a Reconnection Log

144. The Review Group heard from Matthew Downie, Crisis National Director of Policy and External Affairs, that there is little evidence available to assess how effective reconnections are nationally. He said that given the barriers that exist to reconnection, and the level of resources available to assist in meaningful reconnections, it was likely that many were unsuccessful. Crisis explain:

*[Reconnections] have become an increasingly prevalent feature of rough sleeping strategies in England in recent years, albeit largely in the absence of robust evidence regarding the impacts on rough sleepers. Evidence regarding reconnection outcomes is, at present, very weak... The limited data available suggests that reconnection experiences and outcomes vary dramatically.*<sup>20</sup>

145. Given the lack of evidence about the outcomes of reconnections, and the importance of such interventions, this may be another area where the Council could partner or engage with Crisis in piloting a research project. The Review Group are looking for assurance that reconnections are working for the people involved, and that they are being referred to suitable services. As Homeless Link explain:

*Reconnection must not be used in isolation and should never just be a ticket home. Exploring why someone has become homeless and what support can prevent future homelessness should form the basis of the reconnection offer.*<sup>43</sup>

146. Understanding whether reconnection outcomes are effective will help demonstrate whether the Council's policies are working for the people currently resident on Oxford's streets with no local connection. Research suggests that practitioners face daily ethical challenges in whether to refer people to services that may be insufficient for their needs, but they may feel compelled to refer owing to the rigidity local reconnection policies.<sup>20</sup>
147. The Review Group would not wish any person to be referred to another local authority in circumstances where there are doubts over the suitability of services and likelihood of that person progressing to positive outcomes. A reconnection log, which tracks the progress of each reconnection case, would help develop an evidence base to help

inform practitioner level decisions on whether to reconnect, or seek an exemption from the Local Connection Policy. Crisis provide supplementary support for this approach:

*Rough sleepers and named contacts in recipient agencies/authorities should be followed up after every reconnection as standard procedure... This would not only serve to protect against potential negative impacts, but also improve the currently weak evidence base on reconnection outcomes.*<sup>20</sup>

148. A reconnection log would also enable the Council to better understand local barriers to reconnection, and the Review Group encourages the Council to challenge services in other areas to take responsibility for ensuring that appropriate connection services are in place, as advocated for by Homeless link.<sup>43</sup>

**Recommendation 11: That the Council trials a reconnection log for 12 months to monitor the outcomes and effectiveness of reconnections to other areas. The reconnection log should be presented to the Housing Panel when there is sufficient data to draw conclusions.**

### An Oxfordshire Reconnection Service

149. As areas with high populations of people sleeping rough, local authorities in London have had to innovate and work more closely with partners to help reduce instances of homelessness and rough sleeping. Indeed, many of the examples of best practice referenced throughout this report have come from London.
150. The Review Group recognises that the density, geography and unitary elements of London governance supports more integrated service provision for people experiencing homelessness. London has the benefit of funding and coordination from the Greater London Authority and the Mayor, which strengthens cross-boundary relationships and support standards. The Review Group also heard from several local authorities that they make use of the Clearing House Partnership which has resulted in over 13000 new tenancies with floating support, in partnership with 50 housing associations across London.
151. Whilst there are limitations to the transferability of practices from London to Oxford, the Review Group believe there would be benefit to introducing an Oxfordshire wide reconnections service. Given that 19 people who slept rough in 2017/18 were reconnected to another area,<sup>14</sup> representing a small proportion of people with no local connection, the Review Group believe the rate of successful reconnections would improve through the introduction of such a service.
152. For example, the Greater London Authority funds Safe Connections which operates independently for any borough authorities. This service challenges reconnections between local authorities to ensure they are appropriate for resettlement.

**Figure 5: Safe Connections Delivery Model: Developed by Phil Hennessy**



153. The Review Group recognise that the introduction of such a service would have budget implications, and feasibility modelling would need to be undertaken to assess how implementable such a service would be. This would also require pooled funding arrangements to be established, and partner sign up for it to be effective. Therefore, it is recommended that the Council commissions a report in the first instance to assess the case and options for establishing a reconnection service.

**Recommendation 12: That the Council commissions a report to be brought forward in 2019 setting out options for establishing a county wide reconnection service having regard to lessons that can be learnt from the London-wide reconnection service.**

### Part 3: Allocating Housing

154. Oxford's position as the most unaffordable city in the UK is caused by the high cost of housing, with average house prices being around 16 times the yearly average household income. As a consequence, the number of realistic move-on opportunities for people exiting the Adult Homeless Pathway is significantly limited. Accordingly, many local authorities that contributed to this review highlighted that whilst some practices worked for them, they may not necessarily be appropriate for Oxford given the challenges of housing affordability. As the Centre for Housing Policy highlighted, the only local authorities with sufficient affordable housing stock are those which are depopulating, which is not the case for Oxford as an area of growth.

*The issue is funding for the back end of the pathway, where there are limited move-on opportunities because of a lack of affordable housing. I am sure this is a problem for Oxford as well. That's why people become entrenched; because there is no throughput [from homeless pathways].*

**Northern Metropolitan City, Homelessness Manager**

155. The Review Group recognise that in order to achieve throughput from the Adult Homeless Pathway into settled accommodation, the Council's definition of a local connection in relation to homelessness must be aligned to the definition used for the Housing Register.
156. Changing the homeless local connection definition would have implications for exiting the Adult Homeless Pathway because under the current Housing Allocations Scheme, move on options are far more limited for people without a local connection. Accordingly, the Review Group is recommending that the Housing Allocations Scheme be revised to reflect any changes made to the homeless local connection criteria as a result of this review, so that a broader cohort of people with a connection to the area can be entitled to access housing through the Housing Register.
157. For those who are accepted into the Adult Homeless Pathway through a discretionary vulnerability exemption, it is particularly important that they are given opportunity to access the Housing Register, given that they are more likely to experience challenges in securing and sustaining accommodation through the private rented sector.



158. The Review Group is pleased to note that the Allocations Manager has discretion to give exemptions to homeless clients within the Homeless Pathway awarded an exemption prior to entering the Pathway who have no local connection with any area. The Review Group is also pleased to note a number of exceptional circumstances listed in the Housing Allocations Scheme which allow access to the Housing Register. This is the type of detail and narrative that could be expanded upon within the Local Connection Policy.

159. The Council's Housing Allocations Scheme explains that one of its principal housing objectives is:

*To promote the widest possible access to housing to residents of Oxford or those assessed as having local connection to the City.*

160. The recommendations to expand the local connection criteria for access to the Adult Homeless Pathway and the Housing Register support this vision. The Review Group would equally like to ensure that stays in prison, hospital or rehab should not disadvantage a person by resulting in their exclusion from the Housing Register (see recommendation 5).

161. The Review Group heard contributions from ACT; an organisation which provides accommodation to vulnerable people in the City, and operates outside of the Adult Homeless Pathway. Of the 16 people housed by ACT, only two had a local connection as defined in the Common Operational Protocol. These were 16 people who may have otherwise been sleeping rough on the streets of Oxford.

*One of the biggest challenges for ACT is move-on support, which could be helped through changes in Council policy... Some people have been in shorthold tenancies with ACT for two years, take part in community activities, and have positive social networks. However, they are not offered a local connection [As defined in the Housing Allocations Scheme]. This system has the potential for people to fall through the net of support.*

**ACT Outreach Team Manager**

162. As a result of hearing this case study, the Review Group believe that individuals in these circumstances should be able to gain a local connection, as defined in the Local Connection Policy for Homelessness and the Housing Allocations Scheme.

163. At present, the Housing Allocations Scheme explicitly excludes people in supported accommodation from its definition of residency. It states:

*A local connection through residence is not established in situations where the applicant is... living in any other form of accommodation considered "temporary" in nature, including hospital accommodation and other forms of supported accommodation.*

164. The Review Group believe that the Council should offer people who have developed a residency connection to Oxford through supported accommodation (at least six months during the previous 12 months) access to the Housing Register. The Council may wish to identify a list of recognised providers for this connection to be established.



165. It is noted however that revising the Housing Allocations Scheme may involve a lengthy process of review and appropriate consultation. Therefore, the Review Group acknowledge that this may not be implementable in the short term.

**Recommendation 13: That the Council revises the Housing Allocations Scheme to:**

- a) **Accept any person who qualifies for a local connection under any accepted recommendations in this review onto the Housing Register.**
- b) **Ensure that time spent in prison, hospital or rehab does not affect a person's residency connection time (six out of the last twelve months or three out of the last five years), and entry and exit into these institutions should 'freeze' the accounting period.**
- c) **Accept any person onto the Housing Register who is confirmed as having lived in supported accommodation continuously within Oxford for more than 6 months, including accommodation services that are recognised but not directly funded by the Council.**

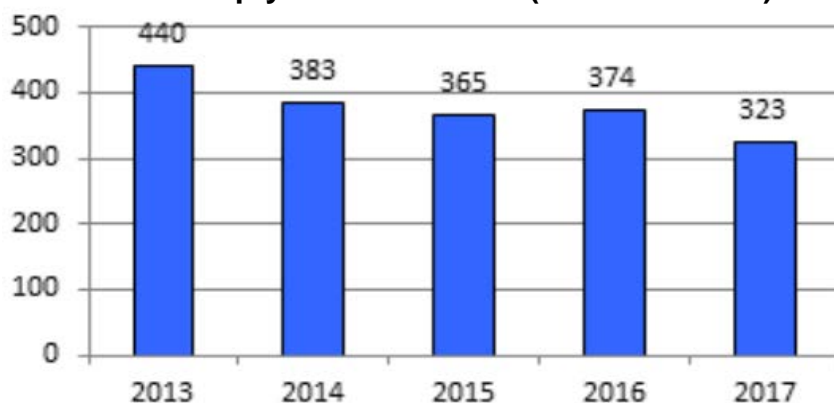
## Part 4: Commissioning and Budget Setting

### Maximising the use of empty properties

166. In speaking with people experiencing homelessness, the Review Group heard that it was frustrating to see long term vacant properties in the City which could alternative be used to house them. For a property to be considered empty by the Council, it needs to have been unoccupied for more than six months, the same amount of time that would otherwise secure a residency connection under the Local Connection Policy.

167. The City Council's first Empty Property Strategy was introduced in 2009 when there were 717 empty dwellings recorded across the City. Since then there has been a substantial reduction in the number of empty dwellings to 323 in November 2017. This is a significant success for the City, which can be attributed in part to the Council's proactive interventions. The Review Group recognise that the reasons for properties being empty are varied and complex. However, some of those properties may be vacant because they are not of an acceptable standard for the private rented market, and there may be scope to better incentivise owners to bring properties back to use.

**Figure 6: Number of empty units in Oxford (Over 6 months)**



168. The Review Group has learned of schemes elsewhere that may help bring more empty properties into use, specifically to support the accommodation needs of people experiencing homelessness. Last year, Ireland introduced a Repair and Leasing Scheme (RLS). The RLS website explains:

*Where a property requires repairs to bring it up to the standard for required for rented properties, the RLS will pay for the repairs up-front in return for the property being made available to be used as social housing for a period of at least 5 years under either a direct lease or Rental Availability Arrangement with the local authority. Under the scheme, the cost of the repairs will be repaid by the owner by offsetting it against the rent due to the owner for the property over the period of the lease agreement.<sup>44</sup>*

169. The Review Group believe there are examples of properties in Oxford that would benefit from such a scheme. As in Dublin, these properties could be earmarked for people experiencing homelessness, at reduced rents, to broaden the move-on opportunities available within the City. There are a number of ways these properties could be managed by the Council, or a partner, such as using them for time limited Housing First style interventions.

170. Introducing such a scheme would require the commitment of significant capital from the Council, particularly in the first instances of refurbishment. However, this proposal supports the Council's wider objectives and long term ambitions for the City beyond homelessness, by bringing disused properties permanently back to market. The Review Group believe this scheme could also extend to commercial properties that may be suitable for short-term residential lets post-refurbishment. Given the need to make a fuller assessment of the opportunities to introduce an RLS, the Review Group recommend that an options report be brought forward to the City Executive Board in the first instance.

**Recommendation 14: That the City Executive Board commissions a report to be brought forward in 2019 setting out options for the Council entering into arrangements with colleges, registered social landlords and private landlords to take over and refurbish sub-standard and empty properties. The Council would then sublet the refurbished properties, at a minimum rent, to priority homelessness cases before returning the properties to their owners after a mutually agreed period.**

## Female Homelessness

171. Domestic abuse is particularly prevalent in cases of female homelessness, where 32% of women say it contributed to their homelessness.<sup>45</sup> In reviewing the research, Safelives suggests that between 44% - 89% of women who are homeless have also experienced violence either during or prior to becoming homeless.<sup>46</sup> The Review Group heard from both men and women about their experiences of domestic abuse before

<sup>44</sup> Rebuilding Ireland, 2018. Repair and Leasing Scheme. What is it? Available at: <http://rebuildingireland.ie/repair-and-leasing-scheme/>

<sup>45</sup> Safelives, 2018. Homelessness and Domestic Abuse. Available at: <http://www.safelives.org.uk/spotlight-5-homelessness-and-domestic-abuse>

<sup>46</sup> Safelives, 2017a. Why a Gendered Approach to Supporting Women Experiencing Homelessness with Histories of Violence is Vital. Available at: [http://www.safelives.org.uk/practice\\_blog/why-gendered-approach-supporting-women-experiencing-homelessness-histories-violence](http://www.safelives.org.uk/practice_blog/why-gendered-approach-supporting-women-experiencing-homelessness-histories-violence)

becoming homeless, and how the abuse had continued when they became homeless, particularly for women.

172. In Oxford, between November 2016 and November 2017, the number of women counted as rough sleeping rose from 0 to 10, representing a significant change in the homeless demographic. The rise in female homelessness was also identified as an issue in London, when the Review Group visited Croydon Council.
173. A 2015 report suggests that homeless women are more likely than men to have higher rates of drug use and mental health problems.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, it is estimated that half of all homeless women have children, the majority of which are in care.<sup>46</sup> The European Observatory on Homelessness suggests that when children are taken into care, this can lead to parents becoming homeless, because of the reduction or withdrawal of their welfare benefits.<sup>23</sup>
174. Given the additional complexities and challenges for female homelessness, particularly in relation to gender based violence, some organisations have criticised local authorities and charities that take a gender neutral approach to homelessness services. The research suggests that women experiencing homelessness are more likely to be hidden in official statistics. For example, One25, a charity that supports women involved in street sex-work in Bristol, suggests that 80% of street sex workers locally are homeless.<sup>48</sup> Because of their transient housing situation, they are rarely identified as homeless and their situation makes them more wary of engaging with local authorities, and more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.
175. Councillor Aziz, a member of the Review Group, undertook to interview six women experiencing homelessness in Oxford about their experiences. The women interviewed spoke of repeated instances of harassment and their vulnerability whilst sleeping rough.

*The majority of girls in the shelter have been in abusive marriages, with abusive family members. They've experienced domestic violence and some have experienced rape.*

*Even though I have a partner, the amount of times a day I get asked if I will give men sex for money. It's every day. Every woman who is homeless – automatically men assume she is a prostitute.*

*I was being picked on [at a hostel] because of my sexual identity. I was being manipulated. I was being bullied and I was abused. I still get it now. I felt really down. I felt depressed. I felt discriminated.*

*When you have your period and you can't keep yourself clean. It is horrible. You can't get products, and you can't change into clean clothes or get a wash.*

***Women currently experiencing homelessness in Oxford***

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<sup>47</sup> Homeless Link, 2015. Homeless health data finds heroin and cocaine dependency more prevalent amongst women than men. Available at: <https://www.homeless.org.uk/connect/news/2015/aug/05/homeless-health-data-finds-heroin-and-cocaine-dependency-more-prevalent>

<sup>48</sup> Safelives, 2017b. Homelessness and abuse amongst street sex-working women in Bristol. Available at: [http://www.safelives.org.uk/practice\\_blog/homelessness-and-abuse-amongst-street-sex-working-women-bristol](http://www.safelives.org.uk/practice_blog/homelessness-and-abuse-amongst-street-sex-working-women-bristol)

176. Whilst the UK has local connection exemptions for those who are fleeing violence or care leavers, for example, the European Observatory on Homelessness says there is also merit in relaxing local connection criteria for women in particular, recognising that homelessness prevention systems are inherently androcentric and present more challenges for women.<sup>23 49</sup>
177. Local service providers also raised the issue of female homelessness, highlighting cases of specific challenges for women in relation to homelessness. There was broad support among contributors for greater exceptions to be made in supporting women, particularly in circumstances where trauma had been experienced.

*Many female rough sleepers have experienced trauma in their lives which has made them fearful of living in same-sex accommodation, and some would prefer not to go into accommodation than is shared with men.*  
**Homelessness Support Worker**

178. The Review Group believes that given the recent rise in female homelessness, and the increased risks experienced by women, that specific measures should be taken to make exceptions for additional support for women with and without a local connection. The Review Group is pleased to note that as part of a recent successful bid to MHCLG, the Council is planning to fund 5 bed spaces in female only accommodation and it is recommended that the level of this provision is kept under review and that 5 bed spaces are retained as a minimum.
179. In speaking with women experiencing homelessness, Councillor Aziz learnt that some women wanted a space to be made available to discuss matters affecting them. Consequently, the Review Group would like to see funds made available to support a female homelessness forum. One of the key issues identified by these women and support workers was the availability of free sanitary products. The Review Group asks that these be made available also.

**Recommendation 15: That the Council continues to commission at least one female only overnight accommodation provider in the Adult Homeless Pathway and keeps demand for this provision under review. Opportunities should be sought to extend this provision for women with no local connection where possible, if further spaces are needed to meet demand.**

**Recommendation 16: That the City Executive Board, as part of its budget setting process, identifies provision for:**

- a) Free room hire and refreshments for a female homelessness forum. The Council should also ensure these women’s views are represented within the Council’s decision making process on homelessness issues.**
- b) Free sanitary products to be available for women experiencing homelessness 24 hours a day. The location of distribution for these products should be agreed in liaison with women currently experiencing homelessness.**

<sup>49</sup> Galbraith, 2018. An exploration of migrant women’s experiences of homelessness within the UK. Available at: <https://housing-studies-association.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Jennifer-Galbraith.pdf>

## Provision for Pets

180. A recurring theme throughout discussions with service providers, council officers and people experiencing homelessness was the importance and value of pets for companionship. It was noted that in some circumstances, people would turn down accommodation because their dog could not be housed with them. Provision is made by some services for dogs to be looked after in local kennels, although this is not always considered suitable by the pet owners.
181. Peer reviewed research carried out by Ontario Veterinary College explains that there are significant benefits to having a pet companion during periods of homelessness.

*Qualitative research has demonstrated that animal companions help homeless youth cope with loneliness, are motivators for positive change, such as decreasing drug or alcohol use, provide unconditional love without judgement, and improve youths' sense of health.<sup>50</sup>*

182. The research also explains that whilst there are significant psychological and social benefits to be gained from having a pet, access to services including housing and jobs can be limited by such companionship. Going forward, the Review Group asks that more provision be made for people to have their pet access shelter with them, rather than at kennels. This issue is particularly pertinent when the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol is in place.

**Recommendation 17: That the Council makes on site provision for domestic pets a material consideration as part of the supported accommodation commissioning process.**

## Housing First and Critical Time Intervention

183. As part of the Review Group's work, national policy experts and leading academic researchers were approached to contribute to the review. Mathew Downie, Crisis National Director of Policy and External Affairs, championed the Housing First approach to homelessness support. Whilst this matter was not explicitly within the scope of the review, the developing evidence base supporting a Housing First approach is compelling. The Housing First model is premised on providing wrap around support and quick access to housing for those with the most complex needs. Housing First England explains:

*Housing First is an internationally evidence-based approach, which uses independent, stable housing as a platform to enable individuals with multiple and complex needs to begin recovery and move away from homelessness. Through the provision of intensive, flexible and person-centred support, 70-90% of Housing First residents are able to remain housed.<sup>51</sup>*

184. Mr Downie told the Review Group that Housing First had been proven internationally as the most effective form of intervention for those with complex needs. Glasgow was

<sup>50</sup> Lem, et al. (2016) The Protective Association between Pet Ownership and Depression among Street-involved Youth: A Cross-sectional Study, *Anthrozoös*, 29:1, 123-136.

<sup>51</sup> Housing First England, 2018. About Housing First. Available at: <https://hfe.homeless.org.uk/about-housing-first>



identified as operating a good model, having housed 50 people over six years with few people dropping out of the programme. The system was based on removing all barriers to accessing support including local connection criteria, intentionality and priority need.

185. In the UK to date, approximately 320 people have been supported by Housing First but Crisis estimate the need to be in the region of 18,500 people. A research study undertaken in Liverpool by Crisis found that savings in relation to expenditure on homelessness services can be fivefold per positive outcome,<sup>52</sup> compared to existing services. Following pilots in other areas of the UK, the Greater Manchester Combined Authority has pledged to make available five one bed properties each year to contribute towards their Housing First programme.<sup>53</sup>
186. The Review Group heard from Council Officers that Oxford City Council has two Housing First type projects that have been operating for some years. These schemes involve a high support ratio and disregard many of the 'rules' traditionally associated with homelessness support. The Council previously identified 20 entrenched rough sleepers with complex needs to be involved with these Housing First projects, which have had relative success. Notably, the significant difference between Glasgow and Oxford however was the housing market, and the lack of affordable housing in Oxford.
187. Professor Pleace from the Centre for Housing Policy, who co-authored the European Observatory on Homelessness Report on Local Connection Policies, was asked what opportunities there may be for Oxford specifically to prevent and reduce homelessness. He too recommended Housing First, and suggested this was currently favoured by MHCLG for funded pilots. Professor Pleace also advocated for exploring opportunities to pilot a Critical Time Intervention (CTI) approach to support. This had proven successful in Denmark and the USA, sharing similarities with Housing First.

*CTI is designed as a time-limited model, where intensive support is used for some time before transitioning someone with high and complex needs onto a lower intensity support service at the point they are ready to live more independently. This approach is housing led like Housing First, but is not open ended, which may better suit local authority commissioning cycles and budgets.*

**Centre for Housing policy**

188. Crisis, which similarly advocate for the CTI model, explain that this approach is particularly well suited to "physically locating staff in institutional settings, by establishing protocols to ensure people have a planned move into secure accommodation."<sup>30</sup> The Review Group notes that the Council's Trailblazer Programme is particularly focussed on providing this upstream approach to prevention by locating professional workers within local institutions to support transitions. A report on the outcome of this programme is currently scheduled for consideration by the Council's Housing Scrutiny Panel on 12 November 2018.

**Recommendation 18: That the Council engages with Crisis and the City Conversation to see what further opportunities exist for piloting innovative Housing First and Critical Time Intervention programmes, given their rates of success and relative cost-benefit ratios.**

<sup>52</sup> Crisis, 2017. Housing First feasibility study for the Liverpool City region. Available at: [https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/237545/housing\\_first\\_feasibility\\_study\\_for\\_the\\_liverpool\\_city\\_region\\_2017.pdf](https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/237545/housing_first_feasibility_study_for_the_liverpool_city_region_2017.pdf)

<sup>53</sup> Manchester Housing Providers Partnership, 2017. Homeless Charter: Partnership pledges.

## Supporting the Outreach Team

189. The Review Group heard from Croydon Council's Outreach Manager that they were given significant autonomy to operate how they. This was however bound by key performance indicators which they regularly exceeded. It was made clear that there was significant discretion in how they applied local connection criteria, but also when and how they worked shifts. The Review Group was impressed with the flexibility afforded to Croydon's outreach team to work reactively to fluctuating demand. For example, shift patterns could change on a regular basis, including working outside of normal working hours to address demand.

**Recommendation 19: That the Council, as part of its budget setting process, gives consideration for contingency funds to be made available for the Council's commissioned outreach Service (OxSPOT) to be more flexible and reactive to changes in homelessness demand throughout the year. For example, extending shifts to meet spikes in the numbers of people sleeping rough.**

## Central Government Funding

190. Throughout 2018, the Council has worked hard to secure an additional £1m from MHCLG to provide new support services and fund extra bed spaces. This reflects a recent drive from Central Government to tackle homelessness, as set out in the Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018. The Strategy commits up to £100m over the next two years to tackling homelessness, and their ambition to end rough sleeping altogether reflects the ambition and direction of the Council.
191. Whilst the additional funding already secured is most welcome, it raises questions over the longevity and sustainability of the new and improved services the Council is supporting. Specifically, there is no guarantee that MHCLG funding for these new services from will continue in the long term. Therefore, the Review Group is recommending that the Council lobbies Central Government to make clear its intentions about providing sustainable long term funding to support its Strategy.
192. There are also wider homelessness influences that the Council may wish to make representations to Central Government about such as lifting the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates and scrapping local connection policies nationally altogether; policies which are do not appear to be fully aligned with the national focus on tackling homelessness.<sup>30</sup> The Review Group hope that as a more joined up national focus on Homelessness will render the Local Connection conundrum a non-issue in time. Separately, raising the LHA rates would help people to sustain private sector tenancies by reducing or eliminating the considerable shortfall between the value of the benefit payments and the levels of private sector rents they pay. This issue is exacerbated in Oxford by the particularly high cost of housing in the City, and the fact that LHA rates are based on a wider geography.

**Recommendation 20: That the Council writes to Central Government to welcome the new funding made available through MHCLG this year, and lobby for greater assurance about the necessity of long term funding to sustain new support services which will help deliver their Rough Sleeping Strategy.**

## Part 5: Communicating What We're Doing

### Changing the way we communicate

193. Oxford has a wealth of voluntary organisations that contribute significantly to supporting the wellbeing of people experiencing homelessness. The recent advent of the City Conversation in particular represents an excellent forum for bringing forward partnership approaches to addressing homelessness. All of the contributing organisations want to help people off of the streets and into suitable accommodation. The Review Group believe there have been occasions however where the public have received mixed messages from various organisations about the work of the Council, which have not always been accurate. Members feel there is a general lack of clarity in the public domain about what the Council's duties are in relation to homelessness, and there is confusion about the Local Connection Policy, and how and why it is applied.
194. The Review Group considered the Council's plans for communicating about winter accommodation provision in 2019, and discussed their own experiences of council communications. It was agreed that Council communications sometimes framed homeless people in a negative way, which could contribute towards existing stigma of the issue. A recent piece of UK research into homelessness communications made several recommendation which are paraphrased below:
- a) *Use the value of Moral Human Rights to connect and drive policy support*
  - b) *Tell a wider range of stories about the lived experience of homelessness*
  - c) *Avoid othering language that creates a distance, evoking sadness or pity*
  - d) *Find different ways of repeating the message across all communications.*<sup>54</sup>
195. The Review Group want to highlight that people experiencing long term homelessness are victims of multiple system failures driven by austerity, such as the structure and administration of Housing Benefit and the closure of specialist health facilities.<sup>55</sup> People sleeping rough in Oxford are members of the public, voters and residents, and the Review Group believe more could be done to remove the 'us and them' narrative that they perceive to be sometimes apparent in Council communications.
196. There was a consensus between contributors and councillors that there needed to be paradigm shift from considering people who are homeless as a problem, to considering their potential to contribute to society. One contributor with local experience in supporting people experiencing homelessness explained that Homeless Link championed a strength based approach to homelessness recovery, where practitioners should consider what strengths someone has and start with the positives.<sup>56</sup>
197. The Review Group heard from people experiencing homelessness, and service professionals, that local authority local connection policies were reflective of national immigration policies. Specifically, they highlighted experiences of local authorities being reluctant to offer a local connection, because the authority said they had a 'better' connection to another area (this was not explicitly suggested as an experience in

<sup>54</sup> Nichols, J. et al, 2018. Reframing Homelessness in the United Kingdom. Frameworks institute / Crisis. Available at: [https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/238823/reframing\\_homelessness\\_in\\_the\\_united\\_kingdom\\_2018.pdf](https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/238823/reframing_homelessness_in_the_united_kingdom_2018.pdf)

<sup>55</sup> Shelter, 2018. What causes Homelessness? Available at: [http://england.shelter.org.uk/campaigns/why\\_we\\_campaign/tackling\\_homelessness/What\\_causes\\_homelessness](http://england.shelter.org.uk/campaigns/why_we_campaign/tackling_homelessness/What_causes_homelessness)

<sup>56</sup> Homeless Link, 2018. Introduction to strength-based best practice. Available at: <https://www.homeless.org.uk/introduction-to-strengths-based-practice>



Oxford). Those who had experienced homelessness said they felt like they were being moved around and “made someone else’s problem.”

*Local connection policies nationally create a type of monopoly board, where people are just being moved round and round without being able to settle. No one is taking responsibility to help.*

**Person who previously experienced homelessness in Oxford**

198. The Review Group wish to see the Council actively reframing the discussion on homelessness, together with the City Conversation, to highlight the net positive contribution these individual people can make to Oxford. This may be through the skills they can offer, the volunteering they contribute and the social networks they contribute too, for example.
199. Using the example of international migration, the Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford says “there is evidence from multiple sources showing that attitudes [towards immigration] have softened in recent years.” This is because the public consensus on immigration is changing to recognise the benefits it can bring,<sup>57</sup> and the Council should champion the same narrative for people experiencing homelessness. Members believe that the Council should also more frequently highlight the experiences and views of people experiencing homelessness locally to help develop a better public understanding of the complexities around homelessness. This aligns with recommendations made by other organisations elsewhere.<sup>54</sup>

**Recommendation 21: That all future Council policy documents referencing homelessness should recognise the net positive contribution that people experiencing homelessness can make (e.g. the skills, experience and diversity they bring). Homeless people themselves should not be framed in a negative light and this should be reflected in the Council’s communication’s plans.**

### **Homelessness experience within the workforce**

200. As part of this shift towards a net positive view of people experiencing homelessness, and a wider representation of their views within Council communications, the Review Group sees value in having an officer within the workforce who has experienced homelessness. It is recognised however that this may already be the case, and that it would be inappropriate to ask applicants or serving staff whether they have experienced homelessness. There is a clear value in recruiting directly from commissioned service providers, who already have a strong grasp of the local homelessness context, and a good understanding of the related complexities.
201. It is asked however that where information about a person’s experience of homelessness is forthcoming, that it be given due weight in the recruitment process. The Review Group heard that the Greater Manchester Combined Authority had specifically targeted people experiencing homelessness for a role within their support function. In engaging with people experiencing homelessness, the Review Group themselves were

<sup>57</sup> EconomicsHelp, 2017. Impact of immigration on UK economy. Available at: <https://www.economicshelp.org/blog/6399/economics/impact-of-immigration-on-uk-economy/>

critiqued for not having had experienced homelessness, to the knowledge of the participants.

**Recommendation 22: That the Council recognises the value someone's homelessness experience can potentially bring to the employed officer workforce, and that it be given due weight in the recruitment process for staff supporting the homelessness function.**

### **Communicating about services and the Local Connection Policy**

202. Members of the Review Group had feedback about winter provision from residents last year regarding the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP), which makes available emergency bed spaces for persons with and without a local connection in prolonged periods of severe weather. They said there was confusion among service users about where available beds were, and who was entitled to access the service. It is recognised however that some people continue to decline this service offer.
203. The Review Group believe that people could be better informed about the services that are available, and their entitlement to support. Feedback from the focus group with people experiencing homelessness indicated that the complexities of the Local Connection Policy were not well understood, and neither was the process of prioritisation. Broadly speaking, there were various misconceptions about the services available throughout the review, and the Review Group believe homelessness communications should be simplified and made more prominent.
204. The Review Group suggest two ways of addressing this issue. First, there was support among contributors to the review for a notice board to be installed in the City Centre specifically to support people trying to access homelessness support services. This is particularly important given that people experiencing homelessness may have less access to the internet. This would also be beneficial in demonstrating to the public how organisations in the City are working together to resolve the issue.
205. Secondly, there would be benefit in producing a simple printed guide to explain how the Local Connection Policy operates. The Review Group identified significant complexities in understanding how the policy is applied, and what the criteria were. There was also understandable confusion among service providers and people experiencing homelessness about the criteria, and this would be an easy way to better communicate the Policy.
206. The Review Group do not want to be prescriptive in their recommendations concerning communication, and believe that the evidence gathered from service providers and people experiencing homelessness in this review will enable the City Executive Board and officers to improve the current communication offer.

**Recommendation 23: That the Council revisits its approach to communicating with people experiencing homelessness, local service providers and the public to better convey information about the Local Connection Policy, how it is applied, and what wider support services are available in the City. Any significant changes (e.g a new notice board or public leaflet) should be presented to the Housing Panel for comment prior to implementation.**

## **Raising the profile of the Council's work**

207. To reflect the recent rise in the number of people sleeping rough on Oxford's streets, and the increased funding (both from MHCLG and the Council) for supporting these people, the Review Group believes there would be value in having a City Executive Board portfolio exclusively designated to homelessness. This would raise the profile of the issue and show that support for vulnerable rough sleepers is high on the Council's agenda. A review of the portfolio would also enable more time to be dedicated to engagement activities with people experiencing homelessness, and representing their views within the decision making process.
208. As with contract monitoring elsewhere within the Council, the Review Group believe there would value in the Board Member attending quarterly contract monitoring meetings that already take place between officers and commissioned services. This refocusing of the board portfolio supports the wider democratisation of the homelessness support function that is advocated for elsewhere in this report. The Review Group recognise however that the allocation of portfolio responsibilities to members of the City Executive Board is entirely a matter for the Leader of the Council who would have to consider this suggestion in the round.

**Recommendation 24: That the Leader considers appointing a City Executive Board member with exclusive responsibility for Homelessness to provide public clarity on board member roles and raise the profile of the issue, given the increasing funding and support being offered in this area.**

**Recommendation 25: That the Board Member responsible for Homelessness considers attending the quarterly contract management meetings of the largest supported accommodation provider(s) commissioned by the Council.**

# Chapter 5: Conclusion

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209. The Review Group warmly welcomes the good work that is already ongoing by the Council to prevent homelessness, and support people to find a sustainable route out of homelessness. The increasing funding and innovative practices that the Council continues to introduce is testament to the effort and dedication of councillors and officers in tackling this complex issue. The Review Group hopes that their work will be welcomed by the Council as a positive contribution to the evidence base for policy development, and the continued introduction of new ideas to confront homelessness.
210. It is hoped that the current Local Connection Policy will be revised, in line with the recommendations set out in this report, to provide a broader account of what it means to have a local connection to Oxford. The Review Group also encourage the Council to be clearer in its communications, including about the fact that the Council will actively exempt the most vulnerable homeless people from the local connection criteria. This paper also presents opportunities for further research and investigation to be undertaken in light of the conversations had with local and national experts in the field.
211. It is recognised that some recommendations may be more implementable than others, and that the time to implement each recommendation may vary significantly. Accordingly, the Review Group would be grateful if a progress update on each accepted recommendation could be brought to the Scrutiny Committee after 12 months of this report being submitted.
212. The Review Group's recommendations are intended to provide some practical measures for widening the inclusivity of the Council's policies and approach to homelessness, and it is hoped that their recommendations will be met with approval.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Review Group Scooping Document

<b>Membership</b>	<p>Councillor Shaista Aziz  Councillor Nadine Bely-Summers (Chair)  Councillor Paul Harris  Councillor Richard Howlett  Councillor Tom Landell-Mills  Councillor Craig Simmons</p>
<b>Officer support</b>	<p>The Scrutiny Officer will support the Review Group around existing work commitments. Approximately 10 hours a week will be dedicated to producing meeting notes, agendas, organising guests, research and drafting reports. Council officers within Housing Services will also provide technical advice, though their capacity to support the review may be limited among other commitments.</p>
<b>Background and rational</b>	<p>With average house prices around 16 times the yearly average household income, Oxford is one of the most unaffordable cities in which to live in England. Changes introduced by new legislation, Government policy and reductions in national and county-level funding have meant the demand for City Council services has increased.</p> <p>Homelessness pressures are increasing, with over 100 households per month approaching the Council as homeless and requesting assistance. Despite these pressures, the council has been meeting its target of housing not more than 120 families in Temporary accommodation. Street counts of rough sleepers have however shown high and sustained levels in the City, with the most recent published data recording 61, and estimating 89, in November 2017</p> <p>The Council recently agreed a new Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2018-21, which has an 18 month Action Plan. Members of the review group will be encouraged to study this document before their first meeting. This Strategy states that the Council intends to continue to apply a local connection approach to most of its accommodation based commissioned services, and will operate a reconnection service for persons that have a better local connection to another area.</p> <p>There are however exemptions available to care leavers and victims of violence, for example, and the local connection policy does not apply in instances of severe weather. Many commissioned services do not require a local connection, including the Street Outreach service; Sit-Up spaces; Day Centres; Employment and Support services.</p> <p>The Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities defines a local connection as having residence for at least six months in an area during the previous 12 months, or for 3 years during the previous 5 year period. Family connection to an area is also a factor in deciding whether there is a local connection.</p> <p>A 2015 <a href="#">Crisis report</a> suggested that “a much broader debate needs to be had as regards the appropriateness of using the Code of Guidance local connection criteria to restrict rough sleepers’ eligibility for accommodation</p>

	<p><i>and other building based services.”</i> This review will contribute to the conversation on this issue.</p> <p>Oxford City Council also uses this statutory definition with regard to eligibility to the Housing Register. Entry into the Adult Homeless Pathway is based around a less stringent ‘Pathway Connection’ being established. If a ‘Local Connection’ can also be established, then this is also recorded as it will open up more ‘move-on’ options at the end of the pathway.</p> <p>69% of homeless people recorded in the City’s 2017 street count did not have an identifiable or known connection to any of the local authorities in Oxfordshire. 21% had an identifiable local connection to one of the other district councils in the County and 10% had an identifiable local connection to Oxford City. There has been an increase in the number of people found rough sleeping in the City with no local connection and who are looking for work and somewhere to live.</p> <p>There has not yet been a detailed piece of work to assess what the impact of relaxing the Council’s local connection policy would mean for service users and the Council, and the Review Group’s work will seek to address this.</p>
<p><b>Purpose of the Review</b></p>	<p>The Review Group will carry out a review into the specific impact of the current local connection policy on those without a local connection.</p> <p>The purpose of the review is to produce recommendations that might improve or broaden the level of services available to those without a local connection. It is expected that any recommendations to change the Council’s policies will require the Review Group to consider the financial implications of such changes, and where funding might be made available. Specific areas to consider are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) What provision is already in place to support rough sleepers without a local connection.</li> <li>b) How homelessness services are funded.</li> <li>c) The views of service users, services providers and experts on how the local connection policy impacts on homeless people with and without a local connection.</li> <li>d) Understanding the reconnection process for those without a local connection.</li> <li>e) Consideration of alternative service models that could provide further assistance to persons with no pathway/ local connection, either by way of reconnection, support or accommodation (including faith groups operating without public funding) and the likely impacts of this.</li> <li>f) The implications of relaxing the local connection policy. This includes the risks, benefits, financial and resource implications.</li> <li>g) National best practice, legislative requirements, and alternative approaches in relation to preventing and reducing homelessness.</li> <li>h) Fact checking misconceptions about the provision of services.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Indicators of Success</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The majority of recommendations are agreed and implemented.</li> <li>2. A strong evidence base is produced to support current or alternative arrangements in relation to the local connection policy.</li> <li>3. Improving public awareness in relation to street homelessness matters, and informing the debate about homelessness in the City (being initiated</li> </ol>

	<p>within the 'City Conversation'.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Improving outcomes for homeless people, with the ambition of reducing levels of rough sleeping within the City.</li> <li>5. Service users and providers feel that they have been listened to and their feedback taken on board as part of an open and transparent review.</li> </ol>
<b>Out of scope</b>	<p>Issues around the availability and affordability of housing in the city and the cost of living, while relevant, will not be central to the review. The Council has recently agreed a Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2018-21, and the Strategy as a whole will not be subject to a review, as time is needed for the action plan to be implemented.</p>
<b>Method / Approach</b>	<p>The Review Group will carry out evidence gathering firstly by hearing from officers about current Council and third party provision for homeless people in the City. The Review Group will then undertake a series of evidence gathering exercises to meet the purpose of the review. This will involve meeting current and former homeless people to gather data on their experience, and recording anonymous case studies where relevant. The Review Group will then meet to feedback on their findings. The data collection process must be carried out in a robust and objective manner to ensure its credibility in supporting any recommendations.</p> <p>The Review Group will meet with service providers, experts and other guests to ask them about the current service provision for homeless people, the local connection policy, and possible recommendations that could be made. The group will meet with a variety of speakers across as many meetings as needed to develop a holistic and balanced understanding of the issues. The timeline agreed for the review may need to be reviewed where additional evidence is required.</p> <p>The Review Group will contact at least one other authority to consider their approach to supporting people without a local connection. Derby City Council has been highlighted. The Review Group will conclude by meeting to reflect on the evidence gathered, and agree its recommendations. Recommendations will be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely (SMART).</p> <p>The Scrutiny Officer will support the Review Group by producing a detailed report of its work, the evidence gathered, and the recommendations agreed, with an accompanied rationale for the recommendations made.</p>
<b>Guest speakers</b>	<p>As a starting point, the Review Group will want to hear from:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Stephen Clarke, Head of Housing, Oxford City Council</li> <li>2. Dave Scholes, Housing Needs Manager, Oxford City Council</li> <li>3. Rachel Lawrence, Rough Sleeping and Single Homelessness Manager</li> <li>4. Men and women who have experience of homelessness</li> <li>5. Oxford City Council's Outreach Team</li> <li>6. Crisis, national homelessness charity</li> <li>7. Oxford Winter Night Shelter</li> <li>8. Oxford Homelessness Project</li> <li>9. Housing needs manager(s) at other authorities.</li> <li>10. Professor Sarah Johnsen and Dr Anwen Jones (Authors of <a href="#">The reconnection of rough sleepers within the UK: an evaluation</a>)</li> <li>11. Professor Suzanne Fitzpatrick (Author of <a href="#">The homelessness monitor: England 2018</a>)</li> </ol>

<b>Specify evidence required and documents</b>	<a href="#">Oxford City Council's Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2018-21</a> <a href="#">Evidence for the Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2018-21</a> Oxford City Council's spending commitment to homelessness services The Homelessness Pathway (March 2018 CEB report) Adult Homeless Pathway Map and Services Directory Operating protocols for the Adult Homeless Pathway (not a published document) Quarterly homelessness count data <a href="#">The homelessness monitor: England 2018</a> <a href="#">The reconnection of rough sleepers within the UK: an evaluation</a> <a href="#">The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017</a>		
<b>Specify Site Visits</b>	Possible site visit to Derby City Council. There has been mention that this Council has relaxed its local connection policy, but clarity is needed.		
<b>Projected start date</b>	W/C 16 July 2018, subject to member availability	<b>Draft Report Deadline</b>	Report to 6 November Scrutiny Committee
<b>Meeting Frequency</b>	~ 6 meetings approx.	<b>Projected completion date</b>	Reports to 14 November CEB

### Draft outline of meetings

<b>Meeting 1 - Understanding the Local Context</b>
The Review Group will meet with council officers to understand the current provision of services for homeless people in the City, and the wider homelessness pathway.
<b>Meeting 2 – Meeting rough sleepers</b>
Members of the Review Group, the Scrutiny Officer and an experienced frontline council officer familiar with interacting rough sleepers will engage with homeless people and record opinions and experiences in relation to the homelessness pathway and the local connection policy. For this to be meaningful, a robust and ethical research approach to interviewing/surveying individuals will need to be established, across a representative sample. This will require further planning before being undertaken.
<b>Meeting 3 – Meeting service providers, experts and former rough sleepers</b>
The Review Group will meet with service professionals from a range of organisations to gather data on their experiences of the local connection policy and the homelessness pathway. This may require a morning/afternoon, and for attendees to be staggered.
<b>Meeting 4 – Meeting other authorities</b>
Members of the Panel will meet with representatives from Derby City Council to discuss their views on relaxing the local connection policy. More clarity is needed in the first instance on the precise nature of the Derby policy.
<b>Meeting 5 – Recommendations and Conclusions</b>
The Review Group will review the evidence it has received and form recommendations.
<b>Meeting 6 – Feasibility of recommendations (provisional)</b>
To discuss with relevant officers the feasibility of implementing any significant resource/spending intensive recommendations, prior to submission to the City Executive Board.



## **Appendix 2: Themes and content of review group meetings**

### **19 July 2018: Internal evidence gathering session**

- Funding for homelessness services across Oxfordshire
- The availability of hostel bed spaces for people experiencing homelessness
- The current definition of a local connection to Oxford
- MHCLG funding for additional bed spaces
- Winter accommodation provision

### **21 August 2018: External evidence session 1 (local / national providers)**

- Exemptions to the local connection policy
- Lived examples of challenges presented by the local connection policy
- The lack of choice, agency and assistance in the reconnection process nationally
- The poor health outcomes for people sleeping rough
- The costs other public services incur as a result of rough sleeping (e.g Police, NHS)
- The ACT housing model
- The value of piloting new approaches with Crisis and MHCLG partners.

### **4 September: External evidence session 2 (local providers)**

- The specific vulnerabilities of pregnant women, women and elderly people
- Misconceptions about services offered by the Council and other providers
- The difficulty of proving residency
- Exemptions that are already offered to people experiencing mental health challenges
- The lack of move on (into permanent accommodation) opportunities nationally
- How other local authorities manage their local connection policies.

### **17 September 2018: External evidence session 3 (people experiencing homelessness)**

- How the support system is perceived by people experiencing homelessness
- How family connections in Oxford do not guarantee a local connection
- Personal accounts of relationship breakdown, violence and abuse
- The need for information on the Local Connection Policy to be better communicated
- People's experiences of prioritisation and access to services

### **25 September 2018: External evidence session 4 (visit to Croydon Council)**

- Supporting people with no recourse to public funds
- Circumstances for people with no local connection to get on the housing register
- Rising numbers of women experiencing homelessness
- Experimenting with start times of street counts
- The importance of discretion in allocating bed spaces.

### **2 October: Draft recommendations and Conclusions**

- Contributions from Claire Dowan and Charlotte Blake, Homeless Oxfordshire.
- Findings of Councillor Aziz research on female homelessness
- A summary meeting to consider all the evidence, and produce draft recommendations
- Hearing from council officers about the merits of key recommendations

### **24 October: Final recommendations and report approval**

- Final evidence gathering with Council Officers
- Agreement of the Review Groups final recommendations and report

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## **Appendix 3: Research Report: Consultation on Local Connection Policies (considered by the Review Group on 21 August 2018)**

### **Introduction and background**

1. This report has been provided as background evidence to the No Local Connection Review Group's ongoing research on local connection policies. This evidence may help to inform the oral evidence gathering sessions with guest speakers and the Review Group's final report. The review group is asked to:
  - a) Note this report as background information for the review
  - b) Consider whether it still wishes to visit another local authority, in light of the information received, and identify priority authorities if required.
2. The Scrutiny Officers has approached 29 local authorities to ask questions about their local connection policies. This report summarises the findings of this research, and the full unedited responses can be found at Appendix 1. This appendix is exempt under paragraph 2, Part 1, of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (information that may reveal the identity of an individual).

### **Methodology**

3. The Scrutiny Officer contacted 29 Local Authorities (participants), initially with tailored emails about their local connection policies. This included a question on whether they would consider someone to have a local connection in circumstances where they had slept rough for six or more months. These findings are weighted towards London borough authorities, and other large metropolitan cities, so the data is not necessarily representative of English local authorities generally. Broadly speaking, London boroughs have a higher number of people sleeping rough than in more rural local authority areas, and greater infrastructure to operate a homeless pathway, supported by a concentration of third sector providers.
4. Importantly, London boroughs assume unitary responsibilities, meaning that they are the principal authority in that area responsible for homelessness. Conversely, homelessness funding arrangements in Oxford have previously been split between the City and County Council. This cooperative two tier arrangement adds a layer of complexity that is not prevalent in London.
5. Responses were received from 12 local authorities, including four phone conversations. In most circumstances, follow up emails / conversations were prompted, with fewer responses received in the second round. Each participant was made aware that this was for the purposes of the review group's work, but consent for wider publication was not sought. By asking for consent to publish, the Scrutiny Officer anticipates fewer responses would have been received, which would also likely be filtered. For that reason, this summary report does not identify any specific local authorities.
6. The responses of the local authorities varied significantly, with some authorities having a significant interest in the work of the review group, and others not responding. It is expected that some of the email addresses used may have been out of date, or the emails ignored due to high demand within the service.

### **Key Themes**

7. This section of the report summarises the key themes of the data gathered from the participants in this research. The four themes relate to; policy discretion, reconnection, cross-boundary work and other comments.

***Discretion is prioritised over a local connection, at the first point of contact***

8. The majority of participants said they took a discretionary approach to service provision for people who are homeless or rough sleeping. Most agreed that whilst local connection criteria are a useful tool for reconnecting people and prioritising service resources, it was often left to the discretion of the outreach worker, and in some cases the pathway manager or multi-agency body, to decide what level of service should be offered. This includes whether someone should be entitled to overnight accommodation, access to support pathways, and move-on support. This however needed regulating, sometimes through contract managements (see paragraph 13).
9. Most participants were of the view that the strict application of a 'one size fits all' local connection policy was not appropriate, and did not account for the diversity of needs and vulnerabilities experienced by rough sleepers. Whilst some said they would offer a local connection to people who had been sleeping rough for more than six months, others took what they described as a more 'pragmatic' approach. Most suggested that each case must be considered on its own merits, with the health, safety and vulnerability of a rough sleeper being the priority.
10. Some explained that having strict local connection criteria could limit one's ability to act in supporting the most vulnerable. Many said that they did not have fixed (or were not willing to share) policy or guidance in this area, and instead tailored their support based on key variables including:
  - Someone's physical and mental health
  - Someone's level of dependency on drugs and/or alcohol
  - Someone's risk of experiencing violence
  - Whether someone's rough sleeping habits were entrenched (which does not necessarily relate to the amount of time sleeping rough, but also attitudes)
  - The barriers posed to reconnecting someone to another area
11. One participant criticised the approach of offering a local connection to people who have slept rough for six months. They said that publishing detailed criteria on what will give someone a local connection, such as rough sleeping for six months, may lead some people to purposefully refusing other services for that period until a local connection is gained. Therefore, they suggested it was an unworkable as a policy. For example, the same participant explained that someone who has been sleeping rough for one year may be in less need than someone who has been for one day, on the basis of their health and vulnerability.
12. Another participant (that does not distinguish the level of services based on local connection) said they prioritised acceptance onto the pathway for those who presented a 'dual diagnosis (those with a severe health problem and problematic substance abuse). Overwhelmingly, health was considered the key vulnerability observed among rough sleepers, as opposed to risk of violence, for example.
13. Some authorities centralised their discretionary decision making powers into pathway managers, whilst others empowered outreach workers and third sector providers to make this decision. One authority with a significant street population highlighted that effective contract management of outreach services ensured only priority cases were

referred for council support services, regardless of local connection. In this case, only a very small percentage of the 1000+ people each year who presented as homeless had a 'genuine' connection to the area.

14. Many participants recognised that judging whether someone should be entitled to overnight accommodation, for example, was a subjective process. One participant explained that a discretionary approach sometimes means overlooking an absence of local connection, and a formal protocol underwriting this would not be of benefit. Some described their approach as being 'local connection blind' at the first point of contact, with shelter being the first priority, followed by reconnection. This is the same as in Oxford. One area would only offer support to those who had registered at a local medical centre, which encouraged sign up.
  15. Whilst most participants highlighted that discretion was key in defining one's entitlement to support, there was general consensus that local connection policies were a valuable way of resolving cross-boundary disputes, stopping abuse of the system, and prioritising need. None professed to have 'got it right', and some highlighted that despite their comparatively relaxed policy approach to other local authorities, there was still a significant number of vulnerable people on the streets, because there were not enough bed spaces, resources and services to support everyone.
  16. Several of the participants explained that in their view, the relaxation of a local connection policy would only contribute to a minor inflow of rough sleepers from outside the local authority boundary, and any evidence to the contrary was called anecdotal by one participant. Participants were confident that the strength of local footfall, the night-time economy, begging opportunities and the quality of voluntary support services were a much bigger draw than what a council policy was. The European Observatory on Homelessness suggests that the perception that improved services will 'attract' people from afar to certain areas is an obstacle to progression.<sup>1</sup>
- Reconnection will always be sought, except in exceptional circumstances***
17. Whilst discretion was prioritised over whether someone had a local connection, the feedback from participants shows that the long term goal is almost always to reconnect people to an area where they have a local connection. Only in exceptional circumstances would a reconnection not be sought, such as for fear of reprimand by a violent drug dealer. For those with significant vulnerabilities, reconnection was generally sought after work had been done to stabilise that person's situation (i.e providing shelter and support).
  18. Some pathway managers took advice from outreach workers on whether to reconnect someone, and others had dedicated reconnection officers responsible for linking people with services in their own area. Most took the approach of offering people shelter, and engaging them with reconnections further into the pathway. Reconnection work was highlighted as resource intensive, and participants indicated that local authorities had increased their focus on this in recent years.
  19. Some authorities were asked what would happen in a situation where someone refused to reconnect. Most said that they would work with that person to understand why they refused to reconnect, and apply discretion on whether that was a valid reason. No policies were forthcoming on this issue. In one example, where someone refused a

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<sup>1</sup> European Observatory on Homelessness (2015). *Local Connection Rules and Access to Homelessness Services in Europe*. p.36

connection, the outreach team would monitor them at arm's length and judge whether their situation was deteriorating to the extent that they required full support.

### ***Cross-boundary work is important***

20. In line with the discretionary approach, some participants highlighted best practice through informal cross-boundary working. For example, two authorities spoke about negotiating reciprocal agreements for exchanging support for rough sleepers. Borough 'A' would take on a rough sleeper whose local connection lies with borough 'B,' but who has been rough sleeping in borough A and is reluctant to return to borough 'B'. In turn, borough 'B' would offer space in a hostel in their area to meet that needs of a rough sleeper in borough 'A.'
21. Examples of these reciprocal and informal arrangements were most common in mayoral areas, where the political and geographical arrangements supported close cross-border working. This is also supported through having unitary single tier authorities in London boroughs. Economies of scale and city-wide voluntary services were also benefits experienced within larger urban areas. Another example of an informal rule between authorities concerned allocating support based on which local authority performed the first assessment, regardless of local connection.

### ***Other comments***

22. Some other notable comments provided by the participants included:
  - New funding from HM Government is allowing some authorities to progress new ideas and recruit more specialised staff. However, the future landscape remains unclear, and local connection policies may need to become stricter where the demand on services increases.
  - None of the participants provided their local connection policies, or procedures for assessing rough sleepers. There was a clear nervousness among participants about providing this, with several suggesting that they did not have such a policy, and discretion was entrusted to the various staff supporting the pathway.
  - The challenge of affordable housing provision means there are very limited move on opportunities for those completing homeless pathways, which leads to saturation in support services. People can then become more entrenched because there is no throughput.
  - People must be entitled to housing benefit in order that they can access support services, which generally disadvantages asylum seekers and European Economic Area jobseekers.

## **Conclusion**

23. From the feedback provided by the 12 participants, the data showed that most authorities take account of local connection criteria in prioritising need, but discretionary exemptions were championed as a more practicable way forward. Officers have explained that this is the same approach taken in Oxford. Multiple and complex health issues, such as dual diagnosis, were highlighted as the key variable where discretion should be applied.

24. The challenge in administering this discretion seems to be whether every person working in the pathway, including outreach workers, commissioned providers and pathway managers, apply their discretion fairly and consistently. The subjective nature of discretion may benefit from having written principles, policies or guidance; which no participants were forthcoming with.

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<b>Background Papers:</b> None
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## Appendix 4: Research Report: Homeless Focus Group (Considered by the Review Group on 2 October 2018)

### Introduction and background

1. On 17 September 2018, the No Local Connection Review Group held an event with people experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping to understand their views on the Local Connection Policy, and their experiences. The meeting was facilitated by Councillor Howlett who set out the purpose of the review at the start of the meeting. The Scrutiny Officer also provided an overview of how people's information would be used, and explained that all information would be anonymised.
2. In total, the Review Group heard from 12 people (men and women), most of whom did not have a local connection to Oxford as defined in the Council's policy. There was a range of experiences at the meeting, from those who had been homeless for 5 weeks to those who had been in and out of temporary accommodation and periods of homelessness for 16 years. The Review Group is grateful to all those who took part, and would like to thank Crisis and Luther Street Surgery for their support in setting up the meeting. In particular, the Review Group would like to thank the Gatehouse for hosting the meeting. Councillors were impressed with the services offered and the scale of support given to a significant number of people attending the venue that evening.
3. The feedback in this report represents the raw data collected at the meeting, and no changes have been made to correct inaccuracies. This protects the views of the participants and also helps in highlighting misconceptions and miscommunications about how the Council applies the Local Connection Criteria. The comments recorded in the report are based on notes taken at the meeting.

### Key Themes

4. This report provides a summary of the comments provided by the participants, grouped into five key themes:
  - Temporarily leaving Oxford
  - Violence and relationship breakdown
  - Family connections
  - The 'system' is viewed as unfair
  - Concluding comments

### ***Temporarily leaving Oxford***

5. Some participants explained that they had left Oxford previously for a variety of reasons, and found that on their return they had lost their local connection, and therefore their access to the Adult Homeless Pathway. One participant said "It restricts your freedom to roam" and another said "I moved away with my partner. After the relationship broke down, I came back to Oxford and had no local connection." One participant added:

*We are in a situation where someone whose birth certificate reads "born in the JR" can be denied a local connection. I think that is ridiculous.*

6. Under the current policy, periods in prison and hospital are not considered towards a pathway connection. Some participants said reform was needed to ensure that people in prison or hospital are not disadvantaged by the policy. A participant explained "Someone can spend their whole life in Oxford, but if they go to prison, they can lose their local

connection.” It was suggested that a significant number of people leaving Bullingdon Prison came to Oxford because of the number of services available. Other participants agreed that local connections should not be lost due to a stay in prison or hospital. There was a consensus that someone who was born in Oxford, and grew up in Oxford, should have a lifelong local connection.

### **Violence and relationship breakdown**

7. One common reason for returning to the area after being away for an extended period of time was to escape a violent relationship. Some participants explained that they moved away to live with their partners, with every intention of living with them indefinitely. However, as relationships broke down (often in violent circumstances) they had to escape and return to Oxford.
8. One participant explained that she moved away from Oxford to live with her partner, and after experiencing sexual abuse and rape, she left that relationship and returned to Oxford:

*Through no fault of my own, I now have no local connection even though I have lived here in the past... because I'm gay, I do not feel comfortable in shared accommodation because there can be stigma... I moved here with a purpose to start again, and I have signed up to the doctors and the hospital. That should give me a local connection.*

9. Violence and relationship breakdowns were presented as a common experience, and those who experienced it said the Local Connection Policy was unfair to them, and that they should have the right to flee violence. Two specific examples were identified as common reasons for losing a local connection as a result of relationship breakdown and violence:

*People who leave Oxford to live with a partner in another part of the country, who then separate after a long period of time and return to Oxford.*

*People who move to Oxford to live with a partner, who then separate after a short period of time.*

10. One Participant explained “I needed to escape [a violent relationship] and start a fresh, and I had worked in Oxford for a year in the past so I decided to come here. I didn't realise how strict the local connection criteria was.” Both men and women spoke about their experiences of violent relationships. One participant said “I don't like to mention the abuse because I'm a man. It can be embarrassing.” Many agreed with the comment that “Those leaving violent relationships from other areas should be exempted from the local connection policy.”

### **Family connections**

11. Some participants said they had family in Oxford, or very near to Oxford, and that they were not able to gain a local connection. For example, one participant said:

*I grew up in Oxford. I moved away for five years, and when I came back, the Council wouldn't offer me a local connection. They said my aunt and uncle were not close enough relatives.*

12. And another said:

*While I was away from Oxford, my mum died, which meant I lost my local connection.*

13. It was also highlighted that due to challenging family relationships and family breakdown, some Oxford based residents in settled accommodation would not verify their relationship with a person experiencing homelessness. The Review Group heard that “Sometimes people have family breakdowns, and their family will be reluctant to confirm their local connection and not give any proof.”
14. Some participants had a long history of their family being settled in Oxford, and being prominent figures in the community. Participants were frustrated that the Council’s policy did not take broader account of family history and the wider family network in defining a local connection.

***The system is viewed as unfair***

15. Some participants expressed anger and frustration with the Council’s approach to supporting people experiencing homelessness, whilst others recognised the need for a prioritised system of support. There was a general view that the ‘system’ was letting people down, that it was unfair, and that improvements could be made. One participant suggested that the Council’s approach to support was adversarial, and that third sector providers such as Crisis took a more effective and holistic approach to support. They explained:

*When you go into crisis, the first thing they say is “how can we help?” When you go into the Council, they put up barriers and use a wrong definition for local connection. The Council is adversarial in its approach and it needs to change.*

16. And another said:

*You talk to someone different at the Council every time so you have to explain everything over and over again so they understand your case. Also, some people are less strict than others.*

17. Having been asked what improvements the Council could make, the Review Group were advised that it was very important for initial assessments to be completed in full. It was explained that simple errors or a lack of information on assessment forms could result in a refused application for support and a further period of homelessness for that person whilst the paperwork was resubmitted. One participant said “it can be very difficult to get people to fill out forms because they can have mental health problems.” They went on to explain:

*The person reading out the application form has a lot of responsibility, and they must help people fill it out fully otherwise they are denied help because of incomplete forms.*

18. Some participants who had a local connection said that it took in excess of six months to confirm that they had local connection, or achieve an exemption from the policy. During that period, they had to sleep on the streets. One participant said:

*Local connection policies nationally create a type of monopoly board, where people are just being moved round and round without being able to settle. No one is taking responsibility to help.*

19. Other systemic challenges to progress were highlighted too. One participant said “Metro bank says they give accounts to the homeless, but they didn’t let me set up an account because I don’t have a registered address.” Another said “There are empty houses in Oxford that could be used to help the homeless.” It was also suggested that “People with criminal records are let down by the system because they can’t get a job or tenancy. Losing a tenancy can feel criminalised.”

20. Another participant said:

*Some people jump in front of you to get into O’Hanlon House. I get that some people are more vulnerable than me, but does that mean I will always be pushed to the back of the queue for support? I don’t necessarily have the confidence to keep pushing to get my space.”*

21. A wider discussion on this issue ensued, and several agreed that those who were more ‘pushy’ or forthright with support workers and services were more likely to get help. It was suggested that support workers have a key role in advocating for someone to get support. The general view was held that the cumulative challenges across the support system had an effect of causing hopelessness. One participant recounted their experience of mental breakdown as a result of homelessness, and nearly losing custody of their children.

### **Concluding comments**

22. At the end of the meeting, participants were invited to summarise their views on how the Council could improve the support it offers to people without a local connection. There was a general view from participants that the definition used in the Local Connection Policy did not align with their perceptions of what a local connection was, suggesting that the policy was overly strict. Most had a connection to Oxford in one way or another, but their connection did not fall within the criteria set out in the Local Connection Policy. Whilst most were critical of the Local Connection Policy, it was a shared view that:

*Oxford is a haven for the homeless in comparison to other areas because there are good support services, things to do and a good community of people.*

23. Specific recommendations for improving the Council’s approach included:

- a) The Local Connection Policy should be abolished, or at least broadened and geographically expanded.
- b) People who were born in Oxford, and grew up in Oxford, should be offered lifelong local connections.
- c) Family connections should be extended to include people such as: deceased family members, cousins, grandparents and grandchildren.
- d) People who have a significant vulnerability, or who have experienced violence and abuse, should be considered for an exemption to the Local Connection Policy.
- e) More effort should be made to better communicate information on the Local Connection Policy and the wider support services that are available.
- f) Better use could be made of vacant buildings for temporary accommodation.

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**Background Papers:** None

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**To:** City Executive Board  
**Date:** 14 November 2018  
**Report of:** Head of Business Improvement  
**Title of Report:** Workplace Equalities Report and Action Plan

<b>Summary and recommendations</b>	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To seek approval for the publication of the Annual Workforce Equalities Report and the resulting Action Plan to improve the diversity of the Council's workforce and make it more representative of the community it serves.
<b>Key decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Executive Board Member:</b>	Councillor Nigel Chapman, Customer Focused Services
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	An efficient and effective Council: our ambition is for a customer –focused organisation, delivering efficient, high quality services that meet people's needs.
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	None.
<b>Recommendations:</b> That the City Executive Board resolves to:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Approve</b> the Workforce Equalities Report 2018/19;</li> <li><b>2. Delegate</b> authority to the Head of Business Improvement to publish the Workforce Equalities Report 2018/19 and to make any typographical changes as may be required before publication; and</li> <li><b>3. Approve</b> the Action Plan at Appendix 4 of this report for submission as part of the 2019/20 budget setting process.</li> </ol>	

<b>Appendices</b>	
Appendix 1	Workforce Equalities Report
Appendix 2	Recruitment and Retention Analysis
Appendix 3	Benchmarking Data

Appendix 4	Action Plan
Appendix 5	Communications Campaign
Appendix 6	Distribution of staff by gender and grade & disability and grade

## Introduction and background

1. Oxford has an ethnically and culturally diverse community. Such diverse communities require the Council to provide strategic community leadership, promote community cohesion and equality across its services and aim for its workforce to reflect the communities it serves. Organisations cannot thrive and grow if everyone in them thinks and behaves in the same way. Having a diverse workforce with people from different racial, educational and social backgrounds and a diverse age range, opens up a wealth of possibilities and helps to encourage improvement, creativity and innovation.
2. There is also a clear competitive advantage to be gained from employing a diverse workforce. An organisation with a diverse range of service users is well placed to understand the needs of a wide range of customers, and can interact with a broad client base. Not only that, but it is also in a good position to recruit and retain staff in an increasingly diverse and competitive labour market. Embedding diversity of thought throughout an organisation also means that talent can be properly recognised and nurtured.
3. In respect of workforce equality, the Equality Act 2010 places a duty on public bodies to publish employment information relating to employees who share a protected characteristic. Oxford City Council (“the Council”) does this through an annual Workforce Equalities Report (WER) which provides a snapshot of employee data metrics. The latest WER provides information as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018, which also includes Oxford Direct Services Ltd (ODS). This can be found at Appendix 1.
4. Beyond this formal duty as an employer, the Council is committed to increasing the diversity of its workforce as a matter of social justice. Analysis of comparative Oxford population data ensures that the Council understands where there are gaps and the significance of them. This has enabled the development of an appropriate and robust Equalities Action Plan to improve the community representation in the Council’s workforce. This can be found at Appendix 4. The Action Plan for ODS will be agreed separately by its Board and reviewed by the Companies Scrutiny Panel.
5. This report sets out the methodology used, findings from a range of data analysis and benchmarking data from comparable authorities. It also explains what the Council is already doing and recommends an Action Plan for significant and lasting improvement.

## Methodology

6. An examination of the Census data from 2011, the Office for National Statistics Labour Force Survey 2016 and the Annual Population Survey 2016 led to an understanding of the demography of Oxford’s population.



7. The data collected over three years in the Workforce Equalities Reports from 2015/16 to 2017/18 provides proper trends on which to build further action. The data in the WER includes ODS, and is disaggregated at points throughout the report, purely to understand the Council position and to determine where improvements to Council activity are required. The information includes: sex; ethnicity; age; disability; sexual orientation; religious beliefs and non-beliefs; where employees live; recruitment activity and turnover; equal pay and the gender pay gap; and disciplinary activity
8. 2017/18 recruitment activity has been analysed to identify any potential issues arising from the recruitment process covering application through to interview and then to appointment. This analysis can be found at Appendix 2.

## **Key Findings**

9. It is clear that the Council has made good progress in recruiting female staff and people with disabilities and the percentage of staff employed in these categories broadly reflects Oxford's economically active population who seek employment. However, plans need to be developed to ensure that staff with these "protected characteristics" hold more senior positions, including in the Senior Leadership Team. This is part of the Action Plan.
10. The data reveals a less encouraging picture in relation to BAME staff. The gap in the ratio of staff employed by the Council and the Oxford's economically active population make-up remains large. Given limited resources, the Action Plan therefore focuses mainly on plans to close this gap and measure progress over the four years.
11. The Labour Force Survey shows that 47% of the national workforce was female.
  - The WER shows the proportion of female employees of the Council and ODS was 35.6% in 2018.
  - The Council has 58.70% of female employees whilst ODS has 11.52% in 2018.
  - The Council's senior management team has 25% female employees.
12. 76% of the Council's female staff occupy Grades 3 to 7, with 21% employed in a role between Grades 8 and 11, and only 2% of female staff are above Grade 11. Please refer to Appendix 6 for more detailed analysis.
13. In terms of disability, the Census asks individuals if their activities are "long-term limited" by health or disability. 6.7% of Oxford residents who are economically active and not full-time students self-reported as limited in this way. By comparison, 7.2% of current Council staff reported they have a disability. Analysis of the data shows that 74% of disabled staff are employed on Grades 3 to 7, with 26% occupying roles between Grade 8 and 11. There are no members of staff in the Council employed in a role above Grade 11 with a declared disability. Please refer to Appendix 6 for more detailed analysis.
14. The key ethnicity data for the Council is as follows:
  - The Census 2011 data shows 18.7% of the economically active population come from an ethnic minority. This excludes full-time students.
  - The WER shows that overall 8.95% of Council and ODS employees are from a BAME group and this has remained relatively consistent since 2015/16.

- The Council has 11.95% of employees from a BAME group, whilst ODS has 5.84%.
  - Some smaller service groups have no BAME representation, whilst other service areas, in particular Business Improvement, Housing and Community Services, have higher numbers of staff from a BAME group.
  - Housing and Community Services have a significant service delivery/presence within areas of Oxford where the BAME population is high. These service areas will be a key focus in terms of creating a workforce that is representative of the communities the Council serves. However the Council must also ensure that all service areas contribute to the changing face of the Council and the ODS workforce if all services are to be more effective.
  - Around 90% of staff from a BAME group are Grade 3 to Grade 7, which compares with 66% of staff from a white group which presents a challenge to the organisation to get more employees from BAME backgrounds into more senior posts.
15. The recruitment analysis set out in Appendix 2 shows that there is a well-qualified local labour market, suggesting that there should be a consistent level of applications from all ethnic groups (i.e. BAME and white) across most of the roles advertised by the Council, with the exception of roles which feature a specific technical/professional qualification as an essential criterion of the person specification.
16. In addition, in 2017/18 there were circa 22% of job applicants that came from BAME groups. If the current levels of BAME staff were higher in the organisation, these levels of BAME applications would be sufficient to keep the organisation representative. However, as we need to increase our BAME levels we need to ensure we are focusing our recruitment campaigns in ways to attract higher numbers of BAME candidates with the right qualifications for the role.
17. The general recruitment activity analysis indicates that overall there were a proportionate number of job applications received from white and BAME applicants. There is a disproportionate gap in the number of white and BAME applicants for Council recruitment schemes that were invited to interview (42% and 36% respectively) and then subsequently appointed (7% and 5% respectively). The reasons for this are not known, despite sampling of four recent recruitment campaigns, but, may cover issues such as unconscious bias or inadvertent discriminatory assessment criteria in job descriptions or interview assessments.
18. In terms of the Council's workforce equality data a fully accurate picture cannot be guaranteed due to a number of staff who have not declared some aspects of their personal characteristics. This means that some of the figures we are reporting in terms of representation in the workforce may be inaccurate, which may in turn affect the relevance of some of the Action Plan activity. The Council is committed to working with support from both Unison and Unite to improve this position. Analysis of recruitment suggests more work could be done at the on-boarding stage to promote reporting. The gap of staff not reporting their personal characteristics is as follows:
- Ethnicity – 6.92%
  - Disability – 6.62%
  - Sexual Orientation – 34.38%

- Religious beliefs – 36.42%

19. Staff turnover for the Council averages around 12% annually and for ODS the figure is 10%. This level is usually considered “healthy” for an organisation, providing a balance between retaining knowledge and bringing in fresh talent and new ideas. Although the information gathered from leavers has improved, there is still further valuable information to be gained from staff exiting the organisation to gather more granular details for reasons for leaving.
20. Some 55% of the Council’s workforce lives outside the OX1 to OX4 postcode area, which is partly a reflection of the high cost of housing in Oxford as well as the Council’s ability to attract talent on both a regional and national basis. The Council is committed to making the workforce representative of the population it serves, although we should be mindful that for example some BAME appointments may not therefore come from the city centre.

### **Benchmarking**

21. Research has been conducted across several Councils to obtain benchmarking data across four protected characteristics. This can be found at Appendix 3. Cambridge City Council and Reading Borough Council appear to be the two councils that are the closest comparators in terms of BAME census data. Their BAME workforce representation levels are 7.18% for Cambridge and 16% for Reading.
22. Officers of Reading report particular concerns about BAME levels in higher management grades but the Council has not employed any specific strategies to improve their representation.
23. As with the Council (see paragraph 13 above), the authorities analysed also experience a level of under-reporting by employees of personal data.

### **Building on current foundations**

24. The Council has built some solid management practices which support an open and engaging working environment.
25. The Council is proud to have maintained its Gold Level Investors in People (IiP) Gold accreditation in 2017 which reflects its commitment to best practice people management. It will continue to embed these best practices in order to recruit and retain a talented workforce that better reflects the local community. IiP sets out to promote equality and diversity within its framework in the following areas: the values and behaviours of the organisation, the ability to build capability to meet organisational objectives with a workforce that is diverse and reflects communities.
26. In order to be in a better position to recruit a workforce more representative of the Oxford’s resident economically active population the Council has continued to review the essential criteria and the practical entry assessment tests for high turnover posts; cascaded best practice around recruitment by involving more staff in the “meeting and greeting “process and informal stakeholder groups; advertised job opportunities in local community publications and community centres; and promoted our more popular/entry level roles via recruitment roadshows.
27. The Council maintains its commitment to staff development and continues to maintain a Corporate Training budget of £124,000 in addition to Service Area

funding of £302,000. Over a number of years there have been several specific management and staff development programmes and between 2015 and 2017 the Council provided additional funding for a comprehensive Health and Wellbeing programme (£150,000) and for a Leadership and Management development programme for all managers, (£174,000). The Council has an internal training resource designing and delivering a varied and high quality corporate training programme including an accredited ILM manager's course. The commitment to staff development across the organisation has enabled it to build sound foundations of good people management and engagement practices creating great working environments.

28. The Council has explored new opportunities to promote the careers available, and has reviewed the apprenticeship opportunities on offer in 2018 to incorporate more specialist apprenticeships. By combining the demands imposed by the apprenticeship levy, identifying hard to recruit posts and utilising the apprenticeship cohort funding the Council is in the process of recruiting 11 new apprentices, four at a higher level qualification/degree level. As of Sept 2018 eight new apprentices have been recruited of which 25% are BAME appointments. Internally the Council has provided apprenticeship training to four current employees through the apprenticeship levy.
29. The Council has held a Corporate *Customer Service Excellence* (CSE) accreditation since 2016. One area of outstanding practice that was recognised was the work of the Youth Ambition (YA) team. Whilst it is difficult to attribute where specific actions have had an impact in building greater levels of diversity within the Council workforce, there is a compelling case that their work enables significantly higher levels of access to more marginalised communities, whilst also building and strengthening relationships. The YA team directly targets people and groups who work with communities to advertise and promote Council job vacancies and also systematically shares them with community leaders, promoting greater visibility of opportunities for diverse communities.
30. Leisure Services regularly involves other agencies and community groups in recruitment processes, giving a broader view on the merits of applicants. Organisations which have been involved in selection panels in recent years include Asylum Welcome, Oxford Friend, Risinghurst Community Association and East Oxford United.
31. As part of an Accessibility and Disability Support Review, a review of accessibility provision for the Town Hall and St Aldates Chambers office accommodation has recently been completed by Jane Topliss Associated Ltd. A report has been produced which identified upgrades to improve the facilities for the members of the public, councillors and staff who have specific access requirements. In addition to this work Oxford Audio has been commissioned to review the current audio and visual equipment (AV) provision, and Action for Hearing Loss has completed a survey of the Council's hearing loop systems used in meeting rooms. Councillors and staff have been involved throughout these survey processes and key stakeholders consulted on the report to clarify the options to be considered going forwards.
32. The Council is a Living Wage Champion. The Council's first "Gender Pay Gap" report for 16/17 indicates that there is no "pay gap" between female and male

staff, which is a reflection of the changes implemented through successive local pay agreements.

### **Positive Action**

33. Positive action is one of the Government's range of measures aimed at ending discrimination in the workplace under the Equality Act 2010. It can be used in two areas: "encouragement and training" (since October 2010) and "recruitment and promotion" (from April 2011). Positive discrimination is unlawful in the UK. For example, an employer recruiting a person because he or she has a relevant protected characteristic rather than because he or she is the best candidate would be committing discrimination under the Equality Act 2010.

34. Employers can take positive action to help people with a particular protected characteristic if:

- They are disadvantaged in some way in relation to work
- their participation in employment or training is particularly low, or
- they have particular needs which are different from other people who do not share their protected characteristic

35. An employer can take a 'protected characteristic' into account when deciding who to appoint to a job, if:

- People with that characteristic are at a disadvantage or under-represented in the employer's workforce, and
- The applicant and other candidates are equally qualified

For example, if an employer has several equally qualified candidates for a job, it would not be unlawful discrimination to give preferential treatment to a woman if women are under-represented in the employer's workforce. But the employer would have to take the comparative merits of the other candidates into consideration before making the appointment.

### **Action Plan**

36. The Action Plan (appendix 4) builds on existing good practice by enhancing the Council's training offer and its recruitment and HR procedures. However, in order to make a real step change a bolder approach to communications is outlined, and more radical positive action type activity is recommended.

37. Mandatory training is to be provided for all Council staff for the first time. This will be through two distinct e-learning courses; Equality & Diversity and Unconscious Bias. These courses will be available from November 2018 with a requirement for all staff to do both by January 2019. New starters will be required to complete the training as part of their probation requirements. Staff will be required to re-visit this e-learning every two years following a bi-annual content review and refresh. The aim of the courses will be to improve staff understanding of equality and diversity issues. From November 2018 there will also be a training programme for managers covering issues such as creating and maintaining an inclusive work environment; being a role model for equality and diversity; and understanding the impact of unconscious bias.

38. The activities outlined in the improved recruitment section will widen access to entry level roles in the organisation particularly in teams such as Customer Services, Revenues and Benefits and Youth Ambition. Getting the views of representative staff and communities to help shape our approach will also be vital.
39. To support this approach candidates will be supported with CV writing and interview advice and a talent pool of BAME candidates will be developed. Subject to budget approval the aim is to improve opportunities to further attract BAME candidates into the organisation for a career in local government at several entry points – as work experience placements, via post graduate traineeships, and by sponsoring professional qualifications among the workforce.
40. This will be enhanced by a communications campaign (Appendix 5) that will promote the Council as an “employer of choice”, and in particular one that welcomes and supports applicants from the BAME community, develops career prospects and promotes job opportunities. Raising the diversity agenda internally is also critical as this will further manifest the culture and momentum for BAME representation to flourish.
41. Work will be undertaken to ensure all managers promote internal career opportunities for BAME staff whether through training, coaching or secondments.

### **Measuring Progress**

42. Realistically, given the profound nature of some of the changes required to bring workforce BAME levels up to those found in the community, this is likely to be a medium term issue. The aim is to achieve workforce BAME levels of 13.65% by March 2020, and to continue to measure progress annually, reporting to both City Executive Board and Scrutiny Committee.
43. This progress should be reviewed and measured regularly, so that action plans and performance expectations can be adjusted accordingly.

### **Financial implications**

44. The activities listed in the plan requiring additional budget are subject to agreement as part of the forthcoming 2019/20 budget process.

### **Legal issues**

45. The Equality Act 2010 (“the Act”) section 149 introduced the Public Sector Equality Duty. It requires that everything the council does, must have due regard to the need to: eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act; advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
46. A relevant protected characteristic is defined in section 4 of the Act as age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, and marriage and civil partnership.

47. The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 require the Council to publish information annually about how it complies with the Public Sector Equality Duty. The information must include, in particular, information relating to persons who share a relevant protected characteristic who are:

- (a) its employees;
- (b) other persons affected by its policies and practices.

48. The Regulations also impose obligations on Councils to publish information relating to the “gender pay gap” in their organisation on the snapshot date of 31<sup>st</sup> March in any year. In particular, Councils are required to publish the difference between the average hourly rate of pay paid to male and female employees; the difference between the average bonus paid to male and female employees; the proportions of male and of female employees who receive bonuses; and the relative proportions of male and female employees in each quartile pay band of the workforce.

49. The Workforce Equality Report and the Action Plan have been prepared in compliance with the requirements of the Act.

50. Positive action in recruitment is lawful provided that the conditions in sections 158 and 159 of the Act are met. Paragraphs 36 - 38 of this report explain how positive action can be lawfully used by the Council. It is only allowed where it is a proportionate way to address any under-representation or disadvantage

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**Background Papers:** None

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# Workforce Equalities Report 2016 to 2018

Published \*\* November 2018

# WORKFORCE EQUALITIES REPORT: 2016 TO 2018

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In contrast to other parts of the County, Oxford is a more ethnically and culturally diverse city. The City has experienced population growth in recent years, with *economically active* Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities across Oxford accounting for some 19% of the population (based on 2011 census data). This diversity of population requires the Council to provide strategic community leadership, promoting community cohesion and equality across its services as well as aim for its workforce to reflect the diversity of the communities it serves. In relation to employment, key initiatives promoted by the Council include:

- Increasing the diversity of the workforce by promoting the career opportunities available in local government, attracting and appointing more BAME candidates to better reflect the make-up of Oxford communities
- Supporting the creation of new jobs through leading on ethical procurement, working with the Local Enterprise Partnership, investing in major infrastructure projects to regenerate Barton, Blackbird Leys, Rose Hill and the City Centre, and supporting employment and skills plans linked to these developments
- Maintaining our accredited Oxford Living Wage (OLW) policy for directly employed staff, contractors and agency staff, as well as influencing other employers to be part of a Living Wage City

## 2. PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT:

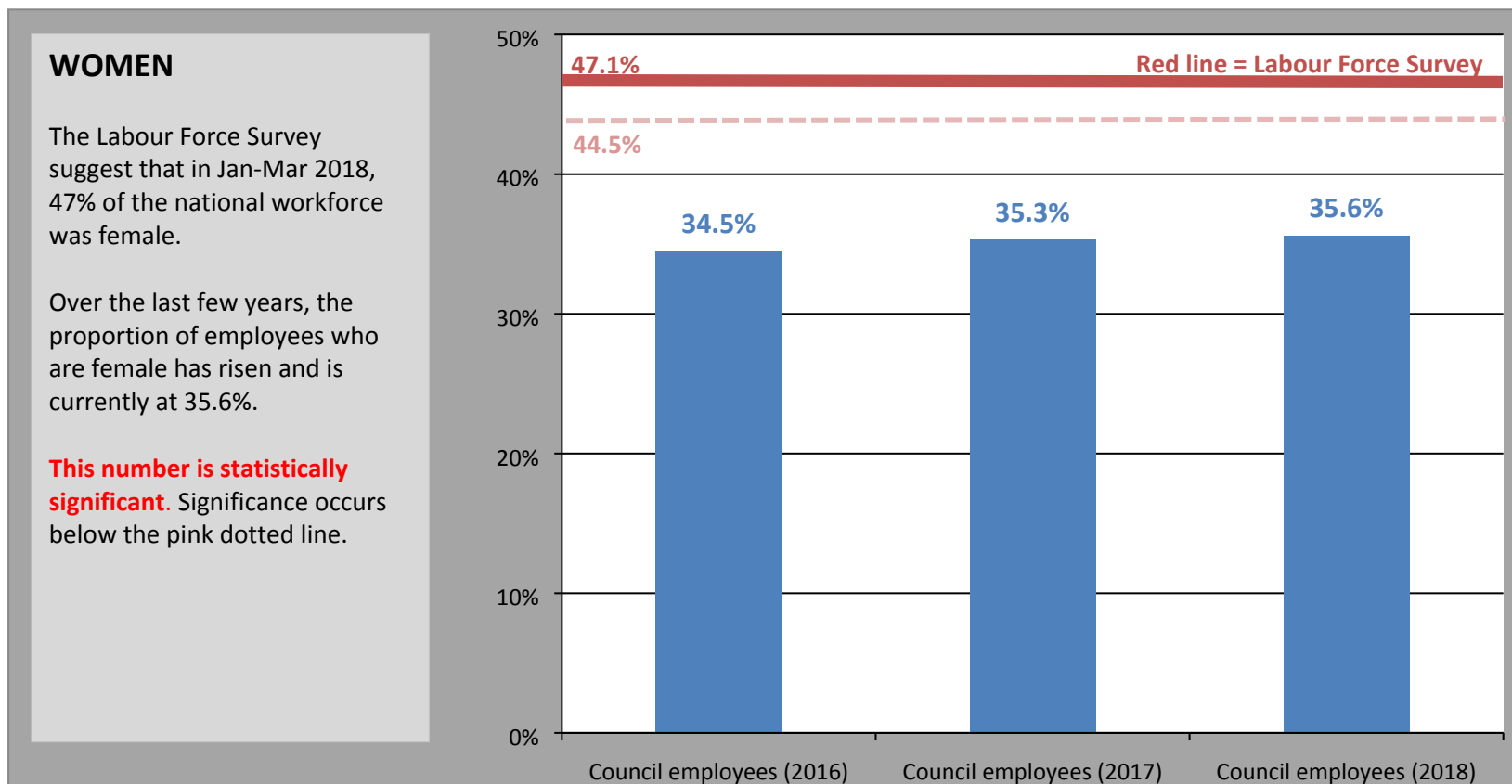
This report focuses on the Council as an employer committed to increasing the diversity of its workforce and providing an inclusive work environment with equality of opportunity for all employees. It covers all aspects of recruitment, retention, performance management and staff development reflecting high standards of professional practice, our position as Investors in People Gold Champion, in addition to embedding the Public Sector Equality Duty and Equality Act 2010 best practice.

It provides an update on human resources and equalities related activities, a 'snap shot' of what we look like as a council, data trend analysis for a three year period (1 April 2015 to 31 March 2018) that highlights what we have done in terms of recruitment and retention to increase the diversity of our workforce. The report also provides comparative population data and breakdown of Oxford City Council and Direct Services staffing for key equalities reporting areas.

### 3. GENERAL POPULATION & WORKFORCE DIVERSITY PROFILE (AS AT 31 MARCH 2016, 2017 AND 2018)

#### OXFORD GENERAL POPULATION DATA: SEX

107



## WORKFORCE PROFILE - OVERVIEW

One of the Council's four values is to Value Diversity and this forms part of the annual behavioural development for all staff, as well as being included in the annual appraisal review process. All new starters are required to read the Council's *Dignity at Work* policy as part of their induction process, and the Council offers a wide range of learning and development including unconscious bias training for managers and staff involved in recruitment as well as equalities-related e-learning packages. HR Business Partners continue to promote and encourage an open and inclusive team culture in their day-to-day engagement with managers and staff.

## WORKFORCE PROFILE (SEX)

### As at March 2016

Gender	Percentage	Number
Female	34.53	433
Male	65.47	821
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1254</b>

### As at 31 March 2017

Gender	Percentage	Number
Female	35.29	463
Male	64.71	849
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1321</b>

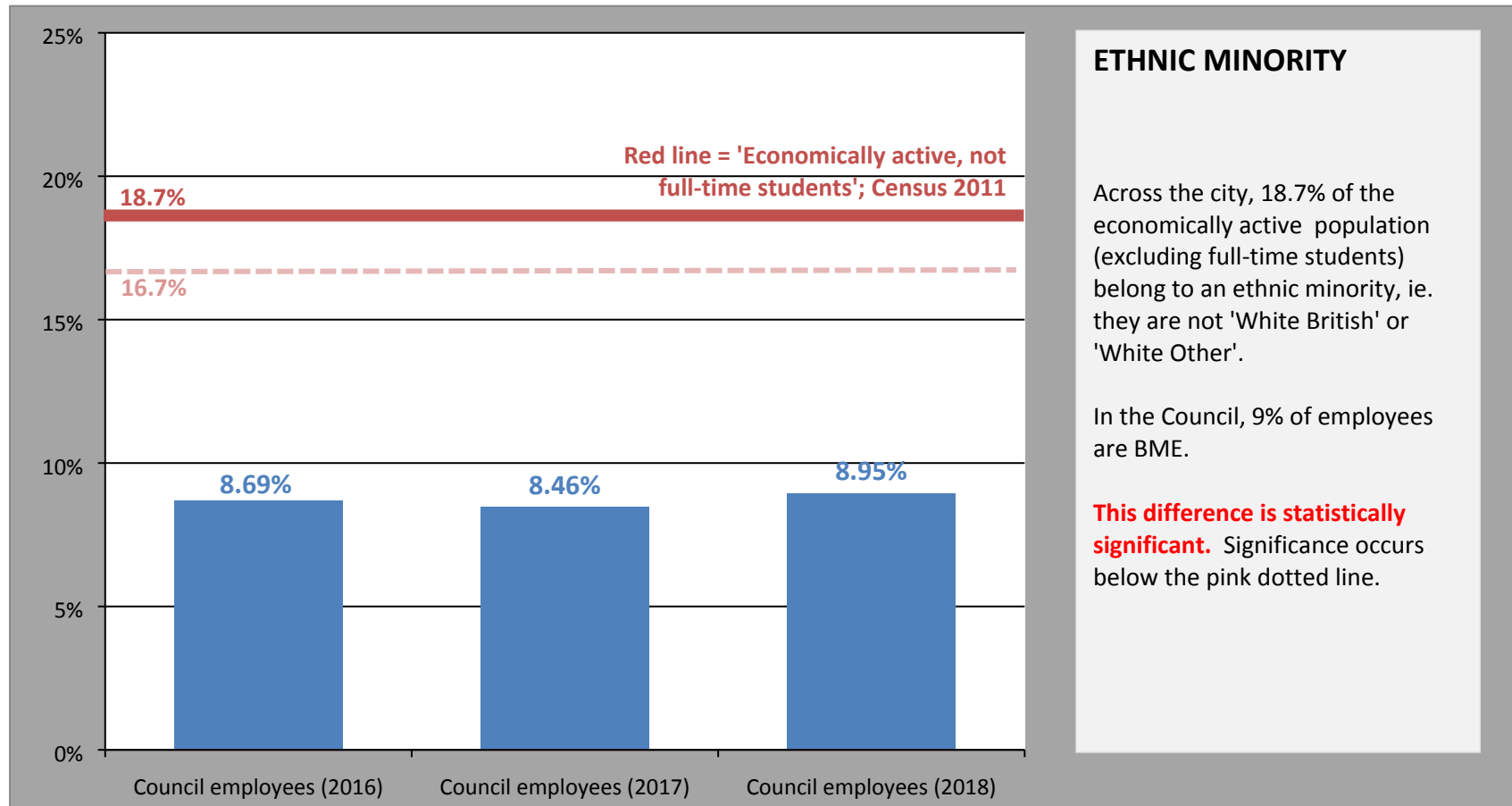
### As at 31 March 2018

Gender	Percentage	Number
Female	35.59	473
Male	64.41	856
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1329</b>

**Commentary:** The organisational headcount has increased steadily since March 2016, with the proportion of female staff increasing slightly over the same period. Although the Council remains a predominantly male organisation, reflecting the high participation rate of male employees within Direct Services, the majority of other service areas have a higher proportion of female staff.

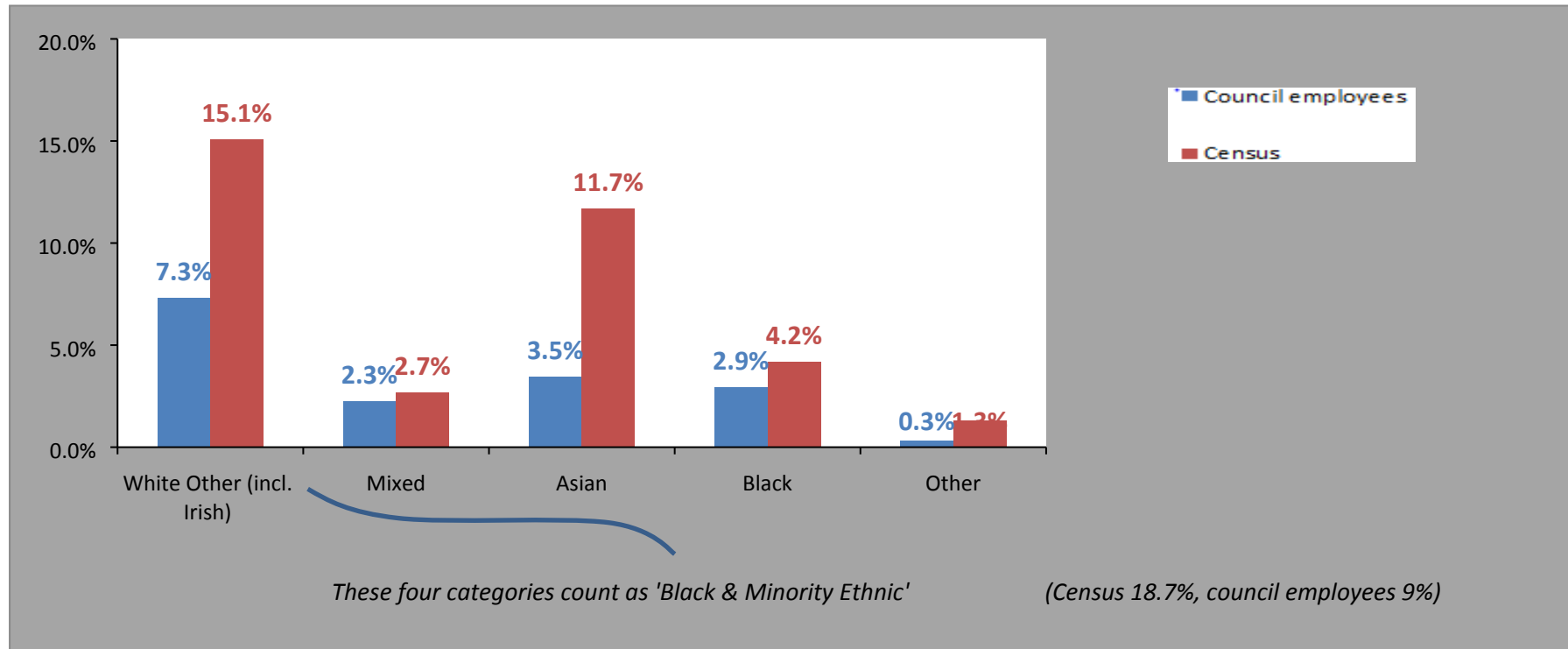
## OXFORD GENERAL POPULATION DATA: ETHNICITY

109



## OXFORD GENERAL POPULATION DATA COMPARISON: CITY ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE GROUPS & COUNCIL EMPLOYEES

110



This graph shows the types of sub-categories for ethnic minority, for those who are economically active. (Note that White British is not presented on this graph).

The graph shows that **'Asian' is the group which is most under-represented**. This is a wide category including Indian/Pakistani/Bangladeshi; Chinese; etc. There are also fewer than expected in the 'White Other' category.

**NOTE:** Full-time students and the economically inactive have been excluded from analysis.

Source: Census 2011, Table DC6201EW

## WORKFORCE PROFILE (ETHNICITY)

### As at March 2016

Ethnicity	Percentage	Number
White	85.81	1076
BAME	8.69	98
Unspecified	5.50	80
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1254</b>

### As at 31 March 2017

Ethnicity	Percentage	Number
White	84.76	1112
BAME	8.46	111
Unspecified	6.78	89
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1312</b>

### As at 31 March 2018

Ethnicity	Percentage	Number
White	84.12	1118
BAME	8.95	119
Unspecified	6.92	92
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1329</b>

**Commentary:** Although the number of employees from a BAME group has steadily increased since March 2016 and is at a record high as at 31 March 2018, we need to ensure that more people feel able to declare their ethnic origin. This will enable us to compile a more comprehensive and accurate picture of our employee make-up.

## OXFORD GENERAL POPULATION DATA: AGE

### Age Distribution

The age distribution at the council is much the same as nationally. However:

(a) there are fewer than expected young people (5.6% are aged under 25, as opposed to 11.7% nationally)

(b) there are more than expected older people (37.8% are aged 50-64, as opposed to 27.6% nationally)

(c) there are fewer than expected people aged 65+ (1.4%, as opposed to 3.7% nationally).





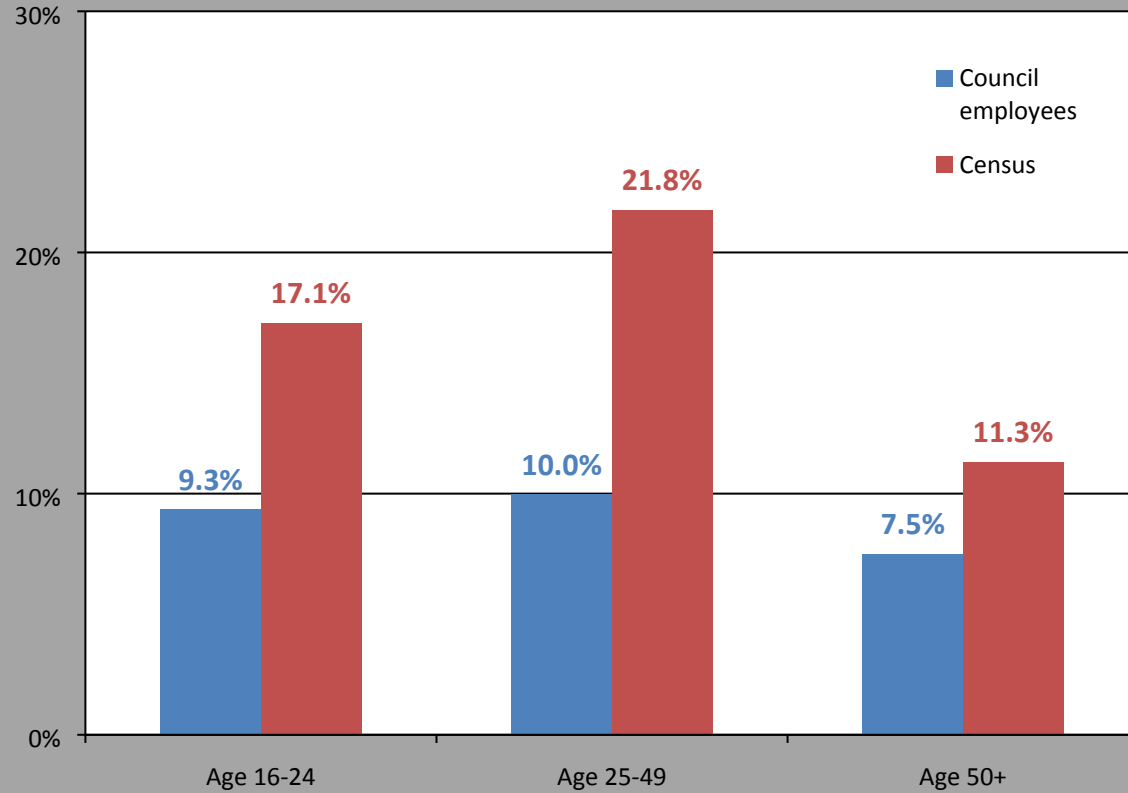
## OXFORD GENERAL POPULATION DATA: ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE ETHNIC GROUPS BY AGE CATEGORY

### Ethnic Minorities vs Age

This graph shows the proportion of council employees who are BAME, compared to the proportion of those economically active in Oxford. (Eg between ages 25 and 49: 21.8% of the Oxford economically active are BAME, compared to 10.0% BAME in the council)

NOTE: Full-time students and the economically inactive have been excluded from analysis.

Source: Census 2011, Table DC6201EW



## WORKFORCE PROFILE (AGE)

### As at March 2016

Age Bands	Percentage	Number
21-30	15.39	193
31-40	21.45	269
41-50	28.31	355
51-60	27.59	346
61-65	4.31	54
Over 65	1.36	17
Under 21	1.59	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1254</b>

### As at 31 March 2017

Age Bands	Percentage	Number
21-30	15.32	201
31-40	21.49	282
41-50	26.91	353
51-60	28.73	377
61-65	4.34	57
Over 65	1.07	14
Under 21	2.13	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1312</b>

### As at 31 March 2018

Age Bands	Percentage	Number
21-30	15.58	207
31-40	21.60	287
41-50	24.68	328
51-60	29.87	397
61-65	5.34	71
Over 65	0.90	12
Under 21	2.03	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1329</b>

114

**Commentary:** The proportion of staff under 30 years of age is now almost 20% of the workforce. Whilst the proportion of staff aged between 51 and 65 has stabilised at around 33%, the number of staff over age 65 has steadily declined since 2015/16. The recruitment to the next cohort of apprentices later this summer will increase the number of staff under age 21.

# OXFORD GENERAL POPULATION DATA: DISABILITY

115

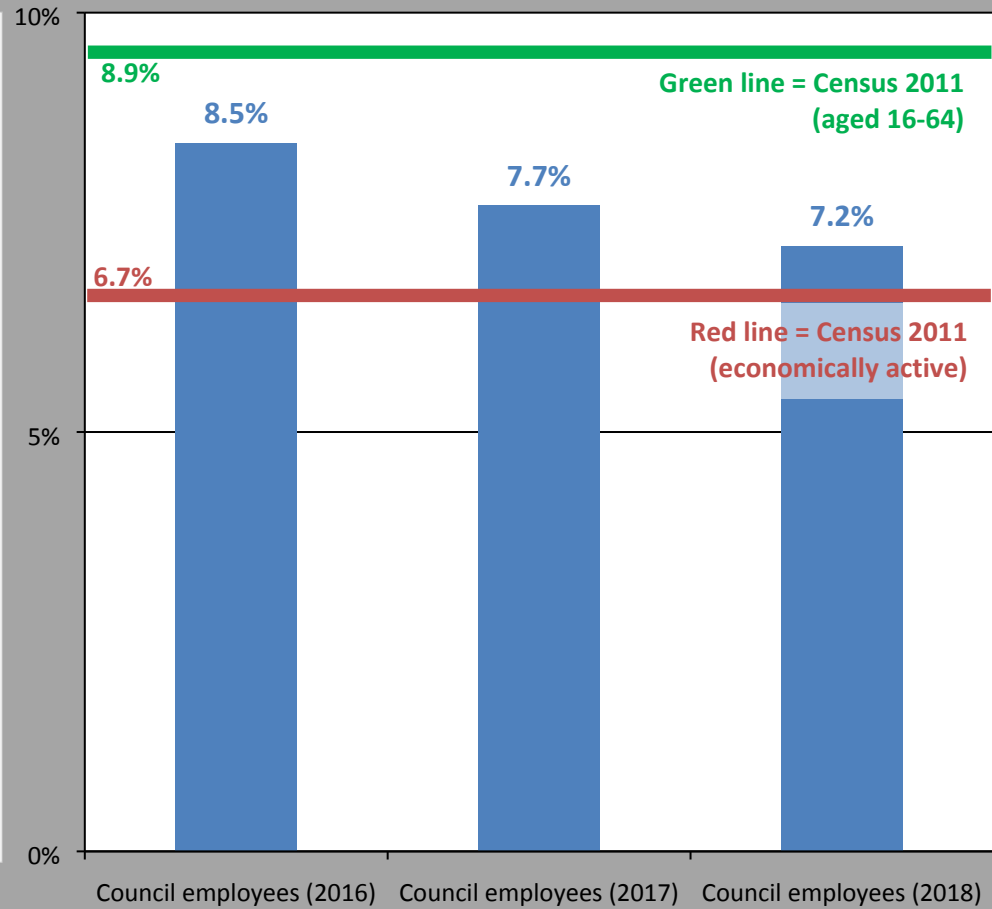
## DISABILITY

The Census asks individuals if their activities are long-term limited by health or disability .

\* Of Oxford residents who are economically active (and not full-time students), 6.7% self-reported as limited in this way.

\* Of Oxford residents aged 16-64, 8.9% self-reported as limited in this way.

Source: Census 2011, Table DC3201EW & DC6302EW



## WORKFORCE PROFILE (DISABILITY)

### As at March 2016

Disability	Percentage	Number
No	85.81	1076
Not Known	1.04	13
Yes	8.45	106
Not Specified	4.70	59
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1254</b>

### As at 31 March 2017

Disability	Percentage	Number
No	85.44	1121
Not Known	1.45	19
Yes	7.70	101
Not Specified	5.41	71
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1312</b>

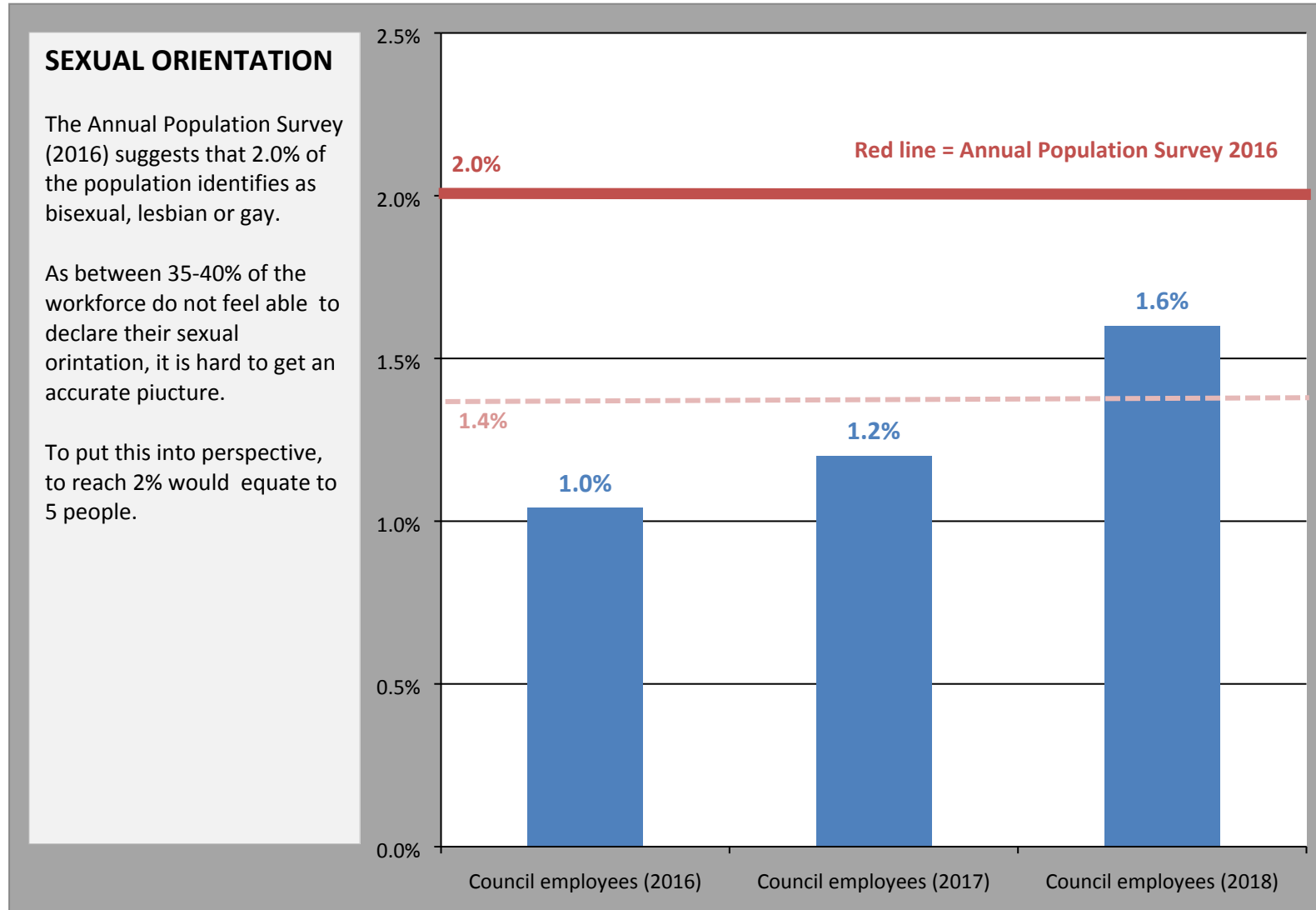
### As at 31 March 2018

Disability	Percentage	Number
No	86.16	1145
Not Known	1.28	17
Yes	7.22	96
Not Specified	5.34	71
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1329</b>

**Commentary:** The number of staff in March 2018 that reported they have a disability was 7.22%, which is the lowest level for 3 years. It should be noted, however, that the Council's policies around attendance management and flexible working continue to offer support for staff declaring a disability, along with an open culture that encourages staff to discuss this with their manager and HR Business Partner (HRBP). The Council has recently awarded its Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) and Occupational Health Service (OCS) contracts to new service providers (Health Assured and People Asset Management, respectively) who will both work in partnership with the Council to further support and improve the services provided to staff and managers alike. In addition, the Council received the *Disability Confident* award last autumn from Job Centre Plus (which replaces the 'Two Ticks' accreditation) and has recently commissioned an independent access audit, with the aim of identifying areas of improvement for staff, Members and the general public using the Council's offices and civic facilities.

## OXFORD GENERAL POPULATION DATA: SEXUAL ORIENTATION

117



## WORKFORCE PROFILE (SEXUAL ORIENTATION)

### As at March 2016

Sexual Orientation	Percentage	Number
Bisexual	0.16	2
Gay man	0.48	6
Gay woman/lesbian	0.40	5
Heterosexual/straight	59.01	740
Prefer not to say	5.90	74
Not specified	34.05	427
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1254</b>

### As at 31 March 2017

Sexual Orientation	Percentage	Number
Bisexual	0.23	3
Gay man	0.46	6
Gay woman/lesbian	0.46	6
Heterosexual/straight	62.27	817
Prefer not to say	5.64	74
Not specified	30.95	406
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1312</b>

### As at 31 March 2018

Sexual Orientation	Percentage	Number
Bisexual	0.30	4
Gay man	0.60	8
Gay woman/lesbian	0.68	9
Heterosexual/straight	64.03	851
Prefer not to say	5.64	75
Not specified	28.74	382
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1329</b>

**Commentary:** Although the number of staff who have declared themselves as Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual has increased steadily over the reporting period and is at a three year high, there remains a significant proportion of staff who have either indicated '*prefer not to say*' (5.64%) or '*not specified*' (28.74%) at employee on-boarding stage as at March 2018.

## Religion/Belief & Non Belief profile:

As at 31/03/16

As at 31/03/17

As at 31/03/18

Religion	Percentage	Number	Religion	Percentage	Number	Religion	Percentage	Number
Atheist/Humanist/no beliefs	20.73	260	Atheist/Humanist/no beliefs	21.19	278	Atheist/Humanist/no beliefs	22.87	304
Buddhist	0.32	4	Buddhist	0.30	4	Buddhist	0.23	3
Catholic	5.58	70	Catholic	6.48	85	Catholic	6.70	89
Christian	26.56	333	Christian	27.59	362	Christian	27.92	371
Hindu	0.40	5	Hindu	0.53	7	Hindu	0.60	8
Jewish	0.08	1	Jewish	0.08	1	Jewish	0.08	1
Muslim	1.04	13	Muslim	1.37	18	Muslim	1.28	17
Other	2.63	33	Other	2.52	33	Other	3.69	49
Prefer not to say	6.30	79	Prefer not to say	6.71	88	Prefer not to say	6.85	91
Sikh	0.16	2	Sikh	0.23	3	Sikh	0.23	3
Not specified	36.20	454	Not specified	33.00	433	Not specified	29.57	393
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1254</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1312</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1329</b>

**Commentary:** The proportion of members of staff who consider themselves to be atheist or have no religion has increased since March 2016. The numbers of staff Christian or Catholic has increased steadily since 2015/16 to circa 33% of the workforce.

A dedicated non-denominational 'quiet room' is available within St Aldate's Chambers for use by all staff as a reflective meditative space. It is also recognised that some groups have specific needs and these are addressed through commitments within the Fair Employment Policy, flexible working arrangements as well as through diversity training and support from HR Business Partners to assist staff/managers planning leave. Details of key national and local events, such as Inter Faith Walks, are promoted through Council Matters bulletins.

**Living in Central Oxford vs. Living outside Central Oxford profile:**

**As at 31/03/16**

Central Oxford	Percentage	Count
Central	45.30	568
Not	54.70	686
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1254</b>

**As at 31/03/17**

Central Oxford	Percentage	Count
Central	45.73	600
Not	54.27	712
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1312</b>

**As at 31/03/18**

Central Oxford	Percentage	Count
Central	44.24	588
Not	55.76	741
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1329</b>

**Commentary:** The proportion of staff living outside the OX1 to OX4 postcode area has increased since March 2016, which reflects the fact that Oxford is the most expensive place to live in the UK outside London, as well as the Council’s ability to attract talent from across the country due to its ambitious agenda and reputation, flexible working arrangements and employee benefits.



#### 4. RECRUITMENT ACTIVITY BETWEEN 2016 AND 2018

The Council continues to use a variety of approaches to promote job opportunities within the local community, including: holding recruitment roadshows in local community venues; attendance at local job fairs and careers events in local schools; advertising suitable roles in community centre notice boards; community newspapers/magazines; local libraries and the Oxford Mail; and encouraging applications for apprenticeship opportunities from the OX1 to OX4 postcode area. Staff turnover remains at around 10% per annum, which is broadly comparable with other public sector organisations. The reduction in recruitment activity volumes over the reporting period will be an issue considered as part of the review of recruitment and retention processes to be completed over the coming year. Data will be reviewed across the entire recruitment cycle to identify if there are any specific points areas within that cycle which need attention. This forms part of the action plan.

**Recruitment activity in 2015/16**

Sex	Percentage	Number
Female	46.51	5138
Male	51.00	5634
Unspecified	2.49	275
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>11047</b>

**Recruitment activity in 2016/17**

Sex	Percentage	Number
Female	41.25	3850
Male	55.66	5195
Unspecified	3.09	289
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>9334</b>

**Recruitment activity in 2017/18**

Sex	Percentage	Number
Female	45.60	3812
Male	50.40	4213
Unspecified	4.00	334
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>8359</b>

Ethnicity	Percentage	Number
BAME	24.30	2684
White	75.70	8363
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>11047</b>

Ethnicity	Percentage	Number
BAME	21.20	1979
White	78.80	7355
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>9334</b>

Ethnicity	Percentage	Number
BAME	20.07	1678
White	79.93	6681
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>8359</b>

Disabled	Percentage	Number
No	87.06	9618
Yes	4.77	527
Not Specified	8.17	902
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>11047</b>

Disabled	Percentage	Number
No	86.49	8073
Yes	4.37	408
Not Specified	9.14	853
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>9334</b>

Disabled	Percentage	Number
No	84.69	7079
Yes	5.13	429
Not Specified	10.18	851
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>8359</b>

**Commentary:** The number of female to male applicants reduced in 2016/17 but is now at a similar level to 2015/16. Applicants from BAME groups reduced noticeably in 2016/17 but has now stabilised around 20% of applicants. The proportion of applicants who declare themselves as having a disability has steadily increased since 2015/16. The Council is reviewing where and how it advertises job opportunities (including greater use of social media to encourage applications from a younger age demographic), its 'employer brand' and how it can promote working for the city, and will continue to work towards being more reflective of the communities it serves through ongoing initiatives such as targeted recruitment campaigns within the OX1 to OX4 postcode areas, as well as outreach work with local communities and schools.

## STARTERS BETWEEN 2016 AND 2018

### New starters during 2015/16

Sex	Percentage	Number
Female	46.63	90
Male	53.37	103
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>193</b>

Ethnicity	Percentage	Number
BAME	12.44	24
White	66.84	129
Not Specified	20.72	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>193</b>

Disabled	Percentage	Number
No	75.13	145
Yes	2.59	5
Not Specified	22.28	43
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>193</b>

### New starters during 2016/17

Sex	Percentage	Number
Female	43.35	114
Male	56.65	149
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>263</b>

Ethnicity	Percentage	Number
BAME	8.75	23
White	59.70	157
Not Specified	31.55	83
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>263</b>

Disabled	Percentage	Number
No	94.68	249
Yes	2.28	6
Not Specified	3.04	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>263</b>

### New starters during 2017/18

Sex	Percentage	Number
Female	33.56	97
Male	66.44	192
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>289</b>

Ethnicity	Percentage	Number
BAME	7.960	23
White	51.900	150
Not Specified	40.140	116
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>289</b>

Disabled	Percentage	Number
No	82.70	239
Yes	2.42	7
Not Specified	14.88	43
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>289</b>

**Commentary:** The proportion of female new starters has reduced since 2015/16, with a significant fall between 2016/17 and 2017/18. Although the number of new starters from a BAME group has remained stable, this is offset by a significant growth in the number of staff who did not provide details of their ethnicity at the onboarding stage. Similarly, whilst the number of new starters who declared themselves as having a disability has steadily increased, there has been a significant increase in the numbers of staff who have not specified whether they have a disability at the onboarding stage. An important area of work in forthcoming years will be interventions to encourage colleagues who have decided not to specify their ethnic origin or disabled status to provide this information, in order that the Council can gain a clearer understanding of the composition and needs of its workforce.

## LEAVERS BETWEEN 2016 AND 2018

### Leavers during 2015/16

Sex	Percentage	Number
Female	41.71	83
Male	58.29	116
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>199</b>

Ethnicity	Percentage	Number
BAME	9.05	18
White	77.39	154
Not Specified	13.56	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>199</b>

Disabled	Percentage	Number
No	76.88	153
Yes	9.05	18
Not Specified	14.07	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>199</b>

### Leavers during 2016/17

Sex	Percentage	Number
Female	30.97	35
Male	69.03	78
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>113</b>

Ethnicity	Percentage	Number
BAME	6.19	7
White	85.84	97
Not Specified	7.97	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>113</b>

Disabled	Percentage	Number
No	91.15	103
Yes	7.97	9
Not Specified	0.88	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>113</b>

### Leavers during 2017/18

Sex	Percentage	Number
Female	37.09	56
Male	62.91	95
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>151</b>

Ethnicity	Percentage	Number
BAME	7.95	12
White	77.48	117
Not Specified	14.57	22
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>151</b>

Disabled	Percentage	Number
No	90.07	136
Yes	7.94	12
Not Specified	1.99	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>151</b>

**Commentary:** The number of female staff that left the Council increased significantly between 2016/17 and 2017/18 but is at a lower rate than 2015/16. This also applies to leavers from a BAME group, but there has been a significant increase in leavers who did not specify their ethnicity when they first joined the Council. The proportion of leavers that declared that they had a disability during 2017/18 was at a similar level to 2016/17, but is significantly lower than 2015/16.

## SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR LEAVING BETWEEN 2016 AND 2018

### Leavers during 2015/16

Reason	Percentage	Number
Died in Service	2.01	4
End of Fixed Term Contract	14.07	28
Failed Probation	1.51	3
Mutually Agreed Termination & Redundancy (with Severance Payment)	3.52	7
Resignation – Relocation	69.34	138
Retirement	8.04	16
Retirement (Ill Health - Tier 1)	1.51	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>199</b>

### Leavers during 2016/17

Reason	Percentage	Number
Died in Service	0.88	1
Dismissal – Attendance	1.77	2
End of Fixed Term Contract	5.31	6
End of Fixed Term Contract (with Redundancy Payment)	0.88	1
Mutually Agreed Termination	7.96	9
Redundancy (with Severance Payment)	0.88	1
Resignation – Career Development	8.85	10
Resignation – Improved Pay/Benefits	0.88	1
Resignation – Other	66.37	75
Resignation – Relocation	1.77	2
Resignation – Retirement	4.42	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>113</b>

### Leavers during 2017/18

Reason	Percentage	Number
Died in Service	0.66	1
Dismissal – Attendance	3.31	5
End of Fixed Term Contract	7.95	12
Failed Probation	1.98	3
Mutually Agreed Termination	2.65	4
Resignation – Career Development	4.64	7
Resignation – Improved Pay/Benefits	0.66	1
Resignation – Other	67.55	102
Resignation – Relocation	2.65	4
Resignation – Retirement	4.64	7
Retirement – Ill Health Tier 1	2.65	4
Retirement – Ill Health Tier 2	0.66	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>151</b>

**Commentary:** The number of leavers at the end of their fixed term contract is at its highest since 2015/16 as the Council moves to consolidate its permanent workforce, with the proportion of 'resignation' (for various categories such as relocation, retirement, etc.) given as a leaving reason for 2017/18 is broadly comparable with 2016/17. More granular reporting for 2016/17 and 2017/18 has been achieved through an increased focus on securing more information from the exit interview process.

## 5. EQUAL PAY/"GENDER PAY GAP" (FULL TIME)

As at 31 March 2016

Full-Time Gap	Hourly Rates	
	Female	Male
Asst Chief Executive	£26.85	£16.72
Business Improvement	£14.19	£15.56
Community Services	£14.64	£16.65
Community Services Directorate	£17.81	£16.97
Direct Services	£13.66	£14.12
Financial Services	£16.41	£16.30
Housing & Property	£16.68	£18.93
Law & Governance	£17.86	£23.91
OD & Corporate Services Directorate	£15.97	£24.19
Planning & Regulatory	£18.52	£18.77
Regeneration & Housing Directorate	£32.25	£21.57
Senior Management	£59.40	£59.40
<b>Overall</b>	<b>£15.84</b>	<b>£15.36</b>

<b>Female Salary Average</b>	£29,848	£15.47
<b>Male Salary Average</b>	£29,773	£15.43

As at 31 March 2017

Full-Time Gap	Hourly Rates	
	Female	Male
Asst Chief Executive	£41.40	£12.85
Business Improvement	£14.09	£15.35
Community Services	£14.37	£16.47
Community Services Directorate	£17.94	£17.14
Direct Services	£13.75	£14.35
Financial Services	£16.61	£16.37
Housing & Property	£16.59	£19.53
Law & Governance	£19.00	£20.75
OD & Corporate Services Directorate	£16.87	£19.49
Planning & Regulatory	£18.16	£18.43
Regeneration & Housing Directorate	£35.12	£21.90
Senior Management	£60.29	£60.29
<b>Overall</b>	<b>£15.90</b>	<b>£15.42</b>

<b>Female Salary Average</b>	£29,918	£15.51
<b>Male Salary Average</b>	£29,802	£15.45

As at 31 March 2018

Full-Time Gap	Hourly Rates	
	Female	Male
Asst Chief Executive	£25.03	£18.25
Business Improvement	£14.22	£15.62
Community Services	£13.76	£16.75
Community Services Directorate	£19.35	£17.07
Direct Services	£14.24	£14.45
Financial Services	£16.80	£17.23
Housing & Property	£17.91	£20.59
Law & Governance	£22.60	£22.02
OD & Corporate Services Directorate	£15.11	£18.65
Planning & Regulatory	£18.87	£18.58
Regeneration & Housing Directorate	£24.22	£22.95
Senior Management		£70.92
<b>Overall</b>	<b>£16.24</b>	<b>£15.66</b>

<b>Female Salary Average</b>	£30,403	£15.76
<b>Male Salary Average</b>	£30,256	£15.68

## EQUAL PAY/"GENDER PAY GAP" (PART-TIME)

As at 31 March 2016

Full-Time Gap	Hourly Rates	
	Female	Male
Asst Chief Executive	£16.08	£16.72
Business Improvement	£14.17	£15.56
Community Services	£12.84	£16.65
Community Services Directorate	£20.42	£16.97
Direct Services	£11.38	£14.12
Financial Services	£14.05	£16.30
Housing & Property	£15.95	£18.93
Law & Governance	£19.26	£23.91
OD & Corporate Services Directorate	£18.45	£24.19
Planning & Regulatory	£17.63	£18.77
<b>Overall</b>	<b>£14.55</b>	<b>£15.36</b>

As at 31 March 2017

Full-Time Gap	Hourly Rates	
	Female	Male
Asst Chief Executive	£16.59	
Business Improvement	£13.48	£16.36
Community Services	£12.83	£13.01
Community Services Directorate	£20.57	
Direct Services	£11.76	£12.89
Financial Services	£14.19	£14.19
Housing & Property	£16.35	£14.96
Law & Governance	£19.55	£24.96
OD & Corporate Services Directorate	£14.74	
Planning & Regulatory	£18.00	£18.17
Senior Management		£79.46
<b>Overall</b>	<b>£14.50</b>	<b>£15.97</b>

As at 31 March 2018

Full-Time Gap	Hourly Rates	
	Female	Male
Asst Chief Executive	£18.43	£12.82
Business Improvement	£14.04	£17.67
Community Services	£12.13	£13.81
Community Services Directorate	£26.00	£17.23
Direct Services	£12.19	£12.69
Financial Services	£14.37	£15.35
Housing & Property	£16.54	£14.41
Law & Governance	£19.88	£25.33
OD & Corporate Services Directorate	£15.11	
Planning & Regulatory	£17.79	£19.05
Regeneration & Housing Directorate		£20.78
Senior Management		£61.19
<b>Overall</b>	<b>£14.53</b>	<b>£16.07</b>

**Commentary:** The average salary for the Council is £ 29,863.70 (as at 31 March 2017). The City Council remains the **only** local authority within Oxfordshire that is a Living Wage Champion. The Council has also built the OLW into its Procurement process, so that all contractors are required to pay at least the OLW for agency staff engaged on council contracts. This policy ensures that Council staff are paid a decent wage and helps to offset the high cost of accommodation within the city, which is the most expensive area to live in the UK. The Council's first *Gender Pay Gap* report (covering the reporting period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017) indicates that in relation to both mean and median basic pay there is no 'pay gap' between female and male staff, which is a reflection of the changes implemented through successive local pay agreements to tackle issues around low pay.

## 6. OTHER WORKFORCE DATA

Disciplinary
Breach of Data Protection policy
Breach of H&S policy
Damage to Council Property
Damage to Council reputation
Discrimination, bullying harassment
Drug or alcohol misuse
Non-adherence to values and behaviours framework
Non-adherence/breach to Organisational policy or work processes

Warnings given during 2015/16			
1st Written	Final Written	Informal Warning	Total
		1	1
1	2		3
6	2	14	22
1	2	1	4
	2	1	3
2	1	5	8
4	4	10	18
<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>58</b>

24%      22%      54%

Warnings given during 2016/17			
1st Written	Final Written	Informal Warning	Total
		1	1
1	2		3
12	2	18	32
1	3	1	5
	1		1
	2	1	3
5	3	9	17
9	7	26	42
<b>28</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>104</b>

27%      19%      54%

Warnings given during 2017/18			
1st Written	Final Written	Informal Warning	Total
12	1	4	17
1	5		6
	1		1
	1		1
4	1	6	11
12	5	21	38
<b>29</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>74</b>

39%      19%      42%

**Commentary:** The proportion of disciplinary casework resulting in the application of an informal or first written warning has steadily increased since 2015/16. Damage to Council property, failure to observe the values and behaviours framework and breaches of organisational policy or work processes represented the majority of disciplinary casework across all of the reporting period. There were single instances of casework relating to alleged discrimination, bullying or harassment in both 2016/17 and 2017/18, with the latter case resulting in a Final Written Warning. (The totals shown includes cases where there was more than one actionable component).



## 7. SUMMARY

- In order to be in a better position to recruit a workforce more representative of the City's resident economically active population we have continued to review the essential criteria and the practical entry assessment tests for high turnover posts; cascaded best practice around recruitment by involving more staff in the meeting and greeting process and informal stakeholder groups; as well as promoted and advertised job opportunities in local community publications and community centres and recruitment.
- The Council maintains its commitment to staff development and continues to maintain a Corporate Training budget of £124,000 in addition to Service Area funding of £302,000. Since 2016 the Council has provided additional funding for a comprehensive Health and Wellbeing programme, (£150,000 over two years) and £174,000 for a Leadership and Management development programme for all managers. We have an internal training resource designing and delivering a varied and high quality corporate training programme including an accredited ILM manager's course.
- In the future, a new Organisational Development strategy has been agreed and will be implemented over the next three years, which was developed in conjunction with feedback from the 2016 staff survey and liP accreditation.
- We have continued to explore new opportunities to promote the careers available at the Council, and have reviewed the apprenticeship opportunities on offer in 2018 to incorporate more specialist apprenticeships, as well as support career development for staff through coaching/ mentoring/ secondments and other interventions, including the extension of a significant corporate training and personal development programme available to all staff.
- The Council has developed and implemented career matrix schemes in a number of service areas to both attract and retain talent within the Council.
- The Council has held Corporate *Customer Service Excellence* (CSE) accreditation since 2016 and received a further 'compliance plus' awards for: the Youth Ambition team's efforts to find and work with vulnerable young people and providing English classes for speakers of other languages alongside their other activities; empowering contact centre staff to use their experience and skills to help customers rather than sticking to a script, and developing staff to respond to customers effectively through social media; and identifying reasons why customers make repeat calls and improving our service to reduce unnecessary calls. The CSE assessor also gave positive feedback across the board, singling out service improvements, better customer engagement, and the way we are supporting and developing our staff to take responsibility for customers and how we serve them.

- The Council is proud to have maintained its Gold Level Investors in People Gold accreditation in 2017 highlighting its commitment to people management, and will continue to embed these best practices in order to recruit and retain a talented workforce that better reflects the local community.
- The Council has an aspiration to be an 'employer of choice' with a workforce that better reflects the demographics of the diverse communities it serves. By continually reviewing and refining policies, procedures and approaches we also aim to develop a significantly better understanding as to why applications from specific groups might fail or, indeed, why they may not apply for job opportunities within the Council.
- Finally the Council will look to address the significant proportion of staff and potential employees who choose not provide details of their ethnicity, religious belief, etc. at key stages of the recruitment process and employee on-boarding process.

#### **November 2018**

**RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION ANALYSIS**

**1. ANALYSIS OF APPLICATIONS RECEIVED THROUGH TO INTERVIEW BY ETHNICITY (2017/18)**

City Council	Applications Received		Interviewed		Appointed		Candidate Withdrew	
	Number	% Received	Number	% Group	Number	% Group	Number	% Group
White Applicants	1209	78	512	42	89	7	37	3
BAME	332	22	119	36	15	5	13	4
<b>Total:</b>	<b>1541</b>		<b>631</b>		<b>104</b>		<b>50</b>	

Direct Services	Applications Received		Interviewed		Appointed		Candidate Withdrew	
	Number	% Received	Number	% Group	Number	% Group	Number	% Group
White Applicants	457	77	320	70	86	19	27	6
BAME	134	23	64	48	10	7	5	4
<b>Total:</b>	<b>591</b>		<b>384</b>		<b>96</b>		<b>32</b>	

**2. LOCATION OF APPLICANTS**

**Applicants by Postcode (City Council Vacancies)**

Applicant	Total
Lives inside Central Oxford	2259
Lives outside Central Oxford	2976
<b>Total:</b>	<b>5235</b>

**Applicants by Postcode (Direct Services Vacancies)**

Applicant	Total
Lives inside Central Oxford	1492
Lives outside Central Oxford	1424
<b>Total:</b>	<b>2916</b>

### 3. LOCATION OF STAFF

#### Oxford City Council

Applicant	Total
Lives inside Central Oxford	254
Lives outside Central Oxford	424
<b>Total:</b>	<b>678</b>

#### Direct Services

Applicant	Total
Lives inside Central Oxford	334
Lives outside Central Oxford	317
<b>Total:</b>	<b>651</b>

### 4. STAFF TURNOVER

#### Oxford City Council

Ethnicity	Number	%
BAME	7	8.5%
White	64	78%
Not Specified	11	13.5%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>82</b>	
<b>Average Staff Turnover</b>		<b>12.1%</b>

#### Oxford Direct Services

Ethnicity	Number	%
BAME	5	7.3
White	54	78.3
Not Specified	10	14.4
<b>Total:</b>	<b>69</b>	
<b>Average Staff Turnover</b>		<b>10.6%</b>

## 5. ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE BAME & WHITE OTHER GROUPS (OX1 to OX4)

	% of economically active who are BME	% of economically active who are White Other
Oxford City wards in OX1	17%	19%
Oxford City wards in OX2	11%	19%
Oxford City wards in OX3	20%	13%
Oxford City wards in OX4	21%	14%
Grand Total	19%	15%

**6. ANALYSIS OF COMMUNITY SERVICES RECRUITMENT SCHEMES  
2017/18**

**Applicants from BAME Groups**

Requisition Ref	Appl'ns Rec'd	Interviewed	Appointed	Withdraw	% Applic'ns Received		
					Interviewed	Appointed	Withdraw
001314	8	4	1	0	50%	12%	0%
001345	5	3	0	0	60%	0%	0%
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>			
		<b>58%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>0%</b>			

**Applicants from White Groups**

Requisition Ref	Appl'ns Rec'd	Interviewed	Appointed	Withdraw	% Applic'ns Received		
					Interviewed	Appointed	Withdraw
001314	5	1	0	0	20%	0%	0%
001345	16	9	1	0	56%	6%	0%
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>			
		<b>48%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>0%</b>			

134

**Note: 36 schemes reached appointment stage**

**7. ANALYSIS OF HOUSING SERVICES RECRUITMENT SCHEMES  
2017/18**

**Applicants from BAME Groups**

Requisition Ref	App'l'ns Rec'd	Interviewed	Appointed	Withdrew	% Applic'ns Received		
					Interviewed	Appointed	Withdrew
001351	1	1	0	0	100%	0%	0%
001346	5	3	0	0	60%	0%	0%
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>			
		<b>66%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>			

**Applicants from White Groups**

Requisition Ref	App'l'ns Rec'd	Interviewed	Appointed	Withdrew	% Applic'ns Received		
					Interviewed	Appointed	Withdrew
001351	3	3	0	0	100%	0%	0%
001346	5	2	0	0	40%	0%	0%
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>			
		<b>63%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>			

**Note: 16 schemes reached appointment stage**

135

## 8. COMMUNITY SERVICES: SAMPLE RECRUITMENT SCHEME ANALYSIS

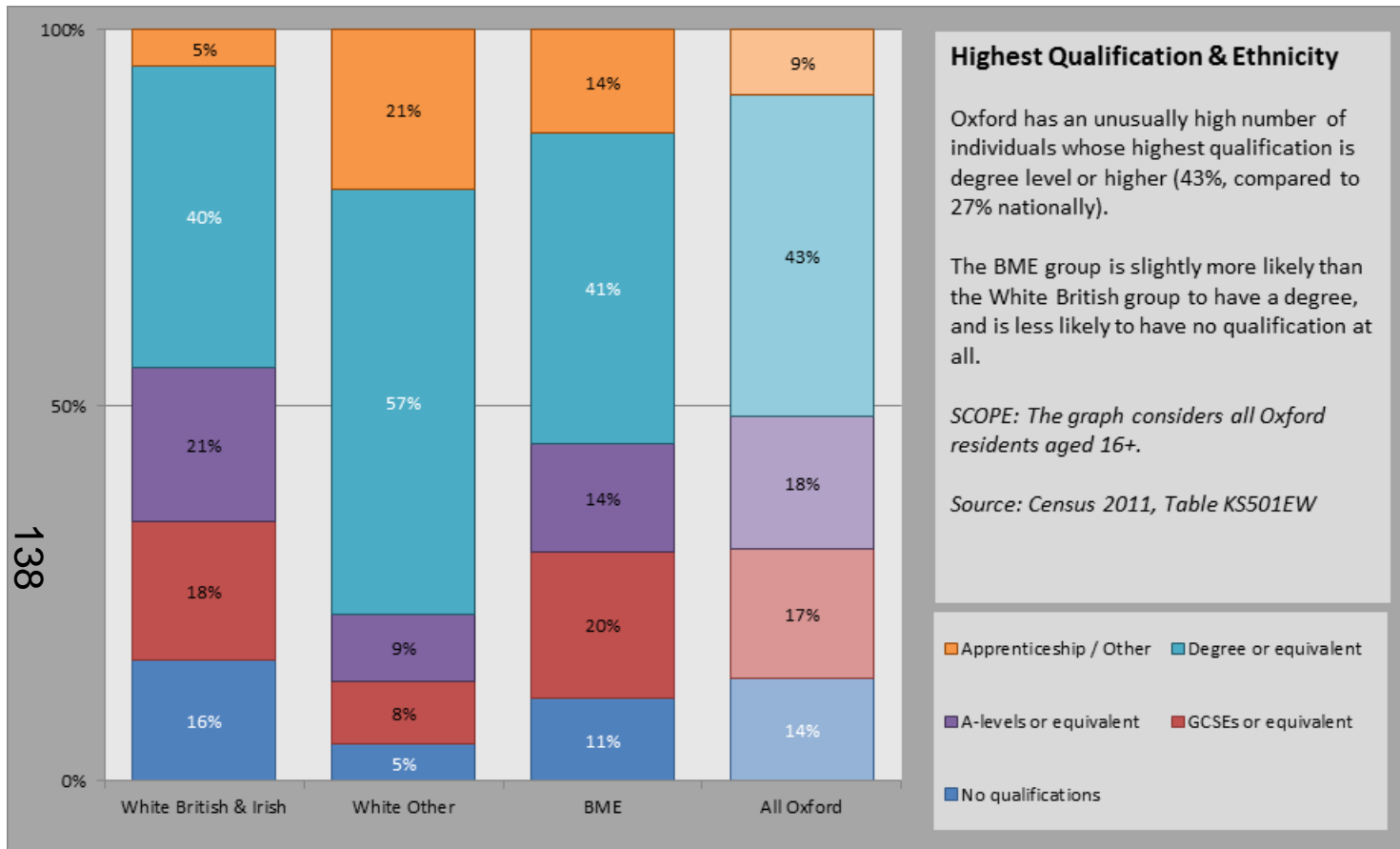
Service Area	Requisition Reference	Job title	Grade	Hours	Internal/External	Advertised	Shortlisting receipt	Interview details
13 Community Services	001314	VAWG Strategic Officer	7	37	External	OCC website; Distribution email; Universal jobmatch; Auto post to Indeed	06/02/2018	<p>10 minute presentation:</p> <p>This post will sit in Oxford City Council but will be overseen by a Thames Valley BAMER Board and supported by 6 BAMER support workers who will be based in local specialist services. We would like you to give a 10 minute presentation outlining your work plan, titled 'My First Three Months in Post'.</p> <p>45 minute competency interview and completion of psychometric questions. This will enable essential criteria on JD to be assessed for the role: technical knowledge, investigative skills. Additionally it will demonstrate organisational skills and ability to meet priorities against key deadlines.</p> <p>45 minute interview will consist of 8 - 10 questions, incorporating environmental crime and Anti-social behaviour and questions to establish partnership working knowledge, team working and alignment with corporate values and behaviours.</p>
Community Services	001345	Performance and Impact Officer	6	37	External	OCC website; Distribution email; Universal jobmatch; Auto post to Indeed	26/03/2018	<p>Your interview will consist of a test lasting 35 minutes and you will be notified of the topic on the day. The test will include paper and computer based elements.</p> <p>This will be followed by a question and answer session lasting approximately 55 minutes.</p>



**9. HOUSING SERVICES: SAMPLE RECRUITMENT SCHEME ANALYSIS**

Service Area	Requisition Reference	Job title	Grade	Hours	Internal/External	Advertised	Shortlisting receipt	Interview details
Housing	001351	Tenancy Management Support Officer	5	37	Internal	OCC website only	04/04/2018	Your assessment will last 45 minutes and will consist of a 30 minute face to face interview followed by a 15 minute computer based test.
Housing	001346	Energy Advice Officer	6	37	External	OCC website; Distribution email; Universal jobmatch; Auto post to Indeed	20/03/2018	Your assessment will consist of a 30 minute job related test followed by a 1 hour panel interview.

## 10. OXFORD POPULATION DATA: HIGHEST QUALIFICATION HELD



This bar chart indicates that there is a well-qualified local labour market, which suggests that there should be a consistent level of applications from all ethnic groups [i.e. BAME and White] across most of the roles advertised by the Council, with the exception of jobs that require a specific technical or professional qualification as an essential criterion in the person specification for the job.

## Equality Benchmarking Data

Research was conducted across several Councils to attain benchmarking data across four protected characteristics:

1. Ethnicity
2. Sex
3. Disability
4. Sexual Orientation

The following Councils were used:

Name	Headcount	Census BAME	Workforce data BAME
Cambridge City	803	17.5%	7.18%
Brent	2062	58%	65%
Southwark	4150	46%	51%
Harrow	2052	58%	49%
Northampton Borough	286	15%	6%
Reading County	4191	23%	16%
South Oxfordshire & VWH	574	9%	3%
Plymouth City	2644	9%	5%
Salisbury County	4597	7%	3%

The two councils that appear to be closest comparators are Cambridge and Reading in terms of BAME Census data. Despite Reading having more staff and Cambridge less the census BAME figures are similar. It is worth noting that between 2015 and 2016 Reading improved their BAME representation by 3% although no figures are published for 2017.

Ethnicity	Brackets indicate ODS									
	Oxford City Council (2017) Census 18.7% BAME		Cambridge City (2018) Census 17.5% BAME		Brent Council (2016) Census 58% BAME		Southwark (2016) Census 46% BAME		Harrow (2017) Census 57.8% BAME	
	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number
White	84.76	1112 (565)	89.87	724	33.4	689	48.31	2111	49	882
BAME	8.46	111 (36)	7.18	56	65	1340	50.86	2005	43	1006
Unspecified	6.78	89 (39)	2.95	23	1.6	33	0.83	34	8	164
<b>Total</b>		<b>1312 (640)</b>		<b>803</b>		<b>2062</b>		<b>4150</b>		<b>2052</b>

Sex	Oxford City Council (2017)		Cambridge City (2017)		Brent Council (2016) Census 58% BAME		Southwark (2016)		Harrow (2017)	
	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number
Female	35.29 (11.72)	463 (75)	51.26	427	65	1340	51	2108	61.45	1260
Male	64.71 (88.28)	849 (565)	48.64	376	35	722	49	2042	38.55	792
<b>Total</b>		<b>1312 (640)</b>		<b>803</b>		<b>2062</b>		<b>4150</b>		<b>2052</b>

Disability	Oxford City Council (2017)		Cambridge City (2017)		Brent Council (2016)		Southwark (2016)		Harrow (2017)	
	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number
Disabled	7.70 (7.34)	101 (47)	6.84	57	10.2	210	2.7	99	4.5	93
<b>Total</b>		<b>1312 (640)</b>		<b>803</b>		<b>2062</b>				

Sexual Orientation	Oxford City Council (2017)		Cambridge City (2017)		Brent Council (2016)		Southwark (2016)		Harrow (2017)	
	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number
Heterosexual	62.27 (58.13)	817 (372)	71.61	575	96.4	1988	77	3196	33.87	695
Gay/Lesbian	1.2 (0.47)	12 (3)	1.25	10	3.3	68	5	207	1.12	22
Prefer not to say	36.82 (41.41)	483 (265)	27.14	218	0.3	6	18	747	65.1	1335
<b>Total</b>		<b>1312 (640)</b>		<b>803</b>		<b>2062</b>		<b>4150</b>		<b>2052</b>

Ethnicity	Brackets indicate ODS							
	Oxford City Council (2017) Census 18.7% BAME		Northampton BC (2016) Census 15% BAME		Reading Council (2016) Census 23% BAME		South Oxfordshire & VWH (2017) Census 9% BAME	
	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number
White	84.76	1112 (565)	61	175	70.7	3122	54	309
BAME	8.46	111 (36)	6	17	16	670	3	17
Unspecified	6.78	89 (39)	33	94	13.3	399	43	248
<b>Total</b>		<b>1312 (640)</b>		<b>286</b>		<b>4191</b>		<b>574</b>

Sex	Oxford City Council (2017)		Northampton BC		Reading Council		South Oxfordshire & VWH	
	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number
Female	35.29 (11.72)	463 (75)	63	180	78.2	3276	65	373
Male	64.71 (88.28)	849 (565)	37	106	21.8	915	35	201
<b>Total</b>		<b>1312 (640)</b>		<b>286</b>		<b>4191</b>		<b>574</b>

Disability	Oxford City Council (2017)		Northampton BC		Reading Council		South Oxfordshire & VWH	
	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number
Disabled	7.70 (7.34)	101 (47)	3.85	11	2.9	1458	3	17
<b>Total</b>		<b>1312 (640)</b>		<b>286</b>		<b>4191</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>574</b>

Sexual Orientation	Oxford City Council (2017)		Northampton BC		Reading Council		South Oxfordshire & VWH	
	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number
Heterosexual	62.27 (58.13)	817 (372)	Not stated		15	637	34	195
Gay/Lesbian	1.2 (0.47)	12 (3)	0.7	2	0.8	34	0	0
Prefer not to say	36.82 (41.41)	483 (265)	Not stated		84	3520	66	379
<b>Total</b>		<b>1312 (640)</b>		<b>286</b>		<b>4191</b>		<b>574</b>

Ethnicity	Brackets indicate ODS									
	Oxford City Council (2017) Census 18.7% BAME		Plymouth City (2017) Census 8.5% BAME		Salisbury County (16) Census 6.7% BAME		(2016) Census 46% BAME		(2017) Census 71.9% BAME	
	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number
White	84.76	1112 (565)	85	2247	87	4000				
BAME	8.46	111 (36)	5	132	3	138				
Unspecified	6.78	89 (39)	10	264	10	459				
<b>Total</b>		<b>1312 (640)</b>		<b>2644</b>		<b>4597</b>				

Sex	Oxford City Council (2017)		Plymouth City (2017)		Salisbury (16)		(2016)		(2017)	
	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number
Female	35.29 (11.72)	463 (75)	61	1621	71	3254				
Male	64.71 (88.28)	849 (565)	39	1023	29	1343				
<b>Total</b>		<b>1312 (640)</b>		<b>2644</b>		<b>4597</b>				

Disability	Oxford City Council (2017)		Plymouth City (2017)		Salisbury County (16)		k (2016)		Harrow (2017)	
	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number
Disabled	7.70 (7.34)	101 (47)	4	104	6	275				
<b>Total</b>		<b>1312 (640)</b>		<b>803</b>		<b>4597</b>				

Sexual Orientation	Oxford City Council (2017)		Plymouth City (2017)		Salisbury County (16)		Southwark (2016)		Harrow (2017)	
	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number
Heterosexual	62.27 (58.13)	817 (372)	45	1118	51	2344				
Gay/Lesbian	1.2 (0.47)	12 (3)	2	52	2	92				
Prefer not to say	36.82 (41.41)	483 (265)	53	1349	47	2161				
<b>Total</b>		<b>1312 (640)</b>				<b>4597</b>				

## **Actions of other authorities**

### Northampton BC

- Validation of selection tests to ensure they are reliable and culture free
- Continue to monitor
- Review dignity at work policy
- Use the findings of the Stonewall report

### Reading BC

- Named disability senior sponsor and champion
- Introduce a virtual steering group
- Disability awareness programme
- Guidance on reasonable adjustment

### South Oxfordshire & VWH

- Promote completion of equality data by staff
- Review of recruitment processes and procedures

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# Appendix 4

## EQUALITIES ACTION PLAN 2018/19 – 2020/21

Action	Deliverable(s)	Owner	Timeline Start	Timeline Finish	Cost £	Additional Budget Required £
<b>Training</b>						
Mandatory all staff and management training	E learning diversity awareness programme for all staff Deliver a modular programme for managers covering : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating an inclusive work environment</li> <li>• Being a role model for diversity</li> <li>• Understanding unconscious bias</li> </ul>	C Harvey	Nov 2018	Jan 2019	30k	
Recruitment refresher training for recruiting managers	'Just in time' recruitment refresher training and on-line briefing material and guidance for recruiting managers. To be continually updated as we refresh procedures and equalities training.	J Thorne	In situ	Ongoing	-	-
<b>Recruitment &amp; HR Procedures</b>						
145 Recruitment roadshows	Series of roadshows/ open days/ taster sessions understanding of the careers and job roles that the Council has to offer. Also giving access to ongoing support and coaching for future vacancies.  Particularly applicable for entry level jobs in large teams: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revenues and Benefits</li> <li>• Customer Service</li> <li>• Youth Ambition</li> </ul>	J Thorne	In situ	Ongoing	-	-
Stratified sampling of recruitment schemes across service areas	Understanding of stages and potential reasons why members of BAME groups do not progress through recruitment process	P Adams	July 2018	Aug 2018	-	-
Improve equalities reporting on iTrent	Reduction in proportion of staff with 'not specified' or 'not declared' records on iTrent in conjunction with Unions.  Promote data reporting during the on-boarding process	H Bishop	Sep 2018	Oct 2018	-	-
Review of recruitment methods and placement	Improved recruitment process (including JD content and language) and advertising 'streams' (including social media and local community publications) To include meeting with Community leaders to review and improve our procedures and methods	J Thorne J Thorne	Oct 2018 Oct 2018	On-going Mar 2019	-	-
Staff reference group	Establish a group of officers representing the breadth of protected characteristics which can act as a guide on anything from recruitment processes and staff retention to workplace culture	C Harvey	Nov 2018	Dec 2018	-	-

## Appendix 4

Survey of job applicants	Greater insight into where job applicants look for jobs	J Thorne	Oct 2018	Mar 2019	-	-
Survey of unsuccessful job applicants	Greater insight into why job applicants withhold information on ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation and religious belief	J Thorne	Oct 2018	Mar 2019	-	-
<b>Action</b>	<b>Deliverable(s)</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Timeline Start</b>	<b>Timeline Finish</b>	<b>Cost £</b>	<b>Additional Budget Required £</b>
Exit feedback	Manager to encourage staff member to complete online exit feedback form prior to leaving. Greater insight into reason(s) for staff leaving and areas for action/improvement the Council could consider.	J Thorne	Oct 2018	Ongoing	-	-
<b>Internal and External Communications</b>						
Draft campaign	Employer of Choice "Silver" campaign and internal communications plan	A Patel	Aug 2018	Sep 2019	1.5k	
Development of 'employer brand'	Improved information for job applicants about the council, career and development opportunities. Further promotion of the City Council welcoming applications from BAME candidates.	A Patel / J Thorne	Sep 2018	Ongoing	-	
Publication of workforce equalities report		P Adams	Oct 2018	Oct 2018	-	-
Equalities Week	Development and implementation of an Equalities Week programme to include: Launch of training programme Recruitment of Equality Reference group Cultural awareness events Demographics of City Communities comms	A Patel/C Harvey	Nov 2018	Dec 2018	£5k	-
<b>Positive Action</b>						
Internal positive action	Through the HRBP's encourage managers to have career coaching discussions with BAME staff in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal management training</li> <li>Coaching via the OD team</li> <li>Using the apprenticeship levy for career development qualifications</li> <li>Shadowing with managers</li> </ul>	Paul Adams	Nov 2018	On-going	Nil	
Job application support	Ongoing support in applying for current vacancies in terms of CV writing and interview advice using HR professionals and focused on for BAME candidates Identify process to include this in recruitment campaigns. Incorporate Equality reference group in process and train	C Harvey	Oct 2018	Ongoing	-	-
Talent pool of BAME candidates	To develop a process to keep unsuccessful candidates and applications from roadshows informed of new vacancies as they arise	J Thorne	Dec 2018	Mar 2019	-	-

## Appendix 4

Work experience/work placement programme*	Co-ordinated programme of work experience/work placement using schools within the City and supported by Service Heads	C Harvey	Oct 2018	Jun 2019	-	-
Legal apprenticeship *	To improve the pipeline of Legal professionals	J Thorne	Sep 2018	Dec 2018	-	-
Senior Leadership Recruitment *	Development of campaign principles to be used as required	J Thorne	Sep 2018	Oct 2018	-	-
Action	Deliverable(s)	Owner	Timeline Start	Timeline Finish	Cost £	Additional Budget Required £
Graduate Internships (funded)*	Development and implementation of a post graduate internship programme for 3 people across a number of service areas (3 – 12 months). Salary paid in line with higher level apprenticeship rates in City Council.	C Harvey	Apr 2019	Sep 2019	84k Based on 12 months)	84k
Sponsoring professional qualifications	To improve the pipeline of Service Area professionals and focusing on future City skill gaps, work with schools to develop a sponsored programme to enable a person to gain a degree qualification	C Harvey	Apr 2019	Sep 2019	£60k pa	£60k pa

### Notes:

\*Positive Action: refers to the steps employers can lawfully take to help and encourage people from certain groups who are under-represented in the workplace to apply for jobs and promotions. Whilst a range of positive action can be taken during the actual recruitment process, an employer can take a protected characteristic into account when deciding who to appoint to a job if people with that characteristic are at a disadvantage or under-represented in the employer's workforce. However, the employer would have to take the comparative merits of the other candidates into consideration before making the appointment.

\*\*Apprenticeship Levy – where recruitment activity includes the potential for a qualification to be gained it is possible that this could be funded through the levy funds

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# Appendix 5

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## Engagement Plan for Employer of Choice

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Departments: Business Improvement Communications	Plan owners: Chris Harvey/Paul Adams – HR Anita Patel/Tony Ecclestone - Comms	Last updated: 05.10.2018	Version: 1.5
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This communication plan will support: **An effective and efficient council as a corporate priority**

What are your business objectives for the communication?

⇒ To help Oxford City Council be seen as an employer of choice by current staff prospective employees and customers

This means we need:

- To be clear about our Employee Value Proposition (EVP) – what are the benefits for potential and current employees – this is not just about material benefits but our values and reasons why employees love working for Oxford. This will be important for new recruits too.
- To let our customers know what a great organisation we are to work for – will also help form their opinion if us in terms of the services we deliver and there could be prospective candidates in that group too.
- To nudge our workforce demographics to be representative of the communities we serve
- To have up to date and accurate data which allows us to deliver accurate reporting
- To increase awareness amongst our colleagues about roles we are recruiting for and encourage them to share these across their personal networks (communities)
- To increase the visibility of the diversity in our current work force to staff, prospective employees and customers
- To educate our work force about diversity and equalities in the work place.

# Appendix 5

Audience	Communications objectives?	Key messages	Channel	Commence by	Roles Responsibilities Actions	Measurement
CMT	Heads up about forthcoming communications to their teams.	In my move to be an Employer of Choice, here are the activities we are focusing on and how you as CMT members can help.	CMT	To be agreed October	Helen to ask CMT to verbally cascade to their teams	
All colleagues	<p>Make sure colleagues know that the Council is beginning a campaign to be an Employer of Choice.</p> <p>The Council is committed to equality and diversity and we need accurate data to report on this.</p> <p>Help them to update their iTrent data</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Council is committed to equality and diversity and it's one of our values.</li> <li>- To help the Council focus on the right areas for organisational development and recruitment we need up to date and accurate personal data</li> <li>- We currently report on the diversity of our work force and we don't fully represent the community we work for in terms of diversity and again we need accurate data to establish this</li> <li>- To make sure our data is correct please update your personal data on iTrent</li> <li>- <b>Here's how (a step by step guide on what to do).</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cascade via CMT</li> <li>- Email</li> <li>- Council Matters</li> <li>- Union channels</li> <li>- Team meetings</li> <li>- Leadership Lunch on 24 Oct</li> </ul>	October 2018	<p>Anita to draft email and story and work with Steve Davis (Unite) &amp; Caroline Glendening (Unison)</p> <p>Chris Harvey to provide iTrent Guide and overall sign off</p>	What number have currently updated their data vs. post the communications

# Appendix 5

All colleagues	Be an employer of choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create an Employee Value Proposition – what do they get for working here (the great work we do, benefits, opportunities)</li> <li>- Audit all employee touch points and communication, e.g. online, letters, induction etc. and define the employee journey</li> <li>- Get our people to talk about their experience of working here?</li> <li>- Explore what our brand stands for and how it is represented visually and in words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Information on our website</li> <li>- Intranet Stories</li> <li>- LinkedIn stories</li> </ul>	November 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anita to work with Paul Adams to define our proposition</li> <li>HR to audit all employee touch points</li> <li>HR to define the employee journey</li> <li>Anita to create Intranet stories</li> <li>Chris to create a longer term plan for employer of choice and the work that needs to be done.</li> </ul>	
All managers	Reminder to managers whose teams haven't yet completed their iTrent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To make sure our data is correct please update your personal data on iTrent</li> <li>- Here's how (a step by step guide on what to do).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Email</li> <li>- Leadership Lunch 24 Oct</li> </ul>	October 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paul Adams to provide all managers names</li> <li>Chris to use summary of previous email to all colleagues</li> </ul>	Change in update figures
All managers and colleagues	Help us recruit for the future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ask colleagues who are leaving to complete the online exit feedback</li> <li>- Ask managers to make sure the person leaving in their team does complete the online exit feedback</li> <li>- It's important for us to understand 'why' they are</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Intranet story</li> <li>- Email</li> </ul>	November 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anita to discuss with Paul Adams for story</li> <li>Paul Adams to define current process and how data is used.</li> </ul>	What are the current figures and then measure returns over the coming months following this communication

# Appendix 5

		leaving so we can make changes in our future recruitment campaigns if we need too.				
All colleagues	'Let's talk...'equalities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Curious about diversity and equalities?</li> <li>- What would you like to know?</li> <li>- What would you like to share?</li> </ul> <p>Recruit diversity reference group, a group were we can run ideas past and get feedback on this and other activity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use 'Let's talk...' communications channel as a way to answer people's questions</li> </ul>	November 2018	<p>Gather questions in advance to shape content via an Intranet news story - Anita</p> <p>Chris and Anita</p>	Feedback from attendees
All colleagues	We're supporting communities with job applications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Our recruitment process now includes support for those people who need it</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Intranet story</li> </ul>	December 2018	Anita and Paul to create story	
All colleagues	Work experience	<p>How we manage work experience here at the Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Outline of new structure</li> <li>- 1<sup>st</sup> WE cohort</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Intranet story</li> </ul>	<p>Jan 19</p> <p>March 19</p>	Anita and Chris to create story	
Leadership Group	Discussion about equalities and employer of choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What could we be doing more actively</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Leadership Conversation</li> <li>- Creative info gathering exercise</li> </ul>	24 October 2018	Anita, Helen, Chris and Gordon to shape the session together	Informal feedback from Leadership Group



# Appendix 5

External and Internal	Use Councillors Aziz and Chapman to share their stories.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Their cultural background</li> <li>- why they live in Oxford</li> <li>- why they do what they do</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Media launch</li> <li>- Press release</li> <li>- Short video for use for Intranet stories and Social media campaign</li> </ul>	29 October 2018	<p>Tony to draft external content.</p> <p>Anita create internal stories</p> <p>Sharon to produce internal video</p>	
All colleagues	Show the diversity within the Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This is who we are</li> <li>- Why we chose to work for the Council</li> <li>- Our background</li> <li>- What it's like to work at Oxford City Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Poster campaign under the banner of Team Oxford – including Council and ODS staff</li> <li>- Short video of colleagues incl. apprentices and ODS – to be used internally and via social media</li> </ul>	<p>October 2018</p> <p>November 2018</p>	<p>Ask for volunteers who would like to take part in the campaign – via Council Matters for OCC and Text for ODS colleagues</p> <p>Create a poster campaign – define messages to appear on posters</p> <p>Create a video campaign, draft questions to ask colleagues.</p>	
Oxford residents	Show the diversity within the Council?	<p>Create an infographic/advert:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Visual line up – What do these people have in common?</li> <li>- They all work for the Council</li> <li>- An insight into our people and how they work with the Oxford community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tenants in Touch</li> <li>- Your Oxford Spring 2019</li> <li>- Internet</li> <li>- Facebook</li> <li>- Twitter</li> <li>- Instagram</li> <li>- News releases</li> </ul>	<p>November onwards 2018</p> <p>Deadline for winter Tenants in Touch is 16 November (Justine Longford)</p>	<p>Tony to draft story for sign off</p> <p>Tony to talk to Paul Adams about Your Oxford content</p>	

# Appendix 5

All colleagues	Equalities week programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Come along and leave with a deeper understanding of diversity and equalities</li> <li>- Promote training programme and benefits.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Face to face</li> <li>- Intranet story</li> </ul>	Jan 2019	Anita, Chris, Paul, Helen to develop and implement	
Trade press for Planning	Offer content to the major professional planning and property magazines aimed at enhancing diverse recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- That diversity of the population has historically been under represented in the planning profession (including OCC) but that Employer of Choice offers an opportunity for the Council to be more representative</li> <li>- Promote the apprenticeship scheme in planning.</li> <li>- Highlight opportunities to work in the Property team</li> </ul>	<p>The Planner: <a href="https://www.theplanner.co.uk/">https://www.theplanner.co.uk/</a></p> <p>Planning Resource: <a href="https://www.planningresource.co.uk/">https://www.planningresource.co.uk/</a></p> <p>Property titles</p>	November 2018 onwards	Tony to create content  There may be some costs associated with paid for coverage – to be met by Planning and Property	
All colleagues	We're investing in specialisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- We're sponsoring professional qualifications</li> <li>- Investing in our future</li> <li>- Brookes development opportunity for BAME candidates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Intranet story</li> <li>- Use <b>Let's talk...</b> to talk about future proofing session</li> </ul>	April 2019	Internal Communications to manage Let's talk session  Chris to share information and intranet story	

## APPENDIX 6: ANALYSIS OF GRADE DISTRIBUTION BY SEX & DISABILITY

### Distribution by Grade and Sex

<b>Summary (City Council)</b>	<b>Female</b>		<b>Male</b>	
	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>
Gr 3 to 7	303	76%	182	65%
Gr 8 to 11	85	21%	79	28%
Above Gr 11	6	2%	15	5%

<b>Summary (Direct Services)</b>	<b>Female</b>		<b>Male</b>	
	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>
Gr 3 to 7	65	87%	378	66%
Gr 8 to 11	6	8%	28	5%
Above Gr 11	0		6	1%

The grades detailed above have been used for comparison as these are common to both organisations. There is a significantly higher number of female staff in Direct Services on Grades 3 to 8 (87%) compared to the City Council (76%). However, only 8% of female staff within Direct Services are employed in a role between Grade 8 and 11, which contrasts with 21% in the City Council. There are no female staff within Direct Services are employed in a role above Grade 11, and only 2% of female staff in the City Council. (Direct Services has some 170 staff on craft grades with only 4 female staff employed on these grades).

A more detailed analysis is provided in the tables below: -

**City Council - Distribution by Grade and Sex**

Grade	Female		Male		Total
	No	%	No	%	
Business Admin Apprentice	4	1.0%	4	1.4%	8
Grade 03	23	5.8%	12	4.3%	35
Grade 04	36	9.0%	18	6.4%	54
Grade 05	99	24.9%	35	12.5%	134
Grade 06	76	19.1%	50	17.9%	126
Grade 07	69	17.3%	67	23.9%	136
Grade 08	39	9.8%	41	14.6%	80
Grade 09	30	7.5%	17	6.1%	47
Grade 10	7	1.8%	10	3.6%	17
Grade 11	9	2.3%	11	3.9%	20
Service Manager +			2	0.7%	2
Business Lead	2	0.5%	6	2.1%	8
Service Head	4	1.0%	3	1.1%	7
SH Level 1			1	0.4%	1
Directors			2	0.7%	2
Chief Exec			1	0.4%	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>398</b>		<b>280</b>		<b>678</b>

**Direct Services - Distribution by Grade and Sex**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Female</b>		<b>Male</b>		<b>Total</b>
Business Admin Apprentice	1		1		2
Electricians Apprentices Yr. 1			3		3
Electricians Apprentices Yr. 2			4		4
Electricians Apprentices Yr. 3			1		1
Electricians Apprentices Yr. 4			2		2
Gen'l Trades Apprentices Yr. 1			2		2
Gen'l Trades Apprentices Yr. 2			1		1
Plumbers Apprentices Yr. 3			1		1
Craft Worker Band C	1		2		3
Craft Worker Band D			16		16
Craft Worker Band E			47		47
Craft Worker Band F	1		41		42
Craft Worker Band G			10		10
Craft Worker Band H	1		33		34
Grade 03	9	12.0%	22	3.8%	31
Grade 04	13	17.3%	174	30.2%	187
Grade 05	19	25.3%	103	17.9%	122
Grade 06	16	21.3%	57	9.9%	73
Grade 07	8	10.7%	22	3.8%	30
Grade 08	4	5.3%	11	1.9%	15
Grade 09	1	1.3%	13	2.3%	14
Grade 10	1	1.3%	3	0.5%	4
Grade 11			1	0.2%	1
Service Head +			1	0.2%	1
Business Lead			4	0.7%	4
SH Level 1			1	0.2%	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>75</b>		<b>576</b>		<b>651</b>

## Distribution by Grade and Disability

### Summary (City Council)

<b>Grade</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>
Gr 3 to 7	40	74%
Gr 8 to 11	14	26%
Above Gr 11	0	0%

### Summary (Direct Services)

<b>Grade</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>
Gr 3 to 7	27	64%
Gr 8 to 11	4	10%
Above Gr 11	1	2%

The grades detailed above have been used for comparison as these are common to both organisations. There is a significantly higher number of disabled staff in the City Council on Grades 3 to 8 (74%) compared to Direct Services (64%). 26% of disabled staff in the City Council are employed in a role between Grade 8 and 11, which contrasts with 10% within Direct Services. There are no members of staff in the City Council employed in a role above Grade 11 with a declared disability, and only 1 employee within Direct Services. (Direct Services has some 10 staff on craft grades with a declared disability).

A more detailed analysis is provided in the tables below: -

**City Council - Distribution by Grade and Disability**

<b>City Council Grade</b>	<b>Disabled</b>
Grade 03	3
Grade 04	5
Grade 05	11
Grade 06	11
Grade 07	10
Grade 08	10
Grade 09	2
Grade 10	1
Grade 11	1
<b>Total:</b>	<b>54</b>

**Direct Services - Distribution by Grade and Disability**

<b>Direct Services Grade</b>	<b>Disabled</b>
General Trades Apprentices Yr. 1	1
Craft Worker Band E	1
Craft Worker Band F	4
Craft Worker Band G	2
Craft Worker Band H	2
Grade 03	4
Grade 04	8
Grade 05	8
Grade 06	5
Grade 07	2
Grade 08	1
Grade 09	3
Business Lead	1
<b>Total:</b>	<b>42</b>

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