

## Chapter 4 – Supporting Communities – helping people with housing

Many people in Oxford need help with finding or keeping settled, secure or safe housing. Our strategic objectives of increasing choice and mobility, reducing homelessness, improving services and improving the environment on estates reflect what is already happening and what further support is needed. This chapter focuses on those people and how we tackle these issues with our partners. Details of what more needs to be done and what we plan to do by 2008 are set out at the end of each short section.

What are the problems facing homeless people and how do we support them?

Constraints on land supply and affordability result in high rates of homelessness. Homeless people do not always contact the Council for help – a small minority have problems because of alcohol, drugs or mental illness. It is important to support people in this situation to prevent their health worsening and to discourage anti social activities such as aggressive begging and street drinking.

People who sleep rough

Outreach work with Rough Sleepers is of a high standard and effective in keeping the number of people sleeping rough down to single figures. People who sleep rough are encouraged to use hostels and day centres and to accept health treatment to help them rebuild their lives. Good practice in this area is recognised nationally and is now being applied to homeless families in Oxford. ODPM funding for outreach and move-on projects and the voluntary sector direct-access hostels has been and continues to be vital for the success this work.

People who have been homeless in the past

We have developed systems to identify households who become homeless more than once within two years and are likely to be in particular need of support to break the cycle of homelessness. Seven households fell into this category in the period to March 2004 and their circumstances have been investigated to identify reasons and support needs.

We used the HRS to find out more about the reasons why people become homeless. 65 people said they had been homeless in the past. One third of them said they were homeless because of family problems, a fifth because of medical problems and a fifth because of drug and alcohol problems. They used hostels or bed and breakfast accommodation, stayed with friends or family or slept rough.

This told us that mechanisms/ advice need to be in place to help people to deal with problems that may be short-term or personal, rather than true housing problems.

People who are at risk of homelessness

We try to prevent families becoming homeless through the Families at Risk of Homelessness (FAROH) Group which regularly reviews the circumstances of tenants at risk of losing their tenancies and puts support measures in place.

Our Homechoice scheme has prevented over 100 households from becoming homeless by intervening to ensure they do not lose their present home or help them straight into a private sector tenancy by offering guarantees to the landlord.

## Single homeless people

Single homeless people with complex needs do not receive the support they need. Across Oxfordshire, district councils cannot accommodate single homeless people moving on from hostels.

What more needs to be done?

Homes for All sets a target of halving homelessness by 2010. This is very challenging. If it is to be achieved, we will have to continue our work on preventing homelessness, increase the supply of affordable (especially social rented) housing and find more imaginative ways of settling people in the private sector. We will use what we have learned about why people become homeless to design services better.

We will commission a new housing advice service. Three adjoining district councils have agreed to commission the same service for their areas.

Services to rough sleepers must be maintained but this is only possible if funding from ODPM continues.

We will continue to work with the Supporting People Commissioning Body to seek adequate funding and support for single homeless people, especially those with complex needs or ready to move-on from hostels.

Representations will continue to be made at local and regional levels on the need for the need to coordinate capital funding for supported housing with revenue funding from Supporting People.

What will we do by 2008 to meet our objectives to reduce homelessness and improve services?

| Action   | Objective number |
|--|------------------|
| Continue to prevent homelessness and work towards the 2010 target to halve the number of households in temporary accommodation   | 5                |
| Continue to bid for funding to maintain our rough sleeping services  | 9                |
| Work with the Supporting People Commissioning Body to seek adequate funding and support for single homeless people, especially those with complex needs or ready to move-on from hostels | 6                |
| Introduce our housing advice service in April 2005 and monitor its performance   | 6                |
| Start working with OSP to achieve the common objectives in the Community and Homelessness Strategies   | 5                |

What are the problems facing young people and how do we support them?

Joint protocols are being developed with Social and Health Care and the Youth Offending Team to ensure that vulnerable and homeless young people receive accommodation and support as required by Homelessness legislation. Supported accommodation and floating support schemes are available for single teenage parents and the pattern of demand is monitored in conjunction with the Primary Care Trust (PCT).

For young people leaving the "looked after" system (formerly "in care"), we have close links with Connexions to ensure that young people have a direct route to advice about their housing options and to homeless services if necessary.

Through Sure Start in Rose Hill, we are contributing to improvements in health and education for young children in one of the most deprived areas of Oxford.

Under the Children Act 1989, the County Council was supporting a total of 177 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. On reaching 18 years of age, if they continue to have leave to remain they are eligible for benefits and social housing. As far as possible, the council avoids making these young people homeless, preferring to help them remain in their accommodation with the assistance of housing benefit.

What more needs to be done?

Previous attempts to set up a foyer for young people were unsuccessful. Now we know more about how difficult it is for employees moving into the area to find housing they can afford, it is clear that providing some form of residential support to vulnerable young people would help us to provide employment and housing for the local workforce.

More work is needed to ensure that asylum-seeking children with leave to remain have access to advice and assistance to make the transition to independent living as they reach adulthood.

What will we do for young people by 2008 to meet our objective to reduce homelessness?

| Action   | Objective number |
|--|------------------|
| Work with the PCT to facilitate progress towards the national target of support for teenage parents  | 6                |
| Investigate the possibility of providing greater residential support for vulnerable young people   | 6                |
| Work with Oxfordshire County Council on further homelessness prevention measures for previously unaccompanied asylum seeking children who have leave to remain and have reached age 18 | 5                |

What are the problems facing older people and people with disabilities and how do we support them?

Social rented sheltered accommodation is available throughout Oxford but in many cases does not meet modern standards and expectations.

Tenants who live in sheltered accommodation and need help with the cost of support services (such as warden services) access this through Supporting People funding, which is already under pressure.

Older and disabled people can receive personal and continuous support through: a mobile warden service to the Council's sheltered housing tenants, an emergency alarm service to elderly and disabled clients living in the private sector, a relief mobile warden service for local housing associations, an out of hours contact service for Environmental Health, Homelessness and two neighbouring local authorities. The Control Centre also addresses community safety issues by monitoring the safety of Council staff working alone by monitoring their safety and also houses CCTV monitoring equipment for the tower blocks.

We have started a review of sheltered accommodation supply, demand, standards and support needs. The review will be widened to include RSL stock and data on health needs. This may lead to some blocks being considered for alternative uses, releasing Supporting People funding for other services.

What more needs to be done?

We will work with the SHOP partners to complete the Sheltered Review.

We will go on to develop a housing strategy for older people, taking into account evidence of needs and preferences from the HRS, the principles of the Department of Health's National Framework for Older People and opportunities for assistive technology.

What will we do by 2008 to meet our objectives of improving housing and support services and developing housing strategy?

| Action   | Objective number |
|--|------------------|
| Complete the city-wide review of need and provision of sheltered accommodation | 6                |
| Develop a housing strategy for Older People                                    | 8                |

What are the problems facing Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities and how do we support them?

Substantial Black, Asian and Chinese communities have grown up within Oxford and the Council has begun to develop services to ensure that the housing needs of these communities can be met.

- The Language Line telephone interpretation service was introduced in July 2002 to assist personal callers whose first language is not English. Usage has increased year on year.
- Houseproud Oxford promotes the equity release scheme in a range of languages and media to broaden awareness and access to the scheme.
- Using research on the needs of BME homeless people in Oxford carried out by Salford University with financial support from the Housing Corporation we published good practice guides on BME housing strategies and management and access to hostels in March 2005.
- The Council has responded to the Lawrence Inquiry and Race Relations Amendment Act by improving staff awareness and procedures for reporting racist incidents.

What more needs to be done?

The council's tenant participation structure has not been representative of Oxford's BME groups. Plans are being developed to encourage BME tenants to participate either in area-based or special interest groups and to engage with them through other organisations and partners.

The 2004 "Status" survey found that the satisfaction of BME tenants with landlord services was lower than the satisfaction level of council tenants in general. This needs to be overcome. The HRA Business Plan looks at ways of improving service to BME tenants.

BME households are disproportionately represented in those accepted as homeless and research is under way to find out more about BME experiences of homelessness. The HRS findings on BME households need further study to show how services might need to change to ensure their housing needs are addressed.

We collect data on lettings in our own stock to BME households but it is not analysed fully: we will improve monitoring of lettings to BME households in our own stock to comply with the CRE<sup>23</sup> code of guidance.

We also need look at how our approach to allocations and development can meet the needs of different age groups and ethnic groups and offer opportunities for households seeking home ownership including Sharia-compliant mortgages.

These issues can be reviewed and developed as part of a BME housing strategy. For this and the other planned strategies relating to specific groups, it will be important to ensure that, like the main strategy, they are regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure delivery against the right priorities.

What will we do by 2008 to meet our objectives of improving housing and support services and developing housing strategy?

| Action  | Objective number |
|---|------------------|
| Develop BME Housing Strategy and set a timetable for implementation                                   | 8                |
| We will continue work on the tenant participation action plan to involve more BME tenants.            | 6                |
| Monitor, review and deliver against the various sub-strategies (BME, older people, HRA Business Plan) | 8                |

How safe do our residents feel and what are we doing to help them feel safer?

Our 2001 Crime and Disorder Audit identified housing-related causes of crime including: quality of accommodation, social exclusion and fear of crime.

We are helping to address these and deliver the Community Safety Strategy through:

- Improved security work to void properties
- Youth diversion through sporting projects to reduce vandalism and anti-social behaviour
- Improved security in private sector stock to make it less vulnerable to burglary ("target hardening")
- Allowing Estate Managers to focus on tenancy and estate-based issues and spend more time on their estates.
- Reducing repeat offending through a training and housing advice project for prisoners at Bullingdon prison

The majority of these projects have been initiated by Oxford Safer Communities Partnership which maintains close working links with SHOP as both groups act as ambition groups for the OSP.

The Council's dedicated Crime and Nuisance Action team (CANACT), established in November 2001 has steadily developed its role and support for the community. Recent achievements include:

- Success in closing down drug houses which has been effective in healing disrupted communities (this work pre-dated the national policy in the Anti-Social Behaviour Act)
- Dealing with antisocial behaviour on mixed tenure estates through joint working with local RSLs
- Over 85% of Acceptable Behaviour Contracts and Parental Control Agreements have been effective

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<sup>23</sup> Council for Racial Equality

- Developing tailored protocols for information-sharing on casework between partner agencies
- Launch of the street warden service in March 2003 for four Oxford estates (Blackbird Leys, Northfield Brook, Rose Hill and Littlemore. The wardens are working effectively with local housing teams: dumped rubbish and abandoned vehicles are removed more promptly, residents feel more confident using local shops and amenities without feeling intimidated.
- Funding obtained for a drugs worker to assist enforcement work and improve opportunities for support and rehabilitation.
- Cases successfully concluded (see table below).

Table 12: levels of success in the CANAcT caseload:

|   | 2002/3  | 2003/4 |
|---|---------|--------|
| Anti-social behaviour orders  | 1       | 3      |
| Parental Control Agreements   | 5       | 3      |
| Acceptable Behaviour Contracts                                      | Over 40 | 76     |
| Cases resolved and concluded  | 80      | 154    |
| Number of possession orders on the grounds of anti-social behaviour | 6       | 11     |
| Total cases   | 110     | 204    |

(Note: the number of measurable outcomes does not equal the total number of cases because some began or ended outside a single year)

What more needs to be done?

Goals for CANAcT are:

- To develop a 5-year incremental expansion and sustainability plan for the street warden service, aligned with the role of Police Community Support Officers.
- To formalise anti-social behaviour policy with Housing Services to comply with the Anti-Social Behaviour Act
- To review the Crime strategy target to identify a more effective measure of the level of anti-social behaviour
- To develop CANAcT's service in the sub-region by extending it to RSLs in adjoining districts in Oxfordshire.
- To continue to maximise the effective use of ASBO's and other methods of controlling antisocial behaviour.

We also want to extend the street warden service to serve all large council estates.

What will we do by 2008 to meet our objective to improve the environment on estates and in areas of decline?

| Action   | Objective number |
|--|------------------|
| We will extend the street warden service to Barton and Wood Farm estates in 2005/6.    | 7                |
| Enable people to live without fear of intimidation by working towards the CANAcT goals | 7                |

I can't afford to buy on the open market – what can you do for me?

### Key workers

We understand that some jobs are particularly important for running local services. Government funding has been able to help people in some jobs to buy a home outright or through shared ownership.

43 public sector workers were assisted in Oxford during 2002/3 by Key Start Homes through these government initiatives<sup>24</sup>, increasing to 131 in 2003/4. Funding is available at present for 153 units through the Key Worker Living Programme.

Oxford City & County Councils acted to improve staff stability and continuity of service delivery by negotiating a Local Public Service Agreement (PSA) signed with ODPM in February 2003 to assist 22 key public sector employees with house purchase over three years.

With our partners we have completed research to find out more about the needs and characteristics of key workers so that better plans can be developed to meet their needs.

What more needs to be done?

Clear planning policies about key workers are needed to guide private developers.

It is difficult for the Council to provide housing for key workers at the expense of people in housing need so we will look at other ways of helping key workers.

We will also investigate whether applicants for housing could be helped as key workers.

We also wish to research financial models to assist public sector key workers into sub-market rental schemes enabling them to build up savings and move on to home ownership but this would be subject to funding being available.

What will we do by 2008 to meet our objective to improve the affordability of housing in Oxford?

| Action   | Objective number |
|--|------------------|
| Investigate interest from private sector employers to participate in a PSA-style scheme to assist their own key workers  | 2                |
| Assess opportunities for affordable housing and key worker housing to be developed through Housing Corporation grant to private sector developers without losing the wider community benefits of our RSL development partnership | 2                |
| Develop a Supplementary Planning Document on conversions, key workers and affordable housing mix.  | 8                |
| Develop housing policies for key workers, including a local definition of key, "essential" workers   | 2                |

I can't afford to rent privately or buy. What can you do for me?

Help with a deposit

Often, people can manage to pay rent to a private landlord, but cannot get enough extra money together for a deposit or may not have references to convince a landlord that they are a good risk. The Lord Mayor's Deposit Guarantee Scheme can help people in this situation to get a tenancy. Please see appendix 9 for more information.

<sup>24</sup> Starter Home Initiative, Challenge Fund

## Getting and keeping a council or housing association home

We offer council tenancies and nominate applicants on our housing register to housing associations. New tenants on low incomes can claim housing benefit to help with the rent and in many cases we can offer a furnished tenancy, providing furniture and carpets chosen by the tenant. Where a new tenant is known to need extra help to live independently we work with health and social care agencies to get support.

## Making sure homes are offered fairly

Priority for rehousing is assessed by a points scheme. Offers of council housing or nominations to RSL tenancies are made from the housing register based on the priority awarded. We check that every offer of a council tenancy is made to the household with highest priority. RSL lettings are monitored on a quarterly basis to ensure that agreed levels of nominations are offered to applicants from different groups such as homeless households and existing tenants in need of a transfer.

## Standards in council and housing association homes

Our improvement plan for OBS to achieve a three star standard of service by March 2007 will mean better maintenance services for tenants.

In order to secure good quality service for RSL tenants, housing management performance and equality policies were included in the selection criteria for the council's preferred development partners.

## What else needs to be done?

We want to increase the choice available to tenants and prospective tenants. This will be a considerable challenge when the relatively low number of council and housing association homes that become vacant each year is compared with the number of people in housing need. We aim to have a local Choice-based letting (CBL) scheme in place by 2010 but this is dependent on funds being available for the computer systems that will be needed. We will use our county-wide partnerships to investigate how sub-regional CBL might be introduced.

What will we do by 2008 to meet our objectives to increase opportunities for choice and mobility and improve housing and support services?

| Action  | Objective number |
|---|------------------|
| We will continue to:  |                  |
| • Support the Lord Mayor's Deposit Guarantee Scheme   | 3                |
| • Offer furnished tenancies to new Council tenants  | 3                |
| • Monitor RSL lettings  | 6                |
| • Check the fairness of our own tenancy offers  | 6                |
| We will continue with the OBS improvement plan to achieve three star standard by March 2007 | 6                |
| We will introduce CBL by 2010   | 3                |



So what else are we doing for our communities as a whole?

Help with housing costs and money problems

We help tenants on low incomes with their rent by paying housing benefit.

Service improvements have been made through:

- Increased staff recruitment
- Staff training
- Accelerating a computer replacement programme
- Measures to assist staff retention
- Liaison meetings with advice agencies

*Table 13: Housing benefit performance indicators 2002 – 5*

|  | 2002 - 3 | 2003 - 4 | Target 2003<br>– 4 | 2004 - 5               |
|--|----------|----------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Average time to process new claims (days)              | 77       | 55.6     | 59                 | <b>To be confirmed</b> |
| Average time to process changes of circumstance (days) | 41       | 28.3     | 28                 |                        |
| Percentage of renewals determined on time              | 30.32    | 44.62    | 65                 |                        |
| Accuracy of processing                                 | 86.8%    | 93.2%    | 95%                | 99%                    |

We can pay Discretionary Housing Payments to top up housing benefit in certain circumstances. The aims of the scheme are:

|  |
|--|
| <p>To distribute funding granted under the discretionary housing payment scheme in an equitable way to meet given criteria, and to promote the following objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• alleviate poverty;</li> <li>• support vulnerable young people in the transition to adult life;</li> <li>• encourage Oxford City residents to seek and retain employment;</li> <li>• safeguard Oxford City residents in their homes;</li> <li>• help those who are trying to help themselves;</li> <li>• keep families together;</li> <li>• support the vulnerable in the local community;</li> <li>• help claimants through personal crises and difficult events.</li> </ul> |
| To ensure as far as possible all customers are made aware of the availability of discretionary housing payments  |
| To ensure central government funding for payments is spent in full without incurring additional spending that will need to be met from the general fund.   |

Further information is available from the Revenues and Benefits Business Unit or from Customer Service Officers at city council public information points.

We realise that people may be at risk of becoming homeless if they have money problems so we pay a grant to the Citizens Advice Bureau to give money advice.

We are working with the LSP to set up a credit union to help people who have difficulty getting loans.

## Help from councillors

Councillors have contributed to new ways of working with communities:

- Ward councillors now meet in Area Committees and have a budget available for local environmental improvements
- Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee has held meetings in local venues to consider issues relating to East Oxford and the Rose Hill Orbits.

## Help with free advice

The Council has produced:

- short information leaflets on homelessness and allocations services to replace the cumbersome allocations policy booklet
- a Homeless Survival guide, giving details of a wide range of services and advice that a homeless person could access.
- A Good Landlord Guide to advise prospective landlords on legal and practical aspects of letting a home.

The Council continues to provide wide access to services and information through the local service shops, local housing offices, regular housing surgeries and the housing repairs contact centre.

## What else needs to be done?

We need to make it easier and less confusing for people to be able to get the right information or to contact the right person in the Council. We have worked out a customer contact strategy to do this.

What will we do by 2008 to meet our objective to improve housing and support services?

| Action   | Objective number |
|--|------------------|
| We will continue to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improve speed and accuracy of processing housing benefit applications</li></ul>   | 6                |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Make discretionary housing payments</li></ul>  | 6                |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide support and advice through grant funding of agencies and producing publications</li></ul>  | 6                |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support the development of a city-wide credit union by December 2005 to enable people with financial problems to access fair financial services (this is a Community Strategy objective)</li></ul> | 6                |
| Make it easier to contact the council through implementing our customer contact strategy   | 6                |

I live in Oxford. How can I get new information and influence Council policy?

## Publications

The Council continues to communicate regularly with its own tenants through the quarterly newsletter Tenants' Issue. The newsletter includes news on topics ranging

from policy changes to estate activity and tests satisfaction with services and initiatives.

Your Oxford magazine is delivered to all residents and gives news and information on all aspects of the Council's work.

Council website

Information about all official council meetings and councillors can found on [www.oxford.gov.uk](http://www.oxford.gov.uk)

Oxford Tenants Panel (OTP) and Talkback Citizens Panel

The Panel was set up in 2003. Its main aims are to improve two-way communication and to give council tenants and leaseholders a means of making their views known. Every tenants and residents association that receives a grant from the council has the right to be represented on the Panel. Representatives from the Panel sit on Housing Scrutiny Committee and the Housing Advisory Board.

Tenants' views are also sought through the twice-yearly Talkback surveys. The number of tenant members of the Talkback panel was boosted to ensure the group was large enough for their responses to be statistically meaningful.

Tenants and Residents Associations

Tenants get involved in improving their estates by participating in a growing number of tenants' associations with help from the Tenant Support Worker and Council grants.

Tenant representatives also participate regularly in project groups to review and develop service areas and policies. As tenants are involved from the outset, they influence the process as well as the final outcome. A recent example of such a project is consultation on proposals to increase tenants' responsibility for minor repairs which generated a high level of interest (25.87% of tenants). Exemption criteria built into the policy took account of tenants' responses.

A resource centre and additional staff support for tenants' and residents' associations are under discussion at present.

The Tenant Participation team can be contacted on 01865 252706.

Area Committees

Ward councillors meet to decide matters that affect their local areas in six area committees. Members of the public are encouraged to attend and make their views known. They can help decide how environmental improvement budgets are spent.

Take part in surveys and consultation

We rely on the cooperation of residents to get up to date information through stock condition and housing needs and other surveys and are grateful to those who give up their time. We carefully select trustworthy companies to do this work.

What more do we plan to do?

| <b>Action</b>   | <b>Objective number</b> |
|---|-------------------------|
| We will continue to monitor and develop the ways residents can make views known using feedback and suggestions we receive | 6                       |
| We will work with Oxford Tenants' Panel to develop appropriate support for tenants and residents' associations            | 6                       |

## Round up of key messages and actions and links to priorities

Many different communities and groups in Oxford need help with housing in a variety of ways. We have described in the sections above what we are doing and what we plan to do to provide that help, based on our strategic housing objectives.

The timescale, priority and measure of success for each action are shown in the action plan at Appendix 1.

## Chapter 5 - Money Matters

The financial decisions that the Council makes for housing and housing support services are guided by Oxford's two key policy aims which are described in earlier chapters: to deliver 150 units of social housing per year and to reach the Decent Homes Standard for the Council stock by 2010. This chapter shows how funding has been used in the past three years, what has been achieved and how funding is planned to meet these two main policy aims over the period to 2008.

This chapter concentrates on the private sector and housing provided through RSLs but information about the Council stock is included to give a complete picture of expenditure on housing. Detailed financial information about the Council stock is covered in the HRA Business Plan.

### How spending is planned - budget setting and business planning

The Council plans ahead by setting 3 year rolling revenue budgets (e.g. plans for 2007- 8 were agreed in February 2005) and currently has a 5 year capital programme.

At the heart of the budget setting and business planning system it is assumed that the Council's business managers will produce business plans that will cost a predetermined sum of money to deliver and that inflation should not result in any increase in spending. They have achieved this for the 2004/5 budget, and for the 2005/6 budget in spite of the rate of pension contributions rising by 3.3%. For the 2005/6 budget, the business managers submitted proposals to meet their cash limits, new ideas for spend to save, bids for additional projects and put forward capital schemes. These proposals were considered by the Executive Board and prioritised against the vision. This produced a budget for consultation. Following consultation the budgets were revised for presentation to Council in February 2005.

The consultation covered the Council's whole budget but mainly focussed on changes in service and options for future spending and savings. Consultation started with a focus group day for members of the public, and included consultation with tenants, area committees and local businesses. In response to consultation feedback, it is planned to begin consultation with members of the public earlier in the process in future and to hold more frequent consultation meetings with business ratepayers.

The Council's capital programme is developed in the following way. Monthly capital monitoring meetings are held at which progress is reviewed and all new schemes are scored and prioritised. Those schemes that meet the vision and score highly are taken forward to Executive Board & Council for authorisation. The scoring system assesses:

- how well a project meets the Council's vision
- the contribution to the aims and objectives of the Council
- which priorities it will achieve
- how the project will be funded and whether it provides future savings and implications for revenue budgets
- how achievable and realistic it is that the needs and objectives of the project can be delivered and whether the needs can be met in other ways or scaled down.

### Where does the money come from and how is it spent?

The Council's funds are held in two accounts. The General Fund is made up of income from Council Tax, business rates, government grant and council services and is used to deliver all Council services except those directly connected with council

housing stock. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) uses income from rents and service charges to provide management and maintenance services to council tenants. More detailed information on HRA income and spending is shown in the HRA Business Plan.

#### Capital

The Capital programme is ambitious. The programme has been agreed ahead of funding and has a projected deficit of approximately £20m. In July 2004 the Council decided to reserve Right to Buy receipts for the sole use of the HRA to be invested in improvements to meet the DHS.

Table 14 shows that during the past three years, the trend has been to invest progressively more in the condition of the council stock and to fund the building of new affordable housing using Local Authority Social Housing Grant (LASHG) received from the Housing Corporation and interest earned on that grant.

*Table 14: Capital investment in housing 2001-2 to 2003-4 (£ thousands)*

|               | <b>2001-2</b> | <b>2002-3</b> | <b>2003-4</b> |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Council Stock | 5260          | 6162          | 7696          |
| LASHG         | 1320          | 677           | 1168          |
| Other Housing | 749           | 979           | 981           |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>7329</b>   | <b>7818</b>   | <b>9845</b>   |

Table 15 shows the planned investment in the council stock will continue and that LASHG ceases as funding for new affordable housing now goes direct to the RSL developing the site.

*Table 15: Future Capital Programme 2004-5 to 2009-10 (£ thousands)*

|                               | <b>2004-5</b> | <b>2005-6</b> | <b>2006-7</b> | <b>2007-8</b> | <b>2008-9</b> | <b>2009-10</b> |
|-------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| Council Stock                 | 9,329         | 14,830        | 12,563        | 12,500        | 10,500        | 9,500          |
| Social Housing Grants         | 455           | 0             | 0             |               |               | 0              |
| Other Housing                 | 2,137         | 1,853         | 4,634         | 1,698         | 1,300         | 800            |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>11,921</b> | <b>16,683</b> | <b>17,197</b> | <b>14,198</b> | <b>11,800</b> | <b>10,300</b>  |
| <b>FUNDED BY:</b>             |               |               |               |               |               |                |
| Supported borrowing           | 1,452         | 1,509         | 0             | 0             | 0             | 0              |
| Grants                        | 345           | 347           | 200           | 200           | 200           | 200            |
| Useable capital receipts      | 5,222         | 5,450         | 10,136        | 2,777*        | 1,600*        | 7,798*         |
| HRA shortfall – to be funded  |               |               |               | 3,939         | 3,208         | 2,238          |
| Major Repairs Allowance (MRA) | 4,849         | 5,948         | 4,937         | 4,937         | 4,937         | 4,937          |
| HRA revenue                   | 44            | 3,429         | 1,924         | 2,345         | 1,855         | 1,825          |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>11,921</b> | <b>16,683</b> | <b>17,197</b> | <b>14,198</b> | <b>11,800</b> | <b>10,300</b>  |

\* Right to Buy receipts £500k pa plus General Fund balancing figure, funding to be identified.

The Council is actively considering funding options from the main alternatives listed below.

The Council has assumed that no supported borrowing approvals will be available beyond 2005/6. Other than MRA, the programme is very dependent on the resources that the Council can generate and the partnerships it can enter into.

The General Fund has assets of £188.5m with no scope for borrowing against anticipated revenue ("prudential borrowing") so asset disposal is being considered as a funding route. A member/officer group has been established to review the use of all the Council's assets. The council is trying to avoid disposal that may not lead to social housing gain. One example is a car park that may have student accommodation built on it but the Council will retain ownership of the car park. The main focus is in Northway, an area of Oxford in which the Council owns many assets. A working party led by the Area Co-ordinator is reviewing the area to determine how land could be used. The Council's aims in the review are to receive both a capital receipt and Social Housing gain but will require careful balancing.

The Council will continue to meet its social housing & community objectives through partnership developments on land that it owns. A recent example is a health centre project for residents in Blackbird Leys being developed in partnership with the Primary Care Trust.

The HRA has scope for some prudential borrowing. The budget approved by the Council in February 2005 includes using available HRA revenue surpluses to fund capital expenditure for Decent Homes. Advice through the Stock Options Appraisal process indicates that there is the potential for the funding gap to be met through prudential borrowing. The HRA Business Plan details the review of hostels for possible sale and how different parts of the stock are being analysed with a view to reducing the Decent Homes challenge.

#### Revenue

Table 16 shows that revenue expenditure on housing since 2001-2 has been dominated by the costs of homelessness and housing benefit administration. In both cases, improved performance in these areas has resulted in a reduction in spending.

Table 16: Revenue Expenditure 2001-2 to 2003-4 (£'s)

|                                   | 2001-2    |           | 2002-3    |           | 2003-4    |           |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
|                                   | Budget    | Actual    | Budget    | Actual    | Budget    | Actual    |
| Homelessness                      | 3,541,565 | 4,101,956 | 4,258,971 | 3,829,713 | 4,156,515 | 3,521,244 |
| Homelessness – externally funded* | 0         | 0         | 0         | 501,293   | 618,316   | 643,229   |
| Waiting List                      | 354,550   | 354,440   | 337,369   | 336,598   | 338,453   | 336,332   |
| Elderly & Warden Services         | 107,094   | 211,563   | 71,389    | 124,011   | (200,228) | 81,316    |
| CANACT                            | 460,997   | 439,649   | 352,129   | 369,506   | 325,780   | 358,330   |
| Housing Benefit Administration    | 2,270,286 | 2,258,413 | 1,774,861 | 1,861,282 | 1,861,282 | 1,861,282 |

|                               |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |
|-------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Local Cost of Housing Benefit | 0                | 0                | 0                | 450,000          | 450,000          | 450,000          |
| Street Wardens*               | 0                | 0                | 15,380           | (13,132)         | 40,222           | 19,202           |
| Rough Sleepers*               | 0                | (7,055)          | 1,129            | (6,551)          | 1,807            | 633              |
| Housing Grants                | 548,333          | 548,333          | 548,333          | 535,036          | 508,900          | 538,143          |
| Housing Advice                | 161,615          | 161,615          | 161,615          | 161,615          | 161,615          | 161,615          |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>7,444,440</b> | <b>8,068,914</b> | <b>7,521,176</b> | <b>8,149,371</b> | <b>8,262,662</b> | <b>7,971,326</b> |

\* early years of funding for street wardens was backed by the Home Office; the Council has been successful in bidding for funding from ODPM homelessness unit to support specific projects regarding homeless prevention and support and resettlement of rough sleepers.

*Table 17: revenue expenditure for 2004/5 (latest budget), and the 3 year budget agreed by the Council in February 2005 (£'s)*

|                                  | <b>2004/5</b>    | <b>2005/6</b>    | <b>2006/7</b>    | <b>2007/8</b>    |
|----------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Homelessness                     | 3,354,489        | 3,467,185        | 3,427,185        | 3,427,185        |
| Homelessness – externally funded | 674,619          | 675,382          | 675,382          | 675,382          |
| Waiting List                     | 421,042          | 245,589          | 245,589          | 245,589          |
| Elderly & Warden Services        | 153,619          | 132,926          | 132,926          | 132,926          |
| CANACT                           | 100,570          | 290,207          | 290,207          | 290,207          |
| Housing Benefit Administration   | 1,774,861        | 1,861,282        | 1,861,282        | 1,861,282        |
| Local Cost of Housing Benefit    | 0                | 450,000          | 450,000          | 400,000          |
| Street Wardens                   | 18,661           | 194,076          | 519,076          | 699,076          |
| Rough Sleepers                   | 34,498           | 11,784           | 11,784           | 11,784           |
| Housing Grants                   | 468,170          | 468,170          | 468,170          | 468,170          |
| Housing Advice                   | 161,615          | 161,615          | 161,615          | 161,615          |
| <b>Total</b>                     | <b>7,162,144</b> | <b>7,958,216</b> | <b>7,775,046</b> | <b>8,240,290</b> |

The homelessness budget has undergone many changes. From 2002/3 onwards the Council's Private Hostel Initiative (PHI) has been replaced by a Private Sector Leasing scheme. By the end of July 2004, 309 units were in operation at a unit cost of £7,811. The private lease scheme means that the Council is now responsible for the management of the units and a growth in expenditure on support officers has occurred. Some of this expenditure is funded from Supporting People. The total expenditure in 2003/4 on all homelessness was £4,005,616. This reflects a downward trend from a high of £4,658,094 in 2001/2.

Some 800 units of temporary accommodation have been provided by local RSLs through Oxford Social Lettings Agency (OSLA). The scheme was renegotiated in 2004 and the annual nomination fee reduced from £1,742 to £1,300 per property. At current levels of use this will result in savings in 2004/5. As the result of the homelessness prevention work being carried out by the Housing Options Team the number of properties in the scheme should decrease over time, enabling further savings to be achieved.

The Council operates an Elderly & Warden service. During 2004 the service was relocated from Beckley View, the sheltered block it occupied to allow Social Housing development at the site. Warden services are extremely popular but cost the General Fund approximately £400,000 per annum. The limitations of Supporting People funding and the need to make revenue savings will lead to a review over the next 12 months.



The Local Cost of Housing Benefits had no budget in 2004/05 in the table above but estimates now suggest this is running at approximately £0.5m. There are two problem areas, the collection of overpaid housing benefit has been poor historically and there are a number of claimants whose rent exceed the rent officer limits causing the cost to fall to the Council. The Council has approximately £2m set aside to repay Benefit Subsidy to the DWP. This has been under discussion for a number of years but with no resolution as yet.

Expenditure not included in the table above is the key worker Public Service Agreement (PSA) partnership with the County Council where the cost to the Council is the borrowing cost which will depend on the number of applications processed. If the Council meets its PSA target, a reward will be received which will cover the Council's costs.

Other schemes and grants

### **New affordable housing & planning gain**

Increased funding of approximately £18.5m from the SE Regional Housing Board for 2004-6 will enable 237 social rented and 130 shared ownership homes to be built to meet the council's target. The supply of affordable housing from s106 sites is expected to increase, particularly in view of the support for 50% affordable housing given by the Local Plan Inspector for sites of over 10 units. It is envisaged that planning policy will be the principal, if somewhat unpredictable, source of affordable housing in future. Current estimates are that 25 units will be completed through this route in 2005-6; 30 in both 2006-7 and 2007-8.

Local land values and the difficulties associated with constrained brownfield sites mean that it may not be possible to achieve affordable housing without public funding.

*Table 18: projected provision of affordable housing*

|  | <b>2003-4</b>  | <b>2004-5<br/>planned</b> | <b>2005-6<br/>proposed</b> |
|--|--|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Number of additional RSL rented dwellings                            | 89 (of which 18 had no Housing Corporation or Council funding) | 182                       | 180                        |
| Number of additional RSL shared ownership dwellings                  | 39 (of which 22 had no Housing Corporation or Council funding) | 59                        | 40                         |
| Number of RSL rented dwellings granted planning permission           | 168  | N/a                       | N/a                        |
| Number of RSL shared ownership dwellings granted planning permission | 60   | N/a                       | N/a                        |

### **Disabled Facilities Grant**

The Council's means tested scheme applies to private sector dwellings only. The Council spends approximately £600,000 per year on between 70 and 100 grants (source: HIP return). The HRA spends £331000 on grants and installations but this is not means tested. Disabled Facilities expenditure in the HRA is under review as part of the stock option appraisal project.

Table 19: Disabled Facilities Grant expenditure 2001-4 and proposals for 2004-6

|   | 2001-2 | 2002-3 | 2003-4 | 2004-5<br>planned | 2005-6<br>proposed |
|---|--------|--------|--------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Total number of mandatory grants completed                                | 48     | 75     | 68     | 100               | 102                |
| Total expenditure on mandatory grants (£ thousand)                        | 348    | 605    | 544    | 600               | 620                |
| Total number of other discretionary loans /grants for housing adaptations | 0      | 0      | 0      | 2                 | 3                  |

Round up of key messages and actions and links to priorities

In this chapter we have given a snapshot of how the council plans and spends its budgets to support the council's vision and strategic housing objectives.

| Action  | Objective |
|---|-----------|
| We will continue to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• review policies for management of General Fund and HRA-owned assets</li> <li>• bid for funding to prevent homelessness and support rough sleeping services</li> <li>• lobby through OMAGH for additional Council tax revenue from empty and second homes to be earmarked for affordable housing.</li> </ul> | 9         |
| We will also : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and maximise opportunities to develop affordable housing without grant / through private investment</li> <li>• Implement any policy change arising from such a review</li> </ul>   | 9         |

## Chapter 6 - Making sure the strategy will work and will be kept up to date.

### How the strategic housing role has developed

The City Council has given more priority to its strategic housing role over the past three years and is now better equipped to deliver an effective programme of strategic work. We have invested in surveys to provide firm evidence of the need for affordable housing, drafting the Housing and Homelessness Strategies and HRA Business Plan, developed more effective partnerships and used survey and performance information to create a monitoring framework for key elements of the Housing and Homelessness Strategy Action Plans. Our performance is reported through Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI's) and these are summarised in appendix 10.

We have raised awareness of local housing issues by writing lobbying articles and responding to government consultation and will continue to develop housing strategy and policy work to support service improvements.

In preparing for CPA inspection in 2004, we improved our understanding of factors that influence the local housing market. The Improvement Plan drawn up following the CPA inspection has been linked to the council's Corporate and Best Value Performance Plans to create a single set of goals for the council, known as The Oxford Plan.

Inspection of the housing service, expected in September 2005, will show us how much progress we have made since the 2004 mock inspection carried out as part of the SOA process and how much more is required to achieve the standards our tenants expect.

### Monitoring service quality and satisfaction

We seek out tenants' and residents' views, opinions and expectations on services, individual initiatives and policy changes through the Talkback Panel a detailed 3-year tenant satisfaction survey, the tenants' newsletter, and annual consultation on the Council's proposed budget. Extensive public consultation on planning policy changes takes place in line with legal requirements. Responses are used by Executive Board and individual business managers to shape budgets, services and capital projects.

### Delivering this strategy

The Action Plan that follows sets out specific actions linked to business plans. The Plan lists individual officers responsible for implementation of those actions. Most of those officers attend or are represented at SHOP.

### Monitoring and reviewing the strategy

Progress in delivering the strategy is monitored by SHOP and Housing Scrutiny Committee. The relationship between these bodies is shown in appendix 6.

SHOP's main functions are:

- To develop and review the local housing and homelessness strategies
- To monitor progress of the housing and homelessness strategy action plans
- To act as a housing resource for the OSP

- To contribute to and respond to the regional and sub-regional agendas and lobby for recognition of Oxford's supply and affordability issues
- To co-ordinate theme or task based sub-groups, taking forward any issues through the political or OSP structure as appropriate.

The SHOP work programme includes sub-group reports, project and coordinating activities and Strategy Monitoring as standing items. A typical recent meeting agenda also included: sheltered housing review, Housing Act 2004 & private sector survey policy implications, final consultation on stock option appraisal, consultation on the draft South East Plan.

To ensure focussed and coordinated work linked to decision-making, a range of operational groups are linked to SHOP via subgroups dealing with housing management, family and single homelessness, development and private sector housing.<sup>25</sup> The groups deal with practical issues relating to implementation, reporting back to SHOP. For example, the Council will consult the RSLs through the housing management sub-group of SHOP on how their progress towards the DHS targets can be monitored. Monitoring will be carried out by SHOP alongside the housing strategy action plan and through the local development partnership.

SHOP's role is complemented by councillor involvement through Housing Scrutiny Committee. Strategy and scrutiny officers have worked together with SHOP and the Committee to agree selected performance measures and milestones. These are monitored on a quarterly basis with the opportunity for more detailed reports on any areas of concern.<sup>26</sup>

This regular review process also enables any slippage in programmes to be considered and either accepted or for remedial action to be taken. For example, this might involve revising other priorities. Concern on any high priority action that could affect the Council's performance on BVPI's or have a negative effect on the main housing objectives (and hence on the council's vision) could be referred by Scrutiny Committee to Executive Board with recommendations for change.

A full annual review and updating of the strategic action plans will take place from 2005, linked to consultation on any changes through an annual conference. This will be an opportunity to update the action plans to take account of any changes in what is expected of the Council or changes in the local housing environment. Progress and changes arising from the review process will be published in an annual strategic housing report. The 2005 conference will be hosted by SHOP and the OSP, creating the foundations for a more proactive approach to tackling housing issues.

#### What more needs to be done?

In future we plan to monitor a wider range of trends and projects (Housing Market Indicators) to assess the impact of actions by the council, our partners and others on the housing market and how this might affect the housing strategy. This will enable us to plan more effectively and react more quickly to change.

We will strengthen the links between SHOP and OSP by reviewing the housing priorities in the Community Strategy and delivering the revised targets.

The process of establishing and checking consistency between the council's various strategies and plans is laborious at present. We therefore intend to undertake an exercise to link them in a more systematic way and make them easier to check and update. This will shift the focus of future work even further onto policy development and performance.

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<sup>25</sup> SHOP structure and membership appear in appendix 6

<sup>26</sup> See appendix 11 for the Scrutiny Committee work plan.

This strategy and the Homelessness Strategy are due to end in 2008. Work on the next housing strategy, taking the council from 2008 into the next decade will follow the outcome of stock option appraisal which could have a fundamental effect not only on the housing service but on the council as a whole. Therefore our final action must be to develop new strategies to start in 2008.

Round up of key messages and actions and links to priorities

| <b>Action</b>  | <b>Objective</b> |
|--|------------------|
| Develop and monitor local housing market indicators                              | 2                |
| Develop a formal mechanism to link and update all corporate strategies and plans | 8                |
| Deliver revised housing targets in the Community Strategy                        | 8                |
| Review and strengthen housing-related priorities in the Community Strategy       | 8                |
| Develop a new 3-year Homelessness Strategy for 2008 -2011                        | 8                |
| Develop a new 3-year Housing Strategy for 2008 - 20011                           | 8                |

Conclusion

We believe that successful completion of these actions will make communities in Oxford more sustainable and enable many more people to have a decent, affordable and secure home.

## OBJECTIVE ONE - INCREASE THE SUPPLY OF HOUSING FOR PEOPLE IN NEED

*(Actions in bold specifically support the Community Strategy)*

| WHAT WILL WE DO?  | WHEN WILL WE DO IT?                     | HOW IMPORTANT IS IT?<br>(High, medium or low priority) | HOW AND HOW OFTEN WILL WE MONITOR OR REVIEW IT? | WHAT IS THE COST?                                    | WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?<br>(KEY AT THE END OF THIS ACTION PLAN) | HOW WILL WE KNOW IF WE'VE SUCCEEDED?  | WHY SHOULD WE DO IT?<br>(KEY AT THE END OF THIS ACTION PLAN) |
|---|---|--|---|--|---|---|--|
| Deliver at least 150 affordable new homes each year, ensuring that at least 70% are for families  | Annually to 2008                        | HIGH   | Annually  | £18.5m for 2004-6 from Regional Housing Board        | DM; RSLs  | Target met  | 3  |
| Consider making a capital contribution to financing new affordable housing development  |   |  |   |  |   |   |  |
| Obtain the maximum possible affordable housing through the planning system  | Annually to 2016 (when Local Plan ends) | HIGH   | Annually  | Funded within existing budgets                       | PSBM; DM; RSLs  | Milestones achieved: 25 units completed in 2005-6; 30 in both 2006-7 and 2007-8 | 3  |
| Create a continuous supply of development sites to meet target  | Annually                                | HIGH   | Annually  | Funded within existing budgets                       | DM  | Sufficient sites included in bids to Housing Corporation                        | 3  |
| Lobby at all levels for recognition of housing need in Oxford and the importance of developing our landholding to the south of the city | Annually                                | MEDIUM   | Annually  | Up To £5000 per year; funded within existing budgets | SDHHC; HSA: HSBM  | Funding allocations increased for affordable housing                            | 3  |

| WHAT WILL WE DO?   | WHEN WILL WE DO IT?    | HOW IMPORTANT IS IT? | HOW AND HOW OFTEN WILL WE MONITOR OR REVIEW IT? | WHAT IS THE COST?                                     | WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?       | HOW WILL WE KNOW IF WE'VE SUCCEEDED?     | WHY SHOULD WE DO IT? |
|--|------------------------|----------------------|---|---|---------------------------|--|----------------------|
| <b>Work with partners to promote land release and access previously unidentified sites for affordable/ key worker housing within Oxford from public sector landowners.</b> | By April 2006          | HIGH                 | April 2006                                      | No direct cost: within current staff responsibilities | SDHHC; HAS; DM; OSP; SHOP | Sites brought forward for development    | 3                    |
| Achieve housing growth targets set by Local and Structure Plans and Regional Spatial Strategy  | Annually to 2016/ 2026 | HIGH                 | Annually  | Funded within existing budgets                        | PSBM                      | Target number of homes built             | 3                    |
| Work in partnership to assess and meet housing need through sub-regional solutions   | 2005/6                 | HIGH                 | 2006  | £10,000 budget  | SDHHC; OMAHG; HSA         | Housing market area assessment completed | 3                    |
| Redevelop derelict City Council-owned land for affordable housing  | 2006/7                 | HIGH                 | 2007  | £1,700,000  | DM                        | Homes completed                          | 3                    |

### OBJECTIVE TWO - IMPROVE THE AFFORDABILITY OF HOUSING IN OXFORD

| WHAT WILL WE DO?   | WHEN WILL WE DO IT? | HOW IMPORTANT IS IT? | HOW AND HOW OFTEN WILL WE MONITOR OR REVIEW IT? | WHAT IS THE COST?              | WHO IS RESPONSIBLE? | HOW WILL WE KNOW IF WE'VE SUCCEEDED?         | WHY SHOULD WE DO IT? |
|--|---------------------|----------------------|---|--------------------------------|---------------------|--|----------------------|
| Draw up Development Strategy for 2006-10   | 2005/6              | HIGH                 | 2010  | Funded within existing budgets | DM                  | Strategy adopted by the Council              | 3                    |
| Develop housing policies for key workers, including a local definition of key, "essential" workers | By July 2005        | HIGH                 | 2008  | Funded within existing budgets | HSA; OCP            | Funding received from Regional Housing Board | 4                    |

| WHAT WILL WE DO?   | WHEN WILL WE DO IT? | HOW IMPORTANT IS IT? | HOW AND HOW OFTEN WILL WE MONITOR OR REVIEW IT? | WHAT IS THE COST?  | WHO IS RESPONSIBLE? | HOW WILL WE KNOW IF WE'VE SUCCEEDED?                | WHY SHOULD WE DO IT? |
|--|---------------------|----------------------|---|--|---------------------|---|----------------------|
| Assist 22 key public sector workers to purchase homes  | By March 2006       | HIGH                 | September 2005                                  | Self-financing. Maximum risk: cost of borrowing up to £500,000 for 3 years | DM; OCP             | 22 equity loans made by March 2006                  | 3                    |
| Investigate interest from private sector employers to participate in a PSA-style scheme to assist their own key workers  | 2006/7              | MEDIUM               | March 2007                                      | £10,000  | HSA; OCP            | Interest identified                                 | 3                    |
| <b>Encourage the OSP to initiate dialogue with the universities to investigate how student accommodation can be provided while reducing the impact on homes for families</b>   | 2005/6              | MEDIUM               |   | No extra cost anticipated  | HAS; OSPM           | New arrangements for student accommodation agreed   | 3                    |
| Develop and trial local housing market indicators  | 2007/8              | MEDIUM               | 2008  | No direct cost: within current staff responsibilities                      | HSA                 | Earning/ house price affordability ratio controlled | 3                    |
| Assess opportunities for affordable and key worker housing to be developed through Housing Corporation grant to private sector developers without losing the wider community benefits of our RSL development partnership | 2005/6              | MEDIUM               | Annually  | No direct cost: within current staff responsibilities                      | HSA; DM             | Increased supply of affordable housing              | 3                    |



OBJECTIVE THREE - INCREASE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHOICE AND MOBILITY WITHIN THE HOUSING STOCK

| WHAT WILL WE DO?  | WHEN WILL WE DO IT?       | HOW IMPORTANT IS IT? | HOW AND HOW OFTEN WILL WE MONITOR OR REVIEW IT? | WHAT IS THE COST?                           | WHO IS RESPONSIBLE? | HOW WILL WE KNOW IF WE'VE SUCCEEDED?                                      | WHY SHOULD WE DO IT? |
|---|---------------------------|----------------------|---|---|---------------------|---|----------------------|
| Review suitable incentives and funding sources to assist tenants of social rented housing who wish to move on to home ownership | By March 2006             | HIGH                 | 2008  | 70,000 for 2005/6                           | HSBM                | Local cash incentive scheme introduced; properties released for reletting | 3                    |
| Continue support for the Lord Mayor's Deposit Guarantee Scheme  | Continuously              | HIGH                 | Annually  | Cost of grant to be confirmed               | HSBM; OCHA          | Increased number of bond holders  | 3                    |
| Offer furnished tenancies to new Council tenants  | Continuously              | HIGH                 | Annually  | To be confirmed                             | HSBM                | New tenancies are maintained: average length of tenancy increases         | 4                    |
| Support and develop opportunities for people in housing need wishing to move outside Oxford                                     | 2005/6                    | HIGH                 | Annually  | To be assessed                              | HSBM; HAM           | Housing need met  | 3                    |
| Implement recommendations of Allocations Review for common housing register, nomination agreements and choice based lettings    | By September 2005         | HIGH                 | 2007  | IT costs and funding for CBL to be assessed | HNM; HAM            | New arrangements in place   | 3                    |
| Encourage mutual exchange of tenancies by improving access to information   | By March 2006             | MEDIUM               | 2008  | Funded within existing budgets              | HNM                 | Register available; increase in mutual exchanges                          | 3                    |
| We will introduce choice based lettings by 2010   | Preparation starts 2005-6 | HIGH                 | Progress quarterly; annually after introduction | IT costs and funding for CBL to be assessed | HNM; HAM            | Scheme objectives operating effectively                                   | 3                    |

**OBJECTIVE FOUR - IMPROVE THE CONDITION OF HOUSING IN OXFORD**

| WHAT WILL WE DO?  | WHEN WILL WE DO IT?                | HOW IMPORTANT IS IT? | HOW AND HOW OFTEN WILL WE MONITOR OR REVIEW IT? | WHAT IS THE COST?              | WHO IS RESPONSIBLE? | HOW WILL WE KNOW IF WE'VE SUCCEEDED?                                  | WHY SHOULD WE DO IT? |
|---|------------------------------------|----------------------|---|--------------------------------|---------------------|---|----------------------|
| Work towards the HECA target and report annually on progress  | By 2010                            | HIGH                 | Annually  | Funded within existing budgets | EHBM                | 30% improvement in home energy efficiency between 1995 and 2010       | 1                    |
| Implement new powers in the Housing Act 2004 for HMOs and private sector housing; assess the resources needed to operate discretionary licensing of privately rented properties | To the timetable to be set by govt | HIGH                 | November 2005                                   | Within planned budgets         | EHBM                | Staff trained and procedures in place                                 | 2                    |
| Improve the Council stock pending completion of SOA   | Annually to 2010                   | HIGH                 | Annually  | £14.8m in 2005/6               | OBSBM               | Milestones achieved for decent homes: <b>(figures to be inserted)</b> | 1                    |
| Complete stock options appraisal for the Council stock  | By July 2005                       | HIGH                 | Next steps to be reviewed following sign-off    | £100,000                       | SDHHC               | Signed off by Government Office for the South East                    | 3                    |
| Implement the stock options appraisal decision  | 2005/6                             | HIGH                 | Six months after sign-off                       | Within planned budgets         | SDHHC               | Action plan developed   | 3                    |
| Draw on private sector strategy (see objective 8) to develop private sector renewal policies to increase the proportion of vulnerable households living in decent homes         | By October 2006                    | HIGH                 | Annually to 2020                                | Funded within existing budgets | EHBM                | Policies included in private sector strategy to meet PSA 7 targets    | 1                    |

| WHAT WILL WE DO?  | WHEN WILL WE DO IT?                           | HOW IMPORTANT IS IT? | HOW AND HOW OFTEN WILL WE MONITOR OR REVIEW IT? | WHAT IS THE COST?                                     | WHO IS RESPONSIBLE? | HOW WILL WE KNOW IF WE'VE SUCCEEDED?                         | WHY SHOULD WE DO IT? |
|---|---|----------------------|---|---|---------------------|--|----------------------|
| Assess the range and quality of our work on sustainable energy and fuel poverty and use this to develop an affordable warmth strategy | 2005/6  | HIGH                 | 2008  | No direct cost: within current staff responsibilities | EHBM; PCT;          | Strategy adopted   | 1                    |
| Where the need arises, using enforcement powers against landlords who do not take up opportunities to improve their properties.       | 2005/6 onwards                                | HIGH                 | Annually  | No direct cost: within current staff responsibilities | EHBM                | Minimum standards achieved as a result of enforcement action | 1                    |
| Carry out inspections to ensure that standards are maintained in properties leased by the council for use as temporary accommodation  | When creating new lease agreements            | HIGH                 | Annually  | No direct cost: within current staff responsibilities | EHBM; HNM           | Standards maintained   | 1                    |
| Investigate the potential for a landlord's accreditation scheme and developing a pilot scheme on student lettings                     | 2006/7  | MEDIUM               | Annually  | No direct cost: within current staff responsibilities | EHBM                | Potential assessed   | 1                    |
| <b>Develop support and advice mechanisms for landlords through regular meetings of Landlords Forum</b>                                | April 2005                                    | HIGH                 | Annually  | Funded within existing budgets                        | EHBM; SHOP; OSP     | Programme of meetings and advice topics agreed               | 1                    |
| Set high standards for new RSL developments in the Development Strategy and RSL partnership agreements                                | When the strategy and partnership are revised | HIGH                 | Annually  | No direct cost: within current staff responsibilities | DM                  | Standards agreed and adhered to by all parties               | 1                    |
| Develop mechanism to monitor RSL progress to meet DHS by 2010   | By September 2005                             | HIGH                 | Annually  | No direct cost: within current staff responsibilities | EHBM; HSA; DM       | Mechanism in place   | 1                    |

OBJECTIVE FIVE – REDUCE HOMELESSNESS IN OXFORD

| WHAT WILL WE DO?   | WHEN WILL WE DO IT? | HOW IMPORTANT IS IT? | HOW AND HOW OFTEN WILL WE MONITOR OR REVIEW IT? | WHAT IS THE COST?                                     | WHO IS RESPONSIBLE? | HOW WILL WE KNOW IF WE'VE SUCCEEDED?  | WHY SHOULD WE DO IT? |
|--|---------------------|----------------------|---|---|---------------------|---|----------------------|
| Work with Oxfordshire County Council on further homelessness prevention measures for previously unaccompanied asylum seeking children who have leave to remain and have reached age 18 | 2005/6              | HIGH                 | 2007  | No direct cost: within current staff responsibilities | HNM; Oxon CC        | Homelessness in this group reduced to nil                                       | 3                    |
| Research and assess the need for hostel accommodation for women of BME origin/ background  | 2006/7              | HIGH                 | 2008  | £10,000 for primary research                          | SRBM; NRBM          | Research completed  | 3                    |
| <b>Start working with OSP to achieve the common objectives in the Community and Homelessness Strategies</b>  | During 2005         | HIGH                 | Annually  | No direct cost: within current staff responsibilities | SHOP; OSPM; HSBM    | Rough sleeping kept at 2/3rds 1998 level; 50% reduction in average time in t.a. | 3                    |
| We will continue to prevent homelessness and work towards the 2010 target to halve the number of homeless households in temporary accommodation  | 2005/6 and beyond   | HIGH                 | Quarterly                                       | No direct cost: within current staff responsibilities | HMN; SHOP           | Target reduction of 500 households in temporary accommodation achieved          | 3                    |

OBJECTIVE SIX – IMPROVE HOUSING AND SUPPORT SERVICES FOR ALL WHO NEED TO USE THEM

| WHAT WILL WE DO?   | WHEN WILL WE DO IT?    | HOW IMPORTANT IS IT? | HOW AND HOW OFTEN WILL WE MONITOR OR REVIEW IT? | WHAT IS THE COST?                                    | WHO IS RESPONSIBLE? | HOW WILL WE KNOW IF WE'VE SUCCEEDED?   | WHY SHOULD WE DO IT? |
|--|------------------------|----------------------|---|--|---------------------|--|----------------------|
| Introduce our housing advice service in April 2005 and monitor its performance   | April 2005             | HIGH                 | After 3 years                                   | £161615 housing advice budget                        | HSBM;HN M           | Specified standards met  | 3                    |
| Work with the Supporting People Commissioning Body to seek adequate funding and support for single homeless people, especially those with complex needs or ready to move-on from hostels | By July 2005           | HIGH                 | July 2006                                       | No extra cost: within current staff responsibilities | NRBM                | Through allocation of funding to schemes and services; reduction in identified unmet support needs | 3                    |
| We will continue work on the tenant participation action plan to involve more BME tenants  | By March 2006          | HIGH                 | March 2007                                      | No extra cost: within current staff responsibilities | HSBM                | Increased satisfaction level   | 3                    |
| Work with the PCT to facilitate progress towards national target of support for teenage parents  | Annually to 2010       | HIGH                 | Annually  | No extra cost: within current staff responsibilities | NRBM; Oxon CC       | All lone parents under 20 will receive accommodation with support if they need it by 2010          | 3                    |
| Continue with OBS improvement plan to achieve three star service by March 2007   | Annually to March 2007 | HIGH                 | Reviewed quarterly                              | Financed from cost savings achieved                  | OBSBM               | Annual targets met, progress to 2 and 3 stars assessed.  | 3                    |
| Make it easier to contact the council through implementing our customer contact strategy   | 2004 - 6               | HIGH                 | 2008  | Cost savings anticipated                             | SDHHC               | Changes completed  | 3                    |
| Carry out a tenancy services review  | September 2005         | HIGH                 | March 2006                                      | No extra cost: within current staff responsibilities | HSBM                | Improvement plan in place to achieve 2 star service  | 3                    |

| WHAT WILL WE DO?  | WHEN WILL WE DO IT? | HOW IMPORTANT IS IT? | HOW AND HOW OFTEN WILL WE MONITOR OR REVIEW IT? | WHAT IS THE COST?                                    | WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?       | HOW WILL WE KNOW IF WE'VE SUCCEEDED?   | WHY SHOULD WE DO IT? |
|---|---------------------|----------------------|---|--|---------------------------|--|----------------------|
| Complete the city-wide review of need and provision of sheltered accommodation  | By June 2005        | HIGH                 | 2008  | No extra cost: within current staff responsibilities | HSBM; SHOP; RSLs; Oxon CC | Review completed   | 3                    |
| Investigate possibility of providing greater residential support for vulnerable young people                              | By December 2005    | MEDIUM               | December 2006                                   | No extra cost: within current staff responsibilities | HSBM; NRBM                | Investigation complete   | 4                    |
| Continue to make discretionary housing payments   | Continuously        | HIGH                 | Quarterly monitoring of BVPI's                  | Within current budget provisions                     | RBBM                      | Payments made to claimants in line with scheme aim   | 4                    |
| Continue to provide support and advice through grant funding of agencies, the credit union and producing publications     | Continuously        | HIGH                 | Annual review of grant applications             | Within current budget provisions                     | NRBM; HSBM; OSPM          | Evidence of benefit through client monitoring by agencies and through satisfaction surveys | 4 & 6                |
| Monitor RSL lettings  | Continuously        | HIGH                 | Quarterly                                       | No extra cost: within current staff responsibilities | HAM                       | Lettings comply with allocations policy  | 3                    |
| Check the fairness of our own tenancy offers  | Continuously        | HIGH                 | Offer by offer                                  | No extra cost: within current staff responsibilities | HAM                       | Offers comply with allocations policy  | 3                    |
| We will continue to monitor and develop the ways residents can make views known using feedback and suggestions we receive | Continuously        | HIGH                 | Through consultation programme                  | No extra cost: within current staff responsibilities | PPO                       | Evidence of feedback incorporated into services  | 6                    |
| We will work with Oxford Tenants' Panel to develop appropriate support for tenants and residents' associations            | 2005/6              | HIGH                 | Monthly with OTP                                | Being assessed                                       | PPM                       | Increased tenant satisfaction  | 6                    |