

Cabinet response to recommendations of the Housing and Homelessness Panel made on 03/09/2020 concerning a presentation made by Oxford Tenants Union regarding the Impact of Covid-19 on the Private Rented Sector

Provided by the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery, Councillor Alex Hollingsworth

Recommendation	Agree?	Comment
1) That the Council uses its existing channels of communication, particularly social media, to share information on tenants' rights and advice relevant to the pandemic and seeks to use its existing links with local community groups to improve access to that information amongst non-English speaking groups or those with English as a second language	Agree	Social media and press releases will continue to be used as a vehicle to promote the rights of tenants in the private rented sector in the pandemic. Community engagement is a key part of the consultation exercise underway for Additional and Selective Licensing and will be used to improve communication regarding
2) That the Council develops a plan for how it could increase homelessness prevention capacity at short notice in the event of an eviction spike, and reviews the effectiveness of its current provision in light of Covid-enforced changes to ways of working.	Agree	In early Summer a new Covid-19 Homelessness taskforce was put together made up of council staff from a range of departments, in order to plan for any future wave of homelessness brought on by the pandemic and rising unemployment. This group continues to consider the emerging evidence and make changes to services to maximise homelessness prevention.
3) That the Council takes whatever measures it has at its disposal, including environmental health enforcement powers, to reduce the number of unsafe homes being let out to tenants before winter arrives.	Agree	This work is underway with checks on suspected unlicensed HMOs, compliance inspections for licence conditions and visits to non-HMOs having recommenced. However, all visits requiring entry are now planned and booked in advance, which has restricted the ability to pursue enforcement action to secure improvements. The changes in working practices have been necessary to protect the health of officers and members of the public.
4) That the Council gathers information from landlords and tenants on the pressures and challenges arising from Covid, and in its existing communications with landlords promotes good	Agree	Officers are in regular dialogue with landlords, agents and tenants about the issues they are facing through Covid. This is through tenants and landlords contacting the enforcement teams and the tenancy relations officer. A

<p>practice in the Covid-environment, highlighting the risks of failing to follow good practice.</p>		<p>letter is being sent out to every HMO in Oxford in the week commencing 12th October regarding Covid. This will promote best practice and advice on legal compliance. It will also be promoted by emailing it to letting agents and landlords and asking them to circulate it to tenants in their properties.</p> <p>We will be continually keeping the situation under review, particularly in light of announcements from the government or the Director of Public Health.</p>
<p>5) That the Council works with local housing support and advice organisations to draft a letter on the need for government to introduce practical policy changes to increase protection for renters, to include consideration of ending section 21 evictions and the need for a rent-freeze policy, and for the Leader to send the agreed letter to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government</p>	<p>In part</p>	<p>We have already sent such a letter to Government regarding these issues, in particular when we responded to the consultation on Section 21 evictions. As such it is considered too soon to write to the Government again. We will however continue to look for ways to lobby the Government on our own and with partner organisations to make the maximum impact.</p>

Cabinet response to recommendations of the Housing and Homelessness Panel made on 03/09/2020 Housing Performance Q1 Provided by the Cabinet Member for Affordable Housing, Councillor Mike Rowley

Recommendation	Agree?	Comment
1) That the Council commits to continuing to provide emergency accommodation to rough sleepers over the winter period, including those with no recourse to public funds.	Yes	<p>Members have recently been circulated a briefing on the council's Severe Weather Emergency Protocol which ensures accommodation is available over winter to anyone who is rough sleeping when temperatures drop to zero or below. All rough sleepers are eligible for this, whether they have a local connection or not, or have recourse to public funds or not.</p> <p>The council and its partners will work to find longer term solutions for all people who are rough sleeping, although this is more challenging for people with no recourse to public funds as they are unable to claim Housing Benefit or Universal Credit.</p>
2) That the Council carries out a gender breakdown regarding who has been housed through the 'Everybody In' scheme to enable a more detailed understanding of the gendered impact of homelessness during Covid-19.	Yes	<p>This work has been undertaken and reported to panel members. The gender breakdown for people accommodated under "Everyone In" is 48 Female (18.4%) / 213 Male (81.6%).</p>
3) That the Council reviews the suitability of its emergency accommodation to those rough sleepers who have specific vulnerabilities and ensures the needs arising from those vulnerabilities are provided for	Yes	<p>Prior to accessing emergency accommodation a detailed assessment is undertaken of rough sleepers so that vulnerabilities can be identified, and catered for. St Mungo's manage our emergency accommodation and have experience of dealing with people with complex needs in Oxford and elsewhere, and do so sensitively taking both a psychologically informed, and trauma informed approach to this work. Some residents will need specialist support which St Mungo's can't provide (e.g. Substance misuse, mental health) but in such cases they</p>

		will work with other agencies and organisations to facilitate access to appropriate services.
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Cabinet response to recommendations of the Housing and Homelessness Panel made on 05/11/2020 concerning the Rough Sleeping Update report

Provided by the Cabinet Member for Affordable Housing, Councillor Mike Rowley

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Agree?</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1) That the Council makes, as a matter of urgency, a public statement to clarify its position that it will provide emergency accommodation to all rough sleepers, including those without recourse to public funds, and that individuals receiving such support will not have their details passed to any immigration agency.	Yes	<p>Members have recently been circulated a briefing on the council's Severe Weather Emergency Protocol which ensures accommodation is available over winter to anyone who is rough sleeping when temperatures drop to zero or below. All rough sleepers are eligible for this, whether they have a local connection or not, or have recourse to public funds or not.</p> <p>The council and its partners will work to find longer term solutions for all people who are rough sleeping, although this is more challenging for people with no recourse to public funds as they are unable to claim Housing Benefit or Universal Credit.</p> <p>Whilst the council does not proactively pass details of individuals to immigration authorities, it will need to comply with any current or new statutory duties.</p>

Cabinet response to recommendations of the Finance and Performance Panel made on 29/09/2020 concerning the Performance Monitoring 2020/21 Q1 report

Provided by Cabinet Member for Customer Focused Services, Councillor Nigel Chapman

Recommendation	Agree?	Comment
1) <i>That in the setting of its corporate performance measures for next year, the Council introduces targets for short and long-term sickness levels.</i>	Partially	Whilst it is clearly important to monitor long and short term absence and manage it effectively and persistently, It is not considered that introducing individual <u>targets</u> for long and short term absence would be realistic or help to manage absence. Numbers of long term cases can vary and are unpredictable. It is however proposed that there is regular <u>reporting and monitoring</u> of absence, split by long and short term absence, which would help to identify patterns or trends. It would also be useful to report on COVID and non-COVID related absences to see if the former drives up overall sickness levels.
2) <i>That the Council investigates ways of measuring and monitoring productivity which take homeworking and the variable suitability of homeworking environments into account.</i>	Not agreed	This is already in hand. One of the first actions arising from the recently developed People Strategy is to ensure that managers are well equipped to manage staff in a remote environment. This involves ensuring staff health and wellbeing, guarding against feelings of isolation from colleagues, managing performance and supporting staff with relevant training and equipment. There is an existing management and appraisal process in operation, which in effect monitors how productive staff are and will capture evidence of any drop in / increase in productive work as a result of more home based working. All of this is to ensure effective service delivery and meeting of Council objectives.

Cabinet response to recommendations of the Finance and Performance Panel made on 29/09/2020 concerning the Integrated Performance Report 2020/21 Q1 report

Provided by Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management, Councillor Ed Turner

Recommendation	Agree?	Comment
1) <i>That the Council ceases to net off uncertainty over its capital programme through the use of an optimism bias, and instead uses an aggregation of the level of risks given to each project in the budget to present the proportion of that figure over which the Council is uncertain of delivery.</i>	Yes	The Council will in future cease to make use of optimism bias calculations in its capital monitoring reporting and look to introduce a risk rating assessment of each project.
2) <i>That in its treatment of variance from budgeted capital spends the Council delineates the impact of increased costs and slippage.</i>	Yes	Generally slippage will be reported as a 'favourable variance' i.e reduced budget against the original budget in year because the budget is 'slipped' into the following year. On some occasions the budget is brought forward from future years if spend is in advance of the amount budgeted in year. This appears as increased budget or an 'adverse variance'. In some instances the in-year budget is increased due to overspends and in future these will be differentiated from budget that is simply brought forward.

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