
Housing Strategy for Oxford 2005 – 2008

Final draft July 2005

Text to go on inside front cover of final document:

The Housing Strategy is about Oxford's plans for housing in the city.

If you would like this document reproduced in a different form (such as tape, large print or Braille) or in a different language, please contact the Housing Strategy Adviser on 01865 252131, e mail cstubbings@oxford.gov.uk or write to Strategy & Review, Town Hall, Oxford, OX1 1BX.

(Text in minority languages to be added)

Housing Strategy 2005 - 2008

Contents

		Page
	Joint statement by Oxfordshire District Councils	3
	Executive Summary	4
Chapter 1	Housing in Oxford	5
	➤ What is Oxford like to live in?	5
	➤ What do we want to do to make it better? The Vision for Oxford	5
	➤ How do we know what's needed? Research, consultation and partnerships	6
	➤ What are we doing to make it better?	7
	➤ So what are the important things that need to happen?	12
Chapter 2	Housing Supply and Demand	14
	➤ How much housing do we have?	14
	➤ Housing need – is there enough housing to go round?	14
	➤ What is being done to meet housing need?	20
	➤ What else needs to be done?	23
	➤ Round up of key messages and actions and links to priorities	24
Chapter 3	Housing Quality	26
	➤ Private sector stock condition	26
	➤ Decent Homes	26
	➤ Houses in Multiple Occupation	27
	➤ Empty and second homes	27
	➤ What is being done to improve private housing?	27
	➤ What more needs to be done?	28
	➤ Public sector housing	28
	➤ Decent homes for Council tenants	28
	➤ Decent homes for housing association tenants	30
	➤ Round up of key messages and actions and links to priorities	30
Chapter 4	Supporting Communities – helping people with housing	32
	➤ What are the problems facing homeless people and how do we support them?	32
	➤ What are the problems facing young people and how do we support them?	33
	➤ What are the problems facing older people and how do we support them?	34
	➤ What are the problems facing Black and Minority Ethnic Communities and how do we support them?	35
	➤ How safe do our residents feel and what are we doing to help them feel safer?	36
	➤ I can't afford to buy on the open market – what can you do for me?	38
	➤ I can't afford to rent privately or buy – what can you do for me?	39
	➤ So what else are we doing for our communities as a whole?	40
	➤ I live in Oxford. How can I get new information and influence council policy?	42
	➤ Round up of key messages and actions and links to priorities	43
Chapter 5	Money Matters – Housing Finance	44
	➤ How spending is planned	44
	➤ Where does the money come from and how is it spent?	44
	➤ Round up of key messages and actions and links to priorities	49
Chapter 6	Making sure the strategy will work and will be kept up to date	50
Appendix 1	Strategic Housing Action Plan 2005 – 2008	53
2	Corporate Planning Processes	67
3	Links to other Council Plans and Strategies	68
4	Wider policy linkages	71
5	SHAP 2001- 2004	73
6	SHOP structure and membership	75
7	County-wide partnership structure	77
8	Local Plan: Sites identified for housing/ mixed use development	79
9	Lord Mayor's Deposit Guarantee Scheme achievements	81
10	Best Value Performance Indicators – measuring performance against targets	83
11	Scrutiny Committee work programme	84
12	Contacts for more information	87
13	Glossary	89

Joint Oxfordshire District Councils' statement for Housing Strategies

Oxfordshire covers an area of more than 1,000 square miles (260,800 hectares) and has a population of 605,492 (2001 Census). The county consists of four predominantly rural District Councils, Cherwell, South Oxfordshire, Vale of the White Horse and West Oxfordshire, and Oxford City Council. The four rural District Councils have all transferred their housing stock. Oxford City Council is currently working through a stock options appraisal process to determine future investment in and management of the Council-owned housing stock.

Key housing issues across the county are:

- the high cost of all forms of housing;
- high demand for all types and tenures of housing;
- homelessness, especially in Oxford City
- a particular shortage of affordable rented housing;
- shortages in supported housing schemes and floating support services for vulnerable people;
- key workers and people on low and average incomes find it very difficult to afford to purchase a home or rent in the private sector. This means that employers find it difficult to attract and retain staff;
- problems of public transport and access to services and amenities for rural residents;
- planning constraints in Green Belt and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- long term empty homes in an area of very high housing demand and need.

The Oxfordshire housing authorities have a range of cross-county and inter-agency groups designed to share information and best practice and to ensure a co-operative and consistent approach to tackling strategic housing issues. Joint statements have been agreed for our Housing Strategies, Homelessness Strategies and Private Sector Renewal Strategies. All the local authorities in Oxfordshire are actively looking for opportunities to strengthen joint working, and to undertake joint commissioning of surveys and services.

Executive Summary

There is a housing crisis in Oxford. This was true when our last housing strategy was produced in 2001. But now the problems of supply and affordability that we are familiar with are common in London and the South East and have been recognised in national housing policy. We have our best chance for many years to increase the supply of affordable housing and to improve living conditions for local people.

This document shows how we plan to make the most of that chance in Oxford for the next three years. In the longer term, we want to be more ambitious in closing the gap between housing need and supply and will use this plan period to work out how we can do this.

In Chapter 1 we look at the housing situation for people in Oxford, how the Council has prepared to improve this and what information we have used to develop the strategy. We also consider what is expected of the Council to contribute to wider priorities and how we work with partners to achieve them. In this chapter we set out our nine housing objectives for the coming three years:

- Increase the supply of housing for people in housing need
- Improve the affordability of housing in Oxford
- Increase opportunities for choice and mobility within the housing stock
- Improve the condition of housing in Oxford
- Reduce Homelessness in Oxford
- Improve housing-related services for everyone who needs to use them
- Improve the environment on estates and in areas of decline
- Develop housing strategy and policy work to support service improvements
- Address the financial pressures on the Council for housing-related services.

Chapter 2 shows why housing need is so high, what we are doing with our partners to overcome this and what more we propose to do.

In Chapter 3 we describe the condition of privately and publicly owned housing, how well it meets the decent home and other standards and what further work is needed. This includes looking at stock option appraisal which will determine the future level of investment in the council's housing stock. Our recent private sector stock survey needs further analysis to help us understand where effort should be concentrated to link in with the Housing Act 2004 provisions for the private sector.

Chapter 4 focuses more closely on the needs of different people and groups within the community, highlighting what support they can obtain and what more is needed.

Chapter 5 illustrates the financial challenge we face in terms of investing in the Council stock and finding funds to invest in more affordable housing and shows how we plan to meet that challenge.

Chapter 6 sets out the arrangements we have in place to monitor and review this strategy to ensure that its action plan is delivered and the actions remain relevant.

The Action Plan shows all the actions that are planned for 2005 – 2008 to meet our nine objectives and is followed by a series of appendices giving more information on aspects of our strategic work.

Chapter 1 –Housing in Oxford

What is Oxford like to live in?

Description of Oxford and the local housing context

Oxford is a compact city in central Oxfordshire with a population of 134,248¹. The thriving local economy is based on tourism, further education, publishing, scientific innovation and manufacturing.

As a regional centre, Oxford attracts people to its services, leisure and cultural facilities and employment opportunities. Of 94,000 people who work in Oxford, 50% travel in from outside the tightly-drawn city boundaries.

The local housing market is under extreme pressure. Homelessness, constraints on the supply of land, high house prices, a large, high priced, poorly maintained private rented sector mean that housing choices are limited and very few people can afford to access the open housing market.

Table 1: tenure in Oxford

Tenure	Oxford	South East	England
Owner-occupied	56.1%	75.6%	69.9%
Council	14.9%	6.7%	13.2%
RSL	6.9%	6.8%	6.6%
Private rented	22.1%	10.9%	10.4%
All tenures	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Private sector stock condition survey 2004

Pockets of social deprivation, high crime and unemployment are to be found in the city. Despite the creation of three Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) schemes and a Sure Start centre, deprivation has not been eliminated. 21 out of 24 electoral wards in Oxford are among the 25% nationally with greatest housing deprivation. Oxford's Northfield Brook ward is the only Super Output Area (SOA)² in Oxfordshire to appear in the 10% of most deprived SOA's in England. The SRB schemes are all nearing their end. Sure Start exists to improve the health and education of young children and their families and to promote social inclusion. Partnerships between the city council, the police and health, education and social care agencies will need to develop further to support the continued economic prosperity of the city and will only be effective if housing issues are addressed.

What do we want to do to make it better?

The Council's vision

The Council's vision for Oxford is "Building Pride in our City". It comprises two core commitments: improving the Council's performance and working with others to develop and deliver shared goals.

The vision commits the Council to improving its services in seven key areas to:

- improve the environments where we live & work
- make Oxford a safer city
- provide more affordable housing
- create local prosperity & sustainable employment

¹ 2001 Census, Office of National Statistics (ONS). The Council is in discussion with ONS regarding this unexpectedly low figure.

² This is a Census area of 2000- 5000 people

- improve transport and mobility
- improve dialogue & consultation
- provide more & improved affordable leisure activities.

These service areas were prioritised through public consultation. The growing importance of housing issues is reflected in the selection of affordable housing as the third highest priority.

Corporate linkages

In order to improve its performance, the Council modernised its structure in 2001. It is designed to deliver the vision through a more systematic approach to business planning and performance management, linking the council's priorities to the work of individual officers. The Council's corporate planning processes are set out at appendix 2.

Asset management is fundamental to the Council's financial stability. We own public buildings like leisure centres, housing stock and commercial premises which generate income. We produce an annual asset management plan which sets out how best we believe these assets can be used to benefit the city. An important question for the next review of asset management to answer will be how those assets can best be employed to increase the supply of affordable housing.

How do we know what's needed?

Since the publication of our last Housing Strategy in 2001, housing has become increasingly important as a national issue and we have worked hard to improve our understanding of what the local issues are, how best we can tackle them and the links between national, regional and local issues.

National, regional and sub-regional policies

In preparing this strategy we have taken into account changes in legislation, national and regional policy, including:

- Introduction of public and private sector targets for the decent home standard (DHS) and the requirement to carry out a stock option appraisal
- Creation of Regional Housing Boards and changes to funding for affordable housing including the introduction of a regional single capital pot to replace Local Authority Social Housing Grant (LASHG)
- Regional Housing Strategy 2004 - 6
- Mandatory requirement for a housing strategy³ which has to meet "Fit for Purpose" criteria.
- Housing Act 2004
- Homes for All, ODPM 5-year plan, 2005

The table at appendix 4 shows the links between these national and regional policies and our local concerns.

Local changes

Not all national priorities are relevant to Oxford and we have spent 2003-5 improving our knowledge of the housing stock and the needs of the community. Consequently we know, for example, that housing market decline, rural issues and empty homes are not matters of serious concern for Oxford. This knowledge helps us to be clear about what the priorities are for Oxford, where these are shared with neighbouring authorities and how they compare with national policy.

³ Local Government Act 2003

We have taken into account the following local changes and new data to write a new housing strategy with a sharper focus and clear objectives and actions:

- Oxford's draft Local Plan with challenging targets for affordable and key worker housing
- Survey data on housing need, the local housing market and stock condition in Oxford
- Oxford's Homelessness Strategy, published in July 2003.
- The introduction of Supporting People funding

Research/ data

We are using existing information better and have invested in research where we did not have enough evidence of local needs and conditions. All statistics quoted in this strategy are from public sources or locally commissioned research, principally the 2001 Census, the council's returns to ODPM including the HIP and P1E quarterly homelessness returns, stock condition and housing needs surveys.

What are we doing to make it better?

We are using improved knowledge to set out our priorities in a new housing strategy, consulting widely to ensure it reflects the right issues and priorities and building partnerships to help deliver the strategy.

Developing a new housing strategy

In developing this strategy during 2003-5, we have taken into account the national policy framework for housing, progress against the previous strategic housing action plan (SHAP 2001-4) and the views of partners and stakeholders to produce a set of relevant and realistic objectives.

Information on current and planned activity within the council was gathered and linked with new information from the census, survey data, government guidance and recent service reviews. These were considered in the context of the council's financial position, particularly the cost of homelessness, to establish local priorities.

The action plan contained in the 2001-4 Strategy was reviewed on a regular basis by the Strategic Housing in Oxfordshire Partnership (SHOP). It was reviewed on the last occasion in August 2003 and details of progress and achievements are shown in appendix 5. The strategy for 2005-8 was already in development at that stage and a revised, more comprehensive, draft action plan was adopted by the Council as part of its policy framework in November 2003. Progress has been regularly monitored since that time.

The key successes and challenges over this transitional period were:

Successes	Challenges
Creation of the Options team and a new approach to homelessness	Responding to the government agenda by undertaking stock options appraisal
Completion of three major surveys of stock condition and housing need	Re-prioritising investment in repairs and maintenance of council stock to meet the Decent Homes standard
Creation and strengthening of strategic partnerships to enable us to deliver and monitor our housing strategies	Reviewing the Housing Revenue Account and its assets to ensure its financial stability

This strategy will replace the adopted draft on completion in 2005. All the objectives from the 2001-4 action plan have been incorporated into the new plan, to ensure continuity.

Asking what people think

In preparing this strategy we worked with tenants, residents, partner organisations, councillors and council officers.

Tenants and residents have been involved in producing the strategy through:

- newsletters
- direct correspondence
- events held in March and August 2003 for individual council tenants and leaseholders (successfully consulting about forty people who do not usually participate in tenant consultation) and representatives of tenant and leaseholder associations.
- Presentations made to ward councillors and members of the public at meetings of all six Area Committees during August/ September 2003.
- Following the disbandment of Oxford Federation of Tenants' Associations, a new structure for tenant participation was established in 2003. Oxford Tenants' Panel (OTP) was advised of the feedback from the consultation events held in 2003 so that relevant issues could be included in the Panel's work programme.
- Following completion of all the preparatory work for the developing Housing Strategy, including stock condition and housing requirement studies, the consultation draft Housing Strategy was submitted to the OTP on 30 March 2005. The Panel accepted the document without requesting any further changes and asked for it to be made available to all tenants' and residents' associations.
- A member of OTP took part in the stakeholder conference on the draft strategy held on 16 June 2005.

Partner organisations and stakeholders have been involved on a regular basis in strategy development through SHOP including consideration of the consultation draft by over 60 delegates at a Housing Strategy Conference hosted jointly by SHOP and Oxford Strategic Partnership on 16 June 2005. SHOP stressed the linkages between housing and health; the conference emphasised the need to develop more effective partnership work and to explore opportunities for additional sources of funding for new affordable housing. As a result, increased priority is being given to these aspects of the Action Plan.

Councillors were regularly consulted and informed about the Housing Strategy at intervals during its development:

- Housing Scrutiny Committee considered presentations on three occasions during the development of the strategy, supporting the investment in evidence-based research to inform decision-making and considering the risks associated with the priorities identified.
- Members of the Executive Board with housing responsibilities and the chair of Housing Scrutiny sat on the stock survey steering group
- Executive Board & Council considered and adopted the draft & approved expenditure for the private sector survey in November 2003.
- **The consultation draft was considered by Scrutiny Committee on 28 April 2005, Executive Board onand adopted by full Council on.....(to be confirmed after completion of consultation)**

Business managers contributed information and took part in regular consultation meetings to ensure linkage with their service plans.

How tenants and residents have influenced the strategy

All residents consulted endorsed the main themes as the most important issues for Oxford. Although they did not generate any major changes in the strategy's objectives, strength of feeling on the condition of the private sector came through very strongly. The 2004 CPA inspection report also identified the lack of up to date survey information as a shortcoming. As a direct result of this feedback we commissioned a Private Sector Stock Condition Survey as the starting point for creating a comprehensive strategy to tackle poor living conditions.

Tenants of the council also voiced their opinions on: maintenance, housing management (including allocations and rents), communication with tenants, tenant participation, decent homes and stock option appraisal.

Their questions and criticisms have been answered by Business Managers and reported back to Oxford Tenants' Panel and, where relevant, included in the tenant participation action plan. The approach used successfully to engage people in consultation on this occasion plus tenants' comments on effective tenant involvement and communication have been fed into stock option appraisal and future consultation processes to improve the way we communicate with tenants.

New ideas were put forward by tenants and leaseholders concerning the installation of water meters, reward schemes, support and skill development for tenants who wish to take better care of their homes. These new ideas have been investigated and reported back to Oxford Tenants' Panel. Most comments have been picked up in developing reward and incentive schemes.

Residents' priorities expressed at Area Committees were:

- more Environmental Health inspections and enforcement work to improve standards in run down areas
- a southern extension to Oxford to increase housing supply and that the city council should work with other districts in Oxfordshire to meet housing need
- to support communities in established residential areas by resisting the trend of extending family homes and developing them as flats
- employers and colleges should be responsible for providing purpose-built accommodation
- communities should not be further disrupted by increased short-term lets or non-family households
- Tenants and residents' views on sustainable communities have strengthened the emphasis given to this aspect of the strategy, especially the importance given to improving the quality of private sector housing and the need to develop a Supplementary Planning Document to address the conversion of family houses into flats.

Working with partners

By working with partners we contribute to and develop sub-regional priorities with the main aim of developing quicker, more efficient ways of delivering affordable and decent housing and other housing services.

We understand that people do not restrict their housing choices to administrative areas and that, acting alone, we can only make a limited contribution to improving the supply, condition and quality of housing. It is therefore vital that the council explores opportunities inside and outside the city to develop relevant partnerships that can achieve this. The Council has built up partnerships within Oxford and across the county and region.

Locally

The council's Strategy & Review Business Unit develops and maintains partnerships and builds up expertise that enables us to influence regional and national policy for the benefit of Oxford and to meet government objectives.

Officers from this team support Oxford Strategic Partnership (OSP), and the Strategic Housing in Oxford Partnership (SHOP). The OSP (a Local Strategic Partnership) was established in February 2003 and published its first Community Strategy in June 2004. OSP is considering how it can coordinate and contribute to further regeneration initiatives as the local SRB schemes come to an end.

It has four housing targets.

- Promote further land release for affordable and key worker housing within Oxford from public sector landowners, by working with partners to access previously unidentified sites by April 2006
- Encourage and support the development of an effective Landlords' Forum by April 2005 to improve housing quality and living standards in the private sector
- Reduce the average time spent by homeless households in temporary accommodation by 50% by 2008
- Maintain levels of rough sleeping at a level two-thirds below the number in 1998.

The OSP is driving these strategic priorities forward through the public, business and voluntary sectors in the city, supported by SHOP. Established in 2001, SHOP represents all public sector housing stakeholders in Oxford and was restructured in 2004 to equip it to deliver the OSP's housing targets.

OSP and SHOP plan to work together on housing issues through regular briefings by the chair of SHOP, dialogue at the annual housing strategy conference about how the OSP can add value. An OSP housing theme group (made up of housing and strategy officers with support from Government Office for the South East) meets to develop the common work programme. A review of the Community Strategy is expected to redefine the housing targets from April 2006.

Regionally

We already work well with neighbouring district councils and Oxfordshire county council as shown by the joint statement made in the introduction to this strategy, although there are inevitably tensions due to urban, rural and political differences. Joint working takes place at all levels: strategic and operational housing liaison, homelessness strategy development and training, joint commissioning of services for private sector renewal and housing advice. Beacon Council status has been achieved by all the Oxfordshire councils for their joint work on Supporting People.

These links were strengthened when Oxfordshire Affordable Housing Members Group (OMAHG) was established in 2003. Senior councillors from each district and the county council meet regularly to tackle housing issues more effectively by working together. They have already begun work on some difficult topics such as approaches to disposal of council assets and joint working with housing associations on development schemes. They are expected to commission a sub-regional housing market area assessment in 2005. We see this as a basis for collaboration on meeting housing need, developing affordable housing, developing a sub-regional strategy and an opportunity to meet ODPM requirements to assess the needs of gypsies and travellers.

The council also plays an active part in Oxfordshire Community Partnership (OCP, the County-wide Local Strategic Partnership), which has identified affordable housing as a high priority, stimulated debate and raised awareness of issues, particularly in relation to key workers. The OCP is responsible for delivery of an equity loan scheme for locally identified key workers, has commissioned innovative research on key workers

and has input into OMAHG. The structure of the city and county-wide partnerships is shown at appendices 6 and 7.

In 2003, the Cities in the South East housing group (CISE), was formed by local authorities in Brighton and Hove, Oxford, Reading, Portsmouth and Southampton. Milton Keynes Council joined the group in 2005. The CISE terms of reference are:

- to meet the needs of cities in the South East
- to discuss common concerns
- to lobby (speak as one voice) where appropriate.

The group's work programme centres on common urban themes:

- Supply of affordable housing
- Homelessness
- Decent homes in the public and private sectors
- Crime/ anti social behaviour
- Regeneration/ urban renaissance.

The CISE group has met with Government Office and members of the Regional Housing Board to explore how we can contribute to the regional agenda; is recognised as a formal consultee for the regional housing strategy and has established a regional tenants' forum learning from experiences of stock option appraisal and looking at strategic issues from an urban, social housing tenants' perspective.

Table 2: positive outcomes of partnership working

Activity/ issue	Partnership	Outcome
Joint work between council and RSLs in Oxford on common issues such as allocations and mobility	Strategic Housing in Oxford Partnership (SHOP)	Housing Management sub-group meeting quarterly on nominations, choice-based lettings, common register, anti-social behaviour, review of sheltered housing provision
Key worker housing	Oxfordshire Community Partnership (OCP)	KWHAG ambition group of OCP set up; affordable housing coordinator employed; City/ County key worker housing scheme set up; county-wide needs research completed November 2004.
Housing for public sector key workers	Oxfordshire County Council	Entering into off-market negotiations for RSL developments on surplus school sites; review of asset management and land disposal policies
Increasing land supply for affordable housing	Oxford Strategic Partnership	Housing objectives included in Community Strategy
Affordable housing development, mobility and support	SHOG/ OMAHG and OxSHLOG (Oxfordshire partnership groups plus RSLs)	County wide research on housing markets; working towards county-wide development partnership, lobbying on use of council tax on second and empty homes for affordable housing
Housing needs survey	Joint commissioning with local house-builders	Large survey sample produced robust data; contributed to the 2003 South East England Regional Assembly evaluation of housing need studies; leading to revised government guidance

Activity/ issue	Partnership	Outcome
Meeting housing need outside Oxford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milton Keynes Council • LAWN - scheme developed by London authorities, enabling applicants to move to low-demand areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milton Keynes undertaking research on likely demand for housing in this Growth Area • Awaiting development of new national mobility and employment scheme announced in Homes for All ("moveUK")
Develop good practice; make a common case for urban housing issues in the region	Cities In the South East Housing Group (CISE)	CISE formally recognised as a consultee on the Regional Housing Strategy; making case for funding from Regional Housing Board; CISE joint tenant stock option appraisal event

The council welcomed the creation of the Regional Housing Board and the increased involvement of local authorities in strategy development and the setting of regional priorities. The council has made detailed responses to consultation on the 2004-6 and 2006-9 regional housing strategies (RHS) both directly and in conjunction with partners. The city council sees the regional agenda as so important that it has seconded the council's housing strategy adviser to the South East England Regional Assembly. She has been able to contribute direct experience of local housing issues to the development of the RHS while communicating enhanced understanding of housing need across the region and the direction of national policy into the local arena, enabling better decision-making on the OMAHG work programme.

So what are the important things that need to happen?

Our improved knowledge and understanding and feedback from residents and partners tell us that the nine main housing priorities for Oxford are:

- Increase the supply of housing for people in housing need
- Improve the affordability of housing in Oxford
- Increase opportunities for choice and mobility within the housing stock
- Improve the condition of housing in Oxford
- Reduce Homelessness in Oxford
- Improve housing-related services for everyone who needs to use them
- Improve the environment on estates and in areas of decline
- Develop housing strategy and policy work to support service improvements
- Address the financial pressures on the Council for housing-related services.

In this chapter we have described how we developed these priorities. The chapters that follow look at three key areas:

- Housing Supply and Demand (Chapter 2)
- Housing Quality (Chapter 3)
- Supporting Communities (Chapter 4).

Each chapter sets out what we are already doing to turn priorities into reality, what further action is needed, any alternatives that could be considered and the actions that we plan to take over the next three years and beyond.

In Chapter 5, the financial position is considered and Chapter 6 looks at how progress and priorities will be monitored and reviewed. The priorities and actions are then brought together in the Action Plan at the end of the Strategy.

Detailed consideration and implementation plans for homelessness issues and the Council's landlord role are to be found in the Homelessness Strategy 2003-2008 and 2004 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan.

Chapter 2 – Housing Supply and Demand

Introduction

This chapter looks at the supply of housing in Oxford, the level of and reasons for housing need and the effects of the imbalance between the two. It then describes current work to correct the imbalance and what more needs to be done.

How much housing do we have?

The total housing stock in Oxford on 1 April 2003 was estimated at 52146⁴ dwellings; Table 1 in Chapter 1 shows that the proportions of privately rented and owner-occupied homes are respectively significantly greater and less than the national average.

Housing need – is there enough housing to go round?

We use a wide range of information to assess, analyse and verify housing needs in Oxford. Sources include: the Housing Register; Supporting People data; partner agencies (such as RSLs, Primary Care Trust, Social & Health Care, universities, police, probation service), published data (e.g. 2001 Census, ODPM statistics, local performance data), surveys & locally commissioned research.

Homelessness

Homelessness is the most serious aspect of housing need. Currently around 960 households live in temporary accommodation at an annual cost to the Council and the community of over £4m. The backlog stood at around 1000 from 1998 until 2003 with an average of 400 households being accepted as homeless each year. The Council's Homelessness Strategy tackles this largely through preventative measures. Although their effect has not yet become fully apparent, we have already successfully met the government's March 2004 target to eliminate the use of Bed and Breakfast-style accommodation for families for periods of 6 weeks and over and by January 2005 it was clear that homelessness was being held at a stable level rather than increasing in line with the recent national trend.

Our main challenges are to continue to prevent homelessness and to generate a greater supply of housing to reduce the exceptionally long periods (an average of 4 years) that people have to spend in temporary accommodation.

The main reasons for homelessness in Oxford in 2003-4 are consistent with previous years and with the national picture. Out of a total of 382 homeless acceptances⁵, exclusions by parents, relatives & friends accounted for 38% of households, relationship breakdown 11%, and termination of assured shorthold (private sector) tenancy 10%.

Table 3 below shows that in 2002-3 the incidence of homelessness in Oxford was almost double that of any other district in Oxfordshire.

⁴ Oxford City Council HIP Return 2003; Office of National Statistics 2001 Census.

⁵ P1EAS return to ODPM

Table 3: levels of homelessness in Oxfordshire districts

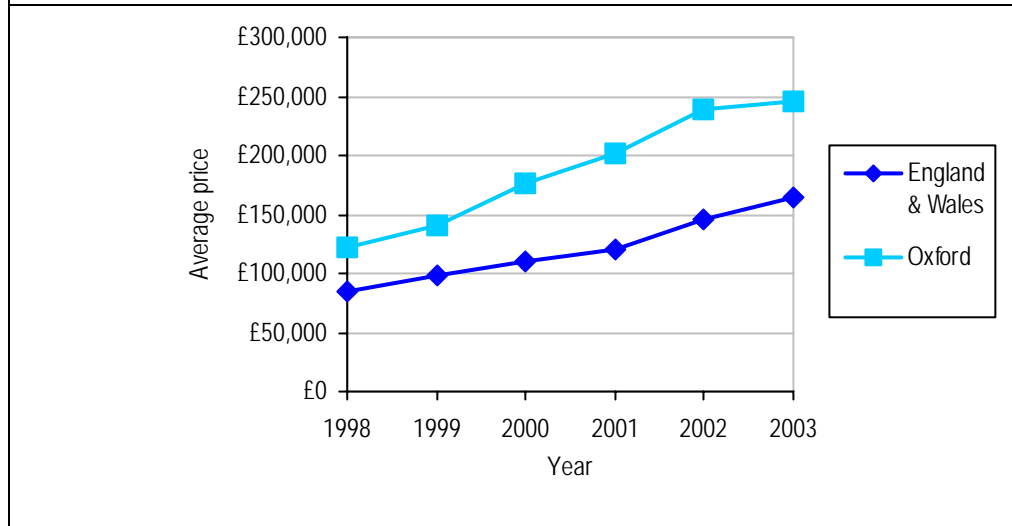
	Number of Households	Number Accepted Homeless as	Number per 1,000 households
Cherwell	53,225	266	5
Oxford City	51,732	438	8.5
Vale of White Horse	45,759	151	3.3
West Oxfordshire	38,397	61	1.6
South Oxfordshire	52,105	148	2.8

Why are so many households in housing need?

Affordability

Since 1998, the supply of new affordable rented housing has reduced and house prices and private sector rents have risen more sharply in Oxford than they have nationally, making Oxford one of the most expensive places to live in England.

Figure 1: Land Registry price changes 1998 –2003 (quarter 4)



Source: HM Land Registry, Property Price Data, 2003

Thus, by the end of 2003, average prices in Oxford were more than 50% higher than those for England and Wales.

Table 4: Land Registry average prices (4th quarter 2003)

Area	Average price	As % of E & W
England & Wales	£163,584	100.0%
South East	£205,109	125.4%
Oxfordshire	£229,674	140.4%
Oxford	£245,732	150.2%

The report "Can work, can't buy"⁶ showed Oxford as the 35th most expensive district in England for house purchase where an income of £46,018 was needed to purchase a lowest quartile property with four or five bedroom/ living rooms.

The Oxford Housing Requirement Study 2004 (HRS) found that the average household income in 2003 was significantly lower than this at £26,156 with significant variations between households living in different types of tenure as shown in Table 5. The table also shows that non-home owners did not have enough savings to meet the initial costs of house purchase.

Tenure	% of households (rounded figures)	Average gross weekly household income (inc. benefits)	Average net weekly household income (including benefits)	Average amount of savings	Average amount of equity
Owner-occupied (no mortgage)	29	£428	£358	£22,594	£268,397
Owner-occupied (with mortgage)	27	£712	£554	£10,362	£138,602
Council	15	£221	£196	£969	-
RSL	7	£224	£198	£115	-
Private rented	22	£641	£520	£3,650	-
ALL HOUSEHOLDS	100.0%	£503	£408	£10,587	£201,839

Comparing local incomes with property prices confirms that the vast majority of households in housing need in Oxford would not be able to obtain a mortgage at standard lending rates. High local property prices affect rents in the private sector as people unable to access owner-occupation compete for homes to rent. Tenancies and shared ownership of flats can also be difficult to afford as charges for additional services can be unmanageably high.

Property size	Minimum price	Average price	Average newbuild
1 bedroom	£126,500	£150,500	£158,200
2 bedrooms	£165,000	£190,500	£207,200
3 bedrooms	£177,000	£219,500	£252,000
4 bedrooms	£228,500	£298,000	£336,000
Property size	Minimum rent (£, pcm)	Average rent (£, pcm)	
Room only	£325	-	
1 bedroom	£575	£705	
2 bedrooms	£695	£820	
3 bedrooms	£805	£980	
4 bedrooms	£1,030	£1,220	

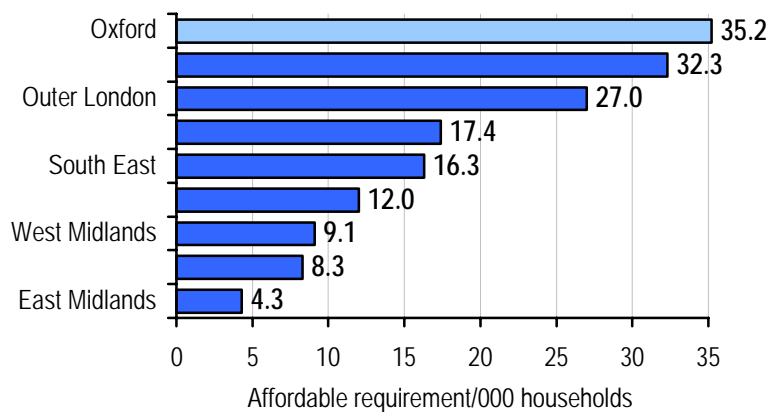
Source: Oxford Housing Requirements Study 2004

Although house prices, property sizes & tenures vary across Oxford, the city is so compact that such differences are only relative and no area of the city is truly affordable.

When the additional affordable homes required per 1000 households is considered, this represents an acute shortage of affordable housing rarely found outside Inner London. This is illustrated in Figure 2 below.

⁶ Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) (May 2003) - comparing average incomes with average prices for three and four- room properties in the fourth quarter of 2002

Figure 2: Typical levels of need for new affordable housing



Source: Fordham Research Housing Needs Surveys completed since July 2000

This picture supports the conclusion of the Barker Review of Housing Supply⁷ that pressure on the housing market in the South East will continue to push up house prices unless substantial house building takes place to control affordability. During the slowdown in house price rises in 2004-5 following interest rate increases, prices in Oxford continued to rise faster than in the rest of Oxfordshire with limited impact on the house price/earnings ratio and hence on housing need.

Land supply

Many areas of Oxford are unsuitable for building due to risk of flooding and the need to protect and enhance the natural and historic environments, limiting scope to provide more housing. Planning polices are designed to get maximum benefit from this limited land supply.

Oxford's housing market has traditionally been buoyant; new houses have been built at a rate exceeding the Structure Plan target. The overall number of homes built is, however, relatively small. Limited availability of sites within Oxford's tightly constrained boundaries increases pressure on house prices & restricts ability to build sufficient homes to relieve this pressure.

The current Draft Local Plan identifies forty-four sites suitable for residential or mixed-use development (which could include house-building), predominantly on previously developed "brown-field" sites. This approach is in line with Government guidance designed to minimise the use of undeveloped "green-field" land. The sites are listed at appendix 8. However, there is no guarantee of when these sites will come forward for development.

The Oxfordshire Structure Plan allocated 3,750 dwellings to be constructed in Oxford between 1996 and 2011. This figure had already been achieved by March 2002, demonstrating the high demand for housing in Oxford.

The current review of the Structure Plan allocates 5500 homes to Oxford during the period ending in 2016: an annual average of 366 new homes. The Council will endeavour to accommodate this and is conscious that the regional spatial strategy for the South East and the Barker review of housing supply may result in yet higher numbers of housing being required in Oxford and Oxfordshire. Through planning polices a high proportion of building has been on brown-field sites and to high densities and we seek to continue this by specifying that residential development should generally be above 40 dwellings per hectare, with higher densities in appropriate areas such as the city centre.

⁷ 'Delivering stability: securing our future housing needs', HM Treasury, April 2004

Limitations on the supply of affordable housing

During the 1990's, a large scale affordable housing programme at Northfield Brook effectively reduced housing need but subsequent development has not kept pace with the amount of affordable rented housing lost through sale of Council homes to tenants exercising the Right to Buy (RTB).

Table 7: affordable housing completions by RSLs compared with Right to Buy sales 2001-4

	2001- 2	2002- 3	2003- 4	2001-4 Totals
New RSL rented dwellings	36	46	89	171
New RSL shared ownership dwellings	0	0	39	39
Total new RSL dwellings	36	46	128	210
Right to Buy Sales	108	129	116	353
Net increase(+)/ loss (-) of affordable housing	-72	-83	+12	-143

The reduction in maximum discount and further restrictions on the RTB have begun to reduce sales from 2004 onwards and will be monitored.

Additional units of affordable housing have been developed as Supplementary Planning Guidance has taken effect and s106 agreements have been negotiated but these have been few in number as yet.

How much extra housing is needed?

Changes in Housing Need since 1998

The 1998 Housing Need Survey and Housing Market Assessment showed a considerable shortage of affordable housing in Oxford. It was not possible to make up the shortfall due to limitations on funding and availability of sites.

A further Housing Needs Survey was commissioned jointly by the Council and local house builders in 2003 to identify and plan to meet housing need. This survey, carried out by Opinion Research Services (ORS), involved in-depth face-to-face interviews with over 2000 residents. The survey data was analysed by Fordham Research Ltd using the Basic Needs Assessment Model⁸ to calculate the need for affordable housing in Oxford. The findings were published in Oxford's Housing Requirements Study (HRS) in April 2004. A summary of this study is available on the Council's website or from the Strategy and Review Unit. Although the two studies cannot be compared directly (due to the introduction, in the interim, of Government guidance on calculating housing need), the table below shows that the overall shortfall of affordable housing (and hence the annual requirement) has increased substantially since 1998.

Table 8: assessed supply and demand for affordable housing 1998 – 2001 compared with 2004 - 8.

	1998	2004
Projected supply of affordable housing	1500	652 (annually)
Assessed demand for affordable housing	5826	20% of backlog need: 157 plus Newly arising need 2252 (per year) = 2409
Net shortfall in supply	4326	8785
Amount of affordable housing needed to make up the shortfall	1442 (annually for 3 years)	1757 (annually for 5 years)

⁸ ODPM guidance, Local Housing Needs Assessment: A Guide to Good Practice, 2000

What types and sizes of affordable housing are needed?

The HRS looked at types of affordable housing required and found that 81% of need is for social rented housing. Around 19% of housing need could be met through “intermediate” options (principally shared ownership). The HRS concluded that new-build low-cost market housing would not meet any housing need and that discount market rents would only meet need if they were significantly below market levels.

The table below shows the breakdown of households in housing need based on what they can afford and the size of home required.

<i>Table 9: Households' ability to afford different affordable housing options</i>				
Property size	Type of affordable housing			
	Shared ownership (50%)	Shared ownership (25%)	Social rented	Total
1 bedroom	91	213	747	1,051
2 bedrooms	0	37	621	657
3 bedrooms	0	10	346	355
4+ bedrooms	7	0	339	346
TOTAL	98	259	2,052	2,409

Source: Oxford Housing Requirements Study 2004

Given such an acute shortage of housing, the challenge for the council is to increase the supply and efficient use of the stock in all possible ways.

Housing needs of specific groups

The HRS considered:

- the needs of disabled and elderly residents in terms of type of accommodation, facilities, aids, adaptations and support they might need to remain in their own homes
- financial or other support that elderly owner-occupiers might need to move to more suitable housing.
- living conditions in the private sector: availability of basic amenities, levels of disrepair and fuel poverty
- the housing needs of black and minority ethnic (BME) households.

The final report can be viewed at www.oxford.gov.uk. This information will be analysed in more detail as policy options are developed as to how Council and community services can respond to these needs.

Competing for private rented housing

The private rented sector plays a major part in the local housing market, having expanded significantly during the last decade, partly due to the increasing popularity of “buy to let” as a form of investment. It increased from 14% of the housing stock in 1995 to 22.1% in 2004 - more than double the national and regional averages. This increase is at the expense of owner occupation and social renting which would be

regarded as more stable and sustainable. Competition from the following groups adds to the pressures of supply and demand.

Asylum seekers

In September 2004, Oxfordshire County Council supported 57 single adults and 64 families under the Interim Provisions of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999. None of these households was entitled to benefits or social housing unless or until given leave to remain in the UK. They were therefore housed in the private rented sector, increasing demand and the ability to charge higher rents.

Key Workers

Housing demand from key workers living in Oxford could not be quantified by the HRS due to varying definitions of key workers and the relatively small numbers of households in each of the Key Worker Living Programme employment groups.⁹

Key workers are seen as employees important for local services & the economy, including those who would need to move into the area to take up work. Organisations such as local hospitals have a need for key worker housing beyond what can be delivered via the planning system.

Given the difficulty quantifying housing demand from key workers, and the overwhelming level of housing need, there is concern that funding key worker housing would be at the expense of social rented housing. Planning policy attempted to resolve this by setting a separate requirement for 10% key worker housing on development sites but the proposal was not accepted by the Local Plan Inspector.

The OCP key worker study¹⁰ considered a wide range of employees across Oxfordshire, mainly working in the public sector, whose roles were described by local employers as important to the success of their service or business. It found that 4357 key workers are in housing need and unable to afford the open market. 52% of key workers surveyed work in Oxford and 82% of key workers would rather buy than rent.

Students

Our two universities bring 25,000 full time students into the city every year.

The Council would not expect to assist them with accommodation but the HRS shows that they play an important part in influencing housing supply and affordability.

Although the universities already supply a considerable amount of student residences on their own land, a large number of undergraduates share houses in the private rented sector. HRS data suggests that a student population of 8 - 10,000 occupies some 3000 properties. This represents 5.7% of the housing stock and is therefore a severe drain on housing resources.

What is being done to meet housing need?

Planning Policy

The Council requires a high level of affordable housing provision on all housing developments: a draft Local Plan target of 50% affordable housing. The Local Plan Inspector's report received in February 2005 indicated that the 50% target should apply to all sites creating 10 dwellings or more, rather than the threshold of 2 dwellings proposed in the draft Local Plan. The most substantial opportunity to deliver affordable

⁹ Government initiative to assist specific groups of public sector key workers to meet the cost of housing

¹⁰ The research report was published in December 2004 and is available on line at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/affordablehousing

housing through planning policy will come from the redevelopment of the city's West End.

Our policy is that units of affordable housing secured through the planning process should be located on site, to promote the diversity & sustainability of communities. Given the scarcity of sites, off-site provision is a less attractive option, with cash in lieu considered only in exceptional circumstances.

The Local Plan Inspector has supported our policy to obtain developer contributions for affordable housing from commercial developments.

Improving delivery of new affordable housing

A Development Partnership for Oxford was established in 2000 between the Council and local RSLs in order to eliminate the cost of unnecessary competition from the development process. Partners were selected in open competition as providers of general needs and supported housing, enabling the Council to set a development programme of 100 units per year.

The partners are: Catalyst Housing Association, Bromford Housing Group, Oxford Citizens Housing Association, English Churches Housing Group, Warden Housing Association.

The 2001 Strategy set out the combination of property sizes and types needed when building new affordable homes. This "strategic mix" was included in Supplementary Planning Guidance and was generally achieved, although not enough homes with three or more bedrooms were built. Analysis of housing need and lettings data shows that the emphasis should be on larger homes. A higher proportion of social rented relets are 1 and 2 bedroom units which do nothing to reduce the period of time spent by larger families in temporary accommodation.

As at 1 April 2004, planning permission existed for 218 units (168 for rent and 60 shared ownership) plus a number of sites where the proportion of affordable housing was under negotiation.

Table 10: affordable housing delivery

	2001/4	2004/5 planned	2005/6 proposed
Additional RSL rented dwellings	171	182	180
Additional RSL shared ownership dwellings	39	59	40
Total	210	241	220

The Council's development team has been expanded. We are reviewing the workload and structure of the team to enable them to work effectively and ensure that sites are identified for future development.

Regional Housing Board funding of £18.5m has been secured for 2004-6 to produce 367 new homes.

Maximising land supply

The Council is working with partners to ensure that the maximum amount of land is made available for affordable housing, including sources that may not previously have been considered. The only opportunity to significantly increase the supply of affordable housing within the city in the foreseeable future is the development of the West End area.

Small sites exist within Oxford that could potentially be used for housing but are dependent on significant investment in infrastructure. The infrastructure does exist outside the southern boundary of the city to support the construction of between 1000

and 4000 homes. This is on green belt land of low agricultural value and is the most realistic means of meeting the city's housing need in the medium to long term.

Making effective use of the current housing stock

Incentives and staff support have been increased to encourage Council tenants to release under-occupied property through the removal expenses (REMS) scheme.

Council policy allocates 75% of property offers and nominations to homeless households in the continuing drive to assist households in temporary accommodation. In 2003/4, 43% of lettings were made to homeless households¹¹.

The council also supports the Lord Mayor's Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme which assists households unable to obtain a private sector tenancy due to lack of a deposit. Recent achievements under the scheme include 40 new tenancies supported between April and December 2004. Appendix 9 gives a fuller picture of the scheme.

For new approaches to preventing or resolving homelessness to be successful, landlords must have confidence that they will receive rent promptly and in full when letting to tenants entitled to housing benefit. Improved housing benefit performance is vital in creating that confidence¹². A housing benefit officer works alongside the Options Team to ensure any benefit related issues are speedily addressed for people at risk of homelessness.

The Council has reviewed the potential to produce more affordable housing from its own assets including garage sites. Where possible at reasonable cost, dilapidated garages in popular areas have been put back into use, leaving a number of sites where repair was uneconomic and anti social and criminal activity took place. RSL partners carried out a feasibility study of these sites leading to agreement in principle in July 2003, of a programme of disposal and redevelopment for 18 sites. The sites will provide additional affordable housing or funds to improve council homes to the Decent Home Standard (DHS), either directly or by reinvesting funds realised through sales. During 2004-5, the emphasis in budget planning has been on using all available means to meet the DHS.

Tackling Homelessness and Affordability

The 2003 Homelessness Strategy set out for the first time a clear implementation plan and distinguishes between homelessness and housing need that can be dealt with on a more controlled and planned basis through a new Housing Options team. The priorities for homelessness are incorporated in the Housing Strategy Action Plan.

By treating private rented housing as an opportunity as well as a challenge, we provide good quality temporary accommodation through Oxford Social Lettings Agency. By building up a portfolio of temporary accommodation leased directly from private landlords we successfully reduced the use of "nightly paid" accommodation and met the government target of having no families with children in "bed and breakfast" accommodation for more than 6 weeks by March 2004.

Additional funding has been provided for a homelessness prevention scheme to supplement the existing rent deposit guarantee scheme. We have introduced a Home Choice scheme to support people who would otherwise be homeless to maintain or access private sector tenancies. The scheme helped 172 households in 2004/5 by providing rent deposit, rent guarantee or other financial support.

¹¹ 2003/4 HIP Return (It should be noted that a proportion of the available properties would be suitable for older people and hence not available to homeless families, and that not every offer results in a tenancy)

¹² see table 13, Chapter 4 for details

We have worked closely with Oxfordshire County Council to enable former refugee/asylum seeking families granted amnesty through the Indefinite Leave to Remain Integration Project to remain in their accommodation, supported by housing benefit if eligible. This partnership has been very successful: we have been able to prevent the majority of families becoming homeless.

What else needs to be done?

Increasing the supply of affordable housing

Our Homelessness Strategy recognised that the target of 100 was not sufficient to reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation. However, limited sites and resources mean that we should not be unrealistically ambitious. A new target of 150 units per year, with 70% being suitable for families, is therefore set for 2004/5 onwards.

We will develop a new strategic mix with the emphasis on larger homes and will look to achieve this through the planning process by negotiating on the basis of bedspaces of affordable housing per scheme.

The council must review the use of its property assets and consider whether it can make a capital contribution to financing new housing development through the RSLs. Both new affordable housing and investment in the council stock to meet the Decent Home Standard (DHS) are both extremely important for the Council¹³.

The council must also be alert to emerging new initiatives that may offer opportunities to increase the supply of affordable housing in a cost effective way. Current examples are:

the Housing Corporation pilot project to give grant direct to developers and financial models for private investment such as Real Estate Investment trusts.

However, it would be acceptable for this to be at the expense of good, local management of the housing in the long term.

The council will continue to lobby to develop its landholding to the south of the city in South Oxfordshire district. This is a significant opportunity to develop affordable housing and to contribute to the wider economic growth of Oxford. The council has pursued this through the Structure Plan Examination in Public (EIP) and the Regional Spatial Strategy. The EIP report is critical of the removal of this potential area for housing growth from the Structure Plan.

Making effective use of the current housing stock

The council also wishes to help tenants who can afford to buy their own home to release tenancies to benefit other households in need. We will review suitable incentives and funding sources including any opportunities offered by the Homes for All Plan.

To help Council tenants who wish to transfer, we are looking at the feasibility of displaying the mutual exchange register on the Council's website. Forms are being redesigned to encourage all tenants registering for transfer to automatically register for an exchange.

Tackling homelessness

The council will continue improving the quality of emergency accommodation by refurbishing some of its hostels to provide more self-contained units. Arrangements are being made to dispose of some larger hostels which are surplus to requirements and would be difficult to convert at reasonable cost. The proceeds from the sale will be used to meet the DHS.

¹³ see Chapter 5 - funding deficits and asset management

The Council is committed to participation in schemes to assist applicants interested in moving to areas where demand for housing is lower and will take advantage of opportunities offered by the “moveUK” scheme.

Managing competing demand

The Draft Local Plan stipulates that future expansion of student numbers should be subject to the institutions providing equivalent amounts of student housing. However, as sites identified in the Plan are currently used for some other purpose, it is not certain whether they will become available. So we will encourage the OSP to initiate dialogue with the universities to investigate how student accommodation can be provided while reducing the impact on homes that can be used for families.

We will develop specific policies on key worker housing based on analysis of the OCP research and other relevant studies. We will also carry out research within our housing register to identify those who could be defined as key workers and could be helped by current or future programmes.

Round up of key messages and actions and links to priorities

In this chapter we have shown that housing need in Oxford is acute, that homelessness and affordability are serious problems and that opportunities to increase the supply of affordable housing are limited.

We **have already** begun to tackle the challenges of housing supply and demand:

Action
Developed partnerships to build new affordable housing
Provided temporary accommodation for homeless households in the private sector through a 10-year association with Oxford Social Lettings Agency (OSLA) and by direct leasing from private landlords
Intervened to help private tenants at risk of homelessness to maintain their tenancies
Worked with other district councils to limit the number of homeless households placed in Oxford on a temporary basis
Managed the transition into permanent accommodation of households given indefinite leave to remain
Supported key worker research commissioned by Oxfordshire Community Partnership (OCP).

We **will continue** to take the following actions:

Action	Objective number
Deliver at least 150 affordable new homes each year, ensuring that at least 70% of homes are for families.	1
Lobby at all levels for recognition of housing need in Oxford and the importance of developing our landholding to the south of the city	1
Obtain the maximum possible amount of affordable housing bedspaces through the planning system	1
Encourage mutual exchange of tenancies by improving access to information	3
Assist 22 key public sector workers to purchase homes	2

We **will take** the following actions to further close the gap between supply and demand:

Action	Objective number
Draw up Development Strategy for 2006-10	2
Review the Council’s potential to make a capital contribution to finance new affordable housing development	1

Create a continuous supply of development sites to meet target	1
Review suitable incentives and funding sources to assist tenants of social rented housing who wish to move on to home ownership	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	2
Review policies on land disposal and asset management of General Fund and HRA-owned properties to meet affordable housing priorities	9
Support and develop opportunities for people in housing need wishing to move outside Oxford	3
Encourage the OSP to initiate dialogue with the universities to investigate how student accommodation can be provided while reducing the impact on homes that can be used for families	2
Develop a more positive dialogue between housing providers, planners and developers	1

These actions appear in our action plan to achieve our objectives to increase the supply of housing for people in housing need, to improve the affordability of housing, to increase opportunities for choice and mobility and to address the financial pressures on housing-related services.

Chapter 3 – Housing Quality

Introduction

Very few people move into a newly built home. The existing housing stock is an important resource for meeting housing need and can only do this if it is kept in acceptable condition. This chapter looks at the condition of private and public sector housing, how well it meets current standards and what action we will take to tackle poor conditions.

Private sector housing

Decent homes

The City's exceptionally large private rented sector¹⁴ has increased by 8% since 1995. Landlords can obtain high rents with little incentive to maintain or improve standards. The importance of decent standards in private sector housing is now recognised at national level with a policy shift away from the physical condition of buildings towards their impact on the health of vulnerable people.

The government's stated aim is: "by 2010 to bring all social housing into decent condition, with most of the improvement taking place in deprived areas, and increase the proportion of private housing in decent condition occupied by vulnerable households."¹⁵ "Vulnerable households", means those in receipt of at least one of the principal means-tested or disability related benefits, including families with children in receipt of child tax credit.¹⁶

The Decent Home Standard is the minimum standard for the condition of all housing. Whether a property meets the standard depends on its thermal efficiency, state of repair, and the age and condition of facilities (particularly kitchens and bathrooms) and services. A property does not have to meet the standard in every respect but a combination of shortcomings will cause it to fail.

The 2001 English House Condition Survey (EHCS) sets the national baseline of 1.2 million vulnerable households in the private sector living in non-decent homes. The national Decent Homes Target Implementation Plan seeks to increase the proportion in decent homes by stages to:

- 65% by 2006
- 70% by 2010
- 75% by 2020.

A private sector survey was carried out in 2004 to identify key information about the physical condition of the housing stock in Oxford, and the potential for improving standards, with the health of vulnerable people in non-decent homes in mind. It will take some time for detailed analysis of the findings to be developed into a long-term strategy for the Council but the key points are set out below.

The survey indicates that 30.7% of stock (14055 dwellings) in Oxford fails to meet at least one element of the decent standard and that only 30% (13253) of vulnerable households are living in non-decent homes, thereby already achieving the 2010 target.

¹⁴ over 22% compared with 12% nationally in 2001.

¹⁵ Source: ODPM Public Service Agreement 7 – target for decent homes

¹⁶ ODPM guidance: A Decent Home, February 2004

This is a good starting point for a city like Oxford with a large private rented sector and older than average housing stock and is a consequence of investment in the stock during the recent period of economic prosperity. However, older stock is more difficult and costly to improve, so sustained and concentrated effort will be necessary to build on this achievement and meet the 2020 target.

Many vulnerable households (70.5% or 9915 homes) do not have a decent level of thermal comfort. Developing more energy efficiency measures and targeting them at the groups in greatest need could therefore bring significant benefits in improvements to health and property condition and is likely to be a priority area for the Council.

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's)

This type of property is concentrated in certain areas of the city including East Oxford which was the subject of our pilot HMO registration area. Residents of HMOs tend to move frequently and can often be vulnerable single people. Safety is of great importance in this type of property, particularly with regard to fire precautions. New powers introduced by the Housing Act 2004 will strengthen our ability to tackle conditions in the 5000+ HMO's in the city.

Empty and second homes

Historically the level of empty homes is low: in 1995, 2% of the stock comprised long-term¹⁷ vacant homes compared with a national average of 17%¹⁸. In 2004, only 0.3% (138) of homes were vacant long term. The market for private letting is so buoyant that it is in owners' interests to make empty homes available for occupation.

The number of second homes in Oxford is also estimated to be small: 27 dwellings in 2004.

What is being done to improve private housing?

Oxford has the highest rate of fuel poverty in the Thames Valley area at 27%.¹⁹The Council therefore gives high priority to fuel poverty in its private sector renewal policy. The Council employs an energy efficiency officer and has an excellent record of success in accessing external funding and improving energy efficiency in all stock & tenure types through a range of awareness and cost-saving campaigns. Means tested grants for thermal insulation are made to qualifying low-income households living in a property with a SAP²⁰ below 60. Oxford is believed to be the first local authority to use its powers in this way to tackle fuel poverty.

The Council adopted a comprehensive policy of assistance for home repairs and improvements in July 2003²¹ including equity release loans and a plan for further action. Our recent surveys show equity release has considerable potential to assist elderly home-owners on low incomes.

The council is developing a better relationship with local landlords through the Landlords' Forum set up in 2002. The Forum's programme of meetings and advice topics included consultation on this strategy in January 2004.

East Oxford Improvement Partnership has been set up to improve standards in private sector tenancies.

¹⁷ long term means vacant for more than 6 months

¹⁸ 1995 Oxford House Condition Survey

¹⁹ Centre for Sustainable Energy (May 2003).

²⁰ Standard Assessment Procedure – see Glossary

²¹ The policy for the provision of assistance for the purpose of improving living conditions July 2003 complies with the Regulatory Reform Order (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 and is available on the council's website.

Although the number of second and empty homes is already low, the council has acted to charge maximum Council Tax on them to further encourage the occupation of homes on a permanent basis.

Landlords of HMOs in the pilot registration area received grants to improve the condition and safety of their properties.

Our private sector leasing scheme sets minimum standards for property condition and a programme of inspections ensures that these standards are maintained.

What more needs to be done?

We will use the home repairs and improvement policy action plan and the 2004 survey data to develop a comprehensive strategy for private sector housing.

Although relatively few in number, empty homes are such a precious commodity that we will appoint an Empty Homes Officer in 2005. This will enable us to take advantage of new legal powers to bring empty homes back into use.

We will investigate the potential for a landlord's accreditation scheme and develop a pilot scheme on student lettings.

We will build on the success of our HMO registration area by implementing new powers for HMOs and assessing the resources needed to operate discretionary licensing of privately rented properties through powers in the Housing Act 2004.

The Council has limited staff and funds to devote to private sector improvements. It may not, therefore be possible to do all the work listed here. In developing the private sector strategy we will assess which actions should be a priority based on the areas identified in the private sector survey as most serious and which will benefit people in greatest need. Early indications of key priorities are:

- Emphasis on continued improvements in energy efficiency
- Review and monitor financial assistance policies
- Improved working with the Landlord's Forum
- Licensing of HMOs
- Help for vulnerable households living in non-decent homes.

Public sector housing

Decent homes for Council tenants

What are Council homes like now?

Council-owned housing stock has to meet the DHS by 2010. In 2003, FPDSavills surveyed the condition of the Council's stock. 20% of all property types were surveyed to provide robust data on decency levels and to plan improvement and investment programmes for 30 years. The stock was found to be 49% "decent" with all stock expected to fail the standard by 2010 if no remedial action were taken. Savills' survey included an energy survey which showed above average energy efficiency levels with a SAP rating of 60.

Detailed information from the survey is found in the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.

What is being done to bring them up to standard?

The overriding issues for the Council, in relation to our own tenants and housing stock, are the stock option appraisal process and the drive to meet the DHS and provide

value for money services. All Councils have to complete a stock option appraisal (SOA) by July 2005, to decide the most suitable approach to stock management and investment. The options are: transfer of the stock to a housing association, creation of an arms length management company, improvement of the stock and new-build through Private Finance Initiative or some combination of the three. Stock retention is only an option if the council can afford to meet the DHS. The Council is using the survey data for the SOA and has undertaken a financial assessment²² and extensive communication and consultation with tenants to find out their priorities, the standards they want for their homes and the costs involved. The process is described in more detail in the HRA Business Plan and is on track to be completed ahead of the July 2005 deadline. A Housing Advisory Board made up of councillors, tenants and senior officers meets regularly to steer progress on this and to deal with the financial challenges associated with the housing stock.

The Council is not waiting for the SOA to be completed before starting work to meet the DHS. Most Council-owned property that was in very poor condition has been dealt with by modernisation and refurbishment:

- many sheltered bedsits have been converted to self-contained 1-bedroom flats
- defective dwellings on Barton estate have been demolished and replaced through SRB funding.

Table 11: Properties still in need of action

Property type	Reason for action	Progress to date
Orlit (Precast Reinforced Concrete) houses at Rose Hill	Defined by law as defective dwellings, maximum remaining life 15 years	Two houses have been demolished and replaced by 2 Eco-homes. Outline planning consent for development of 237 homes (of which 50% affordable) on the site over 5-7 years.
4-storey maisonettes at Blackbird Leys	Anti-social behaviour; unsuitable for families.	The first 20 maisonettes at Butterworth Place, Blackbird Leys has been demolished to make way for 13 family houses. Options are being considered for the remaining 7 blocks.
550 homes of non-traditional construction	Anticipated remaining life of less than 20 years.	Maintenance costs are being considered in the financial assessment for stock option appraisal
Individual properties	Unfit for human habitation or in need of major repairs	Included in current refurbishment programmes. Where this is uneconomic, alternatives (including disposal to produce income to fund social housing) are considered on a site-by-site basis

What more needs to be done?

The HRA Business Plan describes improvement plans put in place for housing management and maintenance services. Performance is reported regularly to Housing Scrutiny Committee to ensure continuous improvement of services.

All housing-related services are preparing for a housing inspection in 2005: checking services against the Audit Commission Key Lines of Enquiry, and ensuring that policies and procedures are fully documented, up to date and well publicised.

²² See Chapter 5 – Housing Finance

Once the SOA has been completed we will know what the Council can afford, how that measures up to the standards that tenants want, which is the best option and what it will take to achieve it. The housing strategy action plan will be updated to reflect this.

Decent homes for housing association tenants

What are housing association homes like now?

Most housing associations in Oxford have relatively modern stock and all expect to meet the DHS by 2010. The 2004 stock condition survey included RSL stock and showed that 24.1% were non-decent. The findings are being shared with the RSLs.

What is being done to bring them up to standard?

RSLs are drawing up plans to improve their stock that does not meet the DHS.

What more needs to be done?

The Council will consult the RSLs through the housing management sub-group of SHOP on how 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.

How we make sure new homes are of good quality

Through the Development Partnership, the Council expects RSLs to meet planning policy and Housing Corporation requirements to create sustainable, high quality housing that is cost-effective to maintain and to run. This will include standards for energy efficiency, accessibility, integrated design in mixed communities and modern construction techniques.

A housing scheme for key workers, let by Keystart Homes at below market rents, helps residents keep their expenses down by providing appliances and carpets.

Round up of key messages and actions and links to priorities

It is important for the Council to give priority to improving the condition of housing because of:

- The size of the private rented sector in Oxford
- the number of vulnerable people living in poor housing
- government targets for decent homes in the public and private sectors.

We will meet our objective of improving the condition of housing of all tenures in Oxford by continuing to:

Action	Objective number
Where the need arises, using enforcement powers against landlords who do not take up opportunities to improve their properties.	4
Work towards the HECA target and report annually on progress	4
Assess the range and quality of our work on sustainable energy and fuel poverty and use this to develop an affordable warmth strategy.	4
Develop support and advice mechanisms for landlords through regular meetings of the Landlord's Forum (this supports the Community Strategy target.)	4
Carry out inspections to ensure that standards are maintained in properties leased by the council for use as temporary accommodation.	4
Lobby through OMAHG for the additional Council Tax revenue from empty and second homes to be earmarked for affordable housing.	9

Complete the stock option appraisal for the Council stock	4
Improve the Council stock pending completion of stock option appraisal	4
Set high standards for new RSL developments in the Development Strategy and RSL partnership agreements	4
Develop East Oxford Housing Improvement Partnership to improve conditions in private sector tenancies	7

Beyond this, we will undertake the following new actions:

Develop a private sector strategy to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued improvements in energy efficiency • Review and monitoring of financial assistance policies • Help for vulnerable households living in non-decent homes • Improved working with the Landlord's Forum 	8
Implement new powers in the Housing Act 2004 for HMO's and private sector housing	4
Assess the resources needed to operate discretionary licensing of privately rented properties	
Investigate the potential for a landlord's accreditation scheme and developing a pilot scheme on student lettings.	4
Implement the stock option appraisal decision for the Council stock	4
Develop a mechanism to monitor RSL progress to meet the DHS by 2010	4
Appoint an Empty Homes Officer	3

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 Home Choice scheme has prevented over 172 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 have commissioned a new housing advice service from local solicitors Turpin, Miller and Higgins (TMH), this started on 4 April 2005. Three adjoining district councils have commissioned TMH to provide the advice service for their areas, contributing to a comprehensive and consistent approach to homelessness across the county.

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 for accommodation 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 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
Monitor performance of our housing advice service	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 reviewed 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 among 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 CRE²³ code of guidance.

We also need look at how our approach to allocations and development can meet the needs of different age groups, household sizes 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.

An action plan has been drawn up to develop a comprehensive Equalities Policy for the council to meet the Equalities Standard Levels 2 and 3 – incorporating the Race Equality Scheme (RES) – by March 2006. The BME Housing Strategy will be developed in consultation with the Equalities Steering Group.

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 2004 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 2005 – 2008 through:

- Improved security work to void properties
- Providing a target hardening budget for council properties, responding to police crime reduction surveys
- Improved security in private sector stock to make it less vulnerable to burglary
- Youth diversion through sporting projects to reduce vandalism and anti-social behaviour
- 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
- Investing in Police Community Support Officers and extending the current street warden scheme to 26 wardens in our most deprived areas by 2008

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.

²³ Council for Racial Equality

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
- 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)

We are also:

- Developing protocols for the allocation of housing to serious offenders
- Implementing racial and domestic violence monitoring systems
- Implementing an updated policy on anti social behaviour.

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.

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
Investigate potential for common county-wide policies on anti social behaviour	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 initiatives²⁴, 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	2

²⁴ Starter Home Initiative, Challenge Fund

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.

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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the Lord Mayor's Deposit Guarantee Scheme • Offer furnished tenancies to new Council tenants • Monitor RSL lettings • Check the fairness of our own tenancy offers 	3 3 6 6
We will continue with the OBS improvement plan to achieve three star standard by March 2007	6
We will introduce choice based lettings 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 - 4	2004 - 5
Average time to process new claims (days)	77	55.6	59	33.5
Average time to process changes of circumstance (days)	41	28.3	28	16.9
Percentage of renewals determined on time	30.32	44.62	65	Not measured – law has changed
Accuracy of processing	86.8%	93.2%	95%	93.4%

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

To distribute funding granted under the discretionary housing payment scheme in an equitable way to meet given criteria, and to promote the following objectives:

- alleviate poverty;
- support vulnerable young people in the transition to adult life;
- encourage Oxford City residents to seek and retain employment;
- safeguard Oxford City residents in their homes;

- help those who are trying to help themselves;
- keep families together;
- support the vulnerable in the local community;
- help claimants through personal crises and difficult events.

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"> • Improve speed and accuracy of processing housing benefit applications 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make effective discretionary housing payments 	6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide support and advice through grant funding of agencies and producing publications 	6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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) 	6
Enable better communication for Council services 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

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?

Action	Objective number
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)

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

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)

	2004-5	2005-6	2006-7	2007-8	2008-9	2009-10
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
Total	11,921	16,683	17,197	14,198	11,800	10,300
FUNDED BY:						
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
Total	11,921	16,683	17,197	14,198	11,800	10,300

* 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
Total	7,444,440	8,068,914	7,521,176	8,149,371	8,262,662	7,971,326

* 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)

	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8
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
Total	7,162,144	7,958,216	7,775,046	8,240,290

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

	2003-4	2004-5 planned	2005-6 proposed
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 planned	2005-6 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"> • review policy on land disposal and management of General Fund and HRA-owned assets to reflect affordable housing priorities • bid for funding to prevent homelessness and support rough sleeping services • lobby through OMAGH for additional Council tax revenue from empty and second homes to be earmarked for affordable housing. 	9
We will also : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and maximise opportunities to develop affordable housing without grant / through private investment • Implement any policy change to develop affordable housing without grant/ through private investment 	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.²⁵ 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.²⁶

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.

²⁵ SHOP structure and membership appear in appendix 6

²⁶ See appendix 11 for the Scrutiny Committee work plan.

Consultation told us that our partnerships must be appropriate and effective. We will therefore review our involvement in partnerships and make them more effective by undertaking training and improving communication.

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

Action	Objective
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
Keep opportunities for partnership working under review	8
Identify and arrange training for SHOP and other partners to enable more effective partnership working and communication	8
Carry out consultation and research to maintain an up to date evidence base to support strategy and policy development	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? (High, medium or low priority)	HOW AND HOW OFTEN WILL WE MONITOR OR REVIEW IT?	WHAT IS THE COST?	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE? (KEY AT THE END OF THIS ACTION PLAN)	HOW WILL WE KNOW IF WE'VE SUCCEEDED?	WHY SHOULD WE DO IT? (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
Review the Council's potential to make a capital contribution to finance new affordable housing development	By March 2006	V HIGH	Annually	No direct cost: within current staff responsibilities	SDHHC; ESBM	Review completed, decision made	3
Obtain the maximum possible affordable housing bedspaces 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	V HIGH	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?
Work with partners to promote land release and access previously unidentified sites for affordable/ key worker housing within Oxford from public sector landowners.	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	No direct cost: within current staff responsibilities	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
Appoint an Empty Homes Officer	2005	HIGH	Annual monitoring of progress on reducing empty homes.	Budget available to create this post in 2005/6.	EHBM	Officer in post and taking action to reduce the number of empty homes.	3
Develop a more positive dialogue between housing providers, planners and developers	By December 2005	HIGH	Annually	No direct cost: within current staff responsibilities	PSBM; DM; SHOP	Regular communication resulting in shared understanding of local needs	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	V HIGH	Annual monitoring; review in 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 allocated by Regional Housing Board	4
Assist 22 key public sector workers to purchase homes	By March 2006	V 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
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	2005/6	MEDIUM	12 months after an agreement is reached	No extra cost anticipated	HAS; OSPM	New arrangements for student accommodation agreed	3
Develop and monitor local housing market indicators	2007/8	MEDIUM	2008	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	MEDIUM	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
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;	To the timetable to be set by govt	V HIGH	November 2005	Within planned budgets	EHBM	Staff trained and procedures in place	2
Assess the resources needed to operate discretionary licensing of privately rented properties	By March 2006	HIGH	March 2006	No direct cost: within current staff responsibilities	EHBM	Assessment completed; decision made re future approach	1
Improve the Council stock pending completion of stock option appraisal	Annually to 2010	HIGH	Monthly monitoring of progress	£14.8m in 2005/6	OBSBM	Milestones achieved for decent homes:	1
Complete stock option 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 option 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
Develop support and advice mechanisms for landlords through regular meetings of Landlords Forum	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 a 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 (Actions for this objective are principally set out in the 2003-8 Homelessness Strategy. Extra actions identified in developing this document are below)

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
Start working with OSP to achieve the common objectives in the Community and Homelessness Strategies	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?
Monitor performance of our housing advice service	Quarterly	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	V 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
Enable better communication for Council services 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	VERY HIGH	December 2006	No extra cost: within current staff responsibilities	HSBM; NRBM	Investigation complete	4
Continue to make effective 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

OBJECTIVE SEVEN – IMPROVE THE ENVIRONMENT ON ESTATES AND IN AREAS OF DECLINE

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?
Enable people to live without fear of intimidation by working towards the CANAcT goals	Annually to 2008	HIGH	Annually	No extra cost: within current staff responsibilities	NRBM	Goals achieved; anti social behaviour reduced	2
We will extend the street warden service to Barton and Wood Farm estates in 2005/6	2005	HIGH	Annually	£175,000	NRBM	Wardens appointed	2
Develop East Oxford Housing Improvement Partnership to improve conditions in private sector tenancies	By March 2006	HIGH	Annually	£30,000	NRBM	Multi-agency database established; progress made towards an accreditation scheme	1
Investigate potential for common county-wide policies on anti social behaviour	By March 2007	MEDIUM	During development of Housing Strategy post-2008	No extra cost: within current staff responsibilities	HSA; SHLOG/ SHOG	Decision taken	2

OBJECTIVE EIGHT - DEVELOP HOUSING STRATEGY AND POLICY TO SUPPORT SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

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 and strengthen housing-related priorities in Community Strategy	May 2005	HIGH	May 2006	Within planned budgets	OSPM; SHOP	Revised priorities agreed	3
Deliver revised housing targets in Community Strategy	2006/7	HIGH	Annually	Within planned budgets	OSP; SHOP	Measurable progress made	3
Develop private sector strategy to include continued improvements in energy efficiency, review and monitoring of financial assistance policies, help for vulnerable households living in non-decent homes and improved working with the Landlord's Forum.	2005/6	HIGH	Annually	Cost of strategy development is within current staff responsibilities	HSA; EHBM	Strategy adopted	1
Develop a formal mechanism to link and update the council's individual plans and strategies	2005/6	HIGH	As strategies are revised	Within planned budgets	SRBM	Mechanism developed	3
Develop BME housing strategy and set timetable for implementation	January to June 2006	HIGH	Progress reviewed quarterly	Within planned budgets	HSA; HSBM	Strategy adopted	3
Keep opportunities for partnership working under review	By March 2006	HIGH	Annually	No extra cost: within current staff responsibilities	SRBM; HSA	Changes made to reflect priorities and capacity	6
Identify and arrange training for SHOP and other partners to enable more effective partnership working and communication	By July 2006	HIGH	Annually	Cost to be assessed	SRBM; HSA; SHOP	Training event attended by SHOP	6

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?
Develop a housing strategy for Older People	June to December 2005	HIGH	Progress reviewed quarterly	Within planned budgets	HAS; HSBM	Strategy adopted	3
Develop a Supplementary Planning Document to set policy on conversions, key workers and affordable housing mix	By December 2005	HIGH	2007	Funded within existing budgets	PSBM; DM; HSA	SPD adopted by Council	3
Monitor, review and deliver against the various sub-strategies (BME, Older People, HRA Business Plan)	Annually	HIGH	Annually	No extra cost: within current staff responsibilities	HSA; HSBM; NRBM; SHOP	Targets being achieved	3
Carry our consultation and research to maintain an up to date evidence base to support strategy and policy development	Continuously in response to changing circumstances	HIGH	Annually	Costs in excess of current staff resources to be assessed on a project by project basis	SRBM	Reliable data available at all times	3
Develop new 3-year Homelessness Strategy for 2008-2011	By March 2008	HIGH	2011	No extra cost: within current staff responsibilities	HSA	Strategy adopted	3
Develop new 3-year Housing Strategy for 2008-2011	By March 2008	HIGH	2011	No extra cost: within current staff responsibilities	HSA	Strategy adopted	3

OBJECTIVE NINE – ADDRESS THE FINANCIAL PRESSURES ON THE COUNCIL FOR HOUSING-RELATED SERVICES

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 policy on land disposal and management of General Fund and HRA-owned assets to meet affordable housing priorities	2005/6 (HRA) 2006/7 (GF)	HIGH	Annually	No extra cost: within current staff responsibilities	FSBM	Review completed; policy change adopted	3
Review and maximise opportunities to develop affordable housing without grant/ through private investment	2006/7	HIGH	2008	No extra cost: within current staff responsibilities	HSA;DM; PSBM	Review completed; policy change adopted	3
Implement any policy change to develop affordable housing without grant/ through private investment	2007/8	HIGH	2008	To be assessed	PSBM;DM;	Implementation targets met	3
Lobby through OMAHG for the additional Council Tax revenue from empty and second homes to be earmarked for affordable housing	2005/6	MEDIUM	Annually through OMAHG	Nil	SDHHC	Revenue committed to an affordable housing initiative	3
Continue to bid for funding to maintain our rough sleeping services	Annually	HIGH	Quarterly through the Homelessness action plan	Grant funding from ODPM approx £600,000	HNM	Funding received and makes a measurable impact on homelessness	3

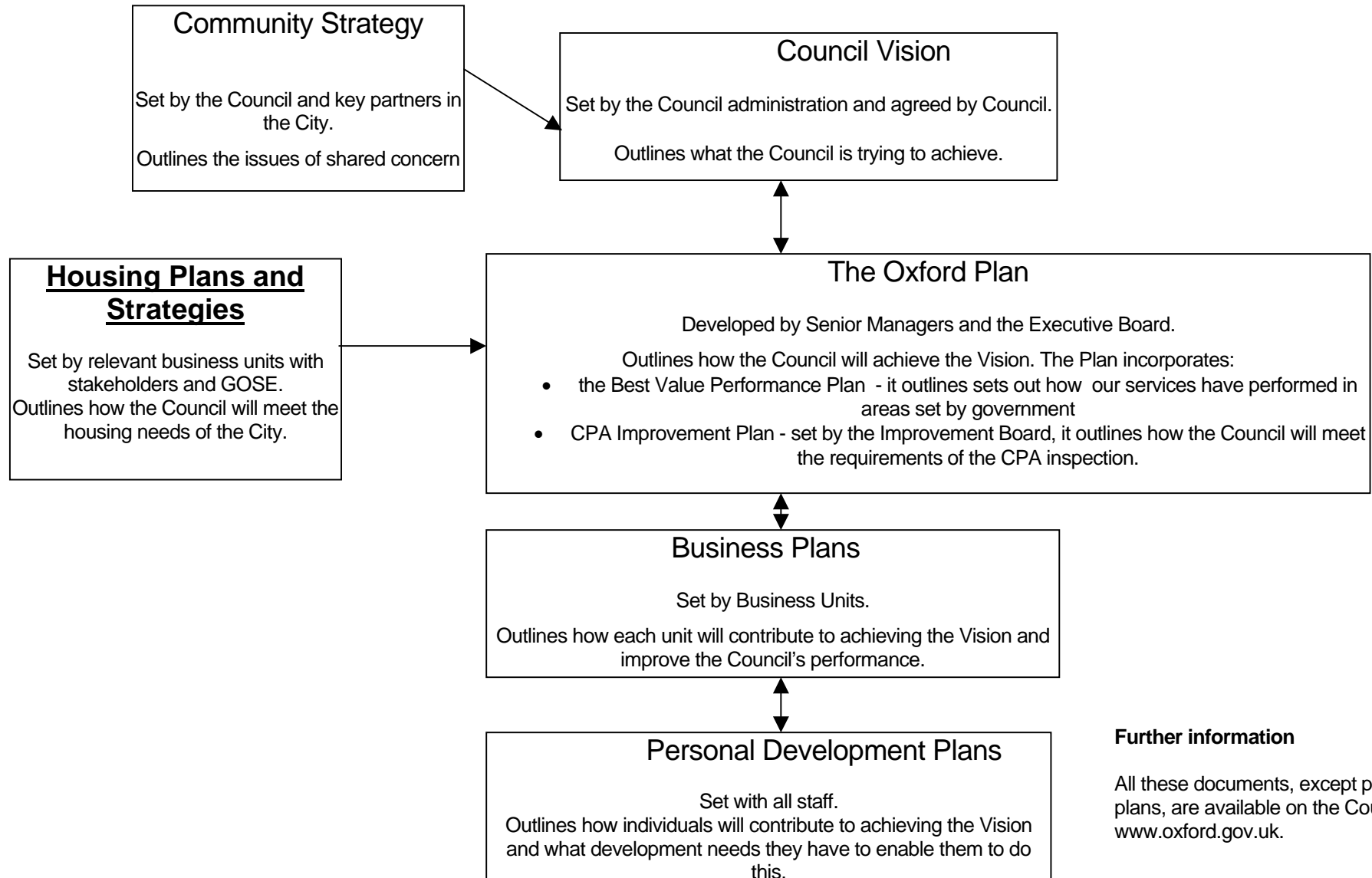
Key to abbreviations;

DM	Development Manager	OSPM	Oxford Strategic Partnership Manager
EHBM	Environmental Health Business Manager	Oxon CC	Oxfordshire County Council
FSBM	Financial Services Business Manager	PSBM	Planning Service Business Manager
HAM	Housing Allocations Manager	PPM	Policy and Performance Manager
HNM	Housing Needs Manager	PPO	Policy and Performance Officer
HSA	Housing Strategy Adviser	RBBM	Revenues and Benefits Business Manager
HSBM	Housing Services Business Manager	SRBM	Strategy and Review Business Manager
NRBM	Neighbourhood Renewal Business Manager	SDHHC	Strategic Director of Housing, Health and Community
OBSBM	Oxford Building Solutions Business Manager	SHOP	Strategic Housing in Oxford Partnership
OSLA	Oxford Social Lettings Agency		

“WHY DO IT?” - KEY TO THE STRATEGIC AIMS IN THE COUNCIL’S VISION

1. IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENT	4. CREATING LOCAL PROSPERITY AND SUSTAINABLE EMPLOYMENT	6. IMPROVING DIALOGUE AND CONSULTATION
2. MAKING OXFORD A SAFER CITY	5. IMPROVING TRANSPORT AND MOBILITY	7. PROVIDING MORE AND AFFORDABLE LEISURE ACTIVITIES
3. PROVIDING MORE AFFORDABLE HOUSING		

APPENDIX 2: CORPORATE PLANNING PROCESSES



Further information

All these documents, except personal development plans, are available on the Council's web site, www.oxford.gov.uk.

APPENDIX 3: LINKS TO OTHER COUNCIL PLANS AND STRATEGIES

Throughout this strategy, references have been made to a range of other documents. Here we summarise them, showing what their importance is for housing and where the documents are to be found.

The Oxford Plan

What does it do? Sets out the main aims and priorities of the Council from 2005 to 2008, its recent performance and how it plans to improve this to meet the aims.

How is it relevant for the housing strategy? There is a common aim to increase the quantity and quality of affordable housing in all sectors. During recent budget consultation we found consensus amongst all age groups of people that affordable housing was a major issue for the city.

To find out more:

Website:	www.oxford.gov.uk/council/the-oxford-plan.cfm
Email:	improvement@oxford.gov.uk
Address:	Performance and Improvement Team Chief Executive's Business Unit Oxford City Council PO Box 10 Oxford OX1 1EN

Community Strategy

What does it do? Oxford's Community Strategy provides a foundation for developing more effective partnership working in the city and is part of an on-going process to link resources in Oxford across the public, business, voluntary, and community sectors. The Community Strategy is built around five key themes to reflect the main priorities for the city and its communities.

How is it relevant for the housing strategy? The Community Strategy theme for a better living environment includes objectives to improve the supply and condition of affordable housing in Oxford.

Like to know more about the Oxford Strategic Partnership?

You can find out more about the strategic partnership by visiting the website,
<http://www.oxfordpartnership.org.uk/>

Like to see a copy of the Community Strategy?

PHONE US ON 01865 249811 AND ASK FOR OUR STRATEGY AND REVIEW TEAM

Community Safety Strategy

What does it do? The Crime and Disorder Act (1998) says local authorities, police and other agencies must work together to reduce crime and disorder. This strategy sets out the aims and priorities of Oxford's Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.

How is it relevant for the housing strategy? The strategies share objectives to reduce anti-social behaviour and crime in residential areas

To find out more:

Website:	www.saferoxford.org.uk/strategy2005-08.asp
Phone:	01865 252283
Email:	saferoxford@oxford.gov.uk
Fax:	01865 252678
Address:	Oxford City Council (Strategy and Review) 3rd Floor Town Hal St Aldate's Oxford OX1 1BX

Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2004 –2007

What does it do? Reports on the Council's priorities, plans and performance as a landlord.

How is it relevant for the housing strategy? Council housing is an important component of affordable housing stock in Oxford.

To find out more:

Website:	www.oxford.gov.uk
Email:	jbanfield@oxford.gov.uk
Address:	Strategy and Review Oxford City Council PO Box 10 Oxford OX1 1BX

Asset Management Plan

What does it do? Asset Management deals with Council owned land and premises that are not used for residential housing and is responsible for strategic management of the Council's non-Housing Revenue Account (HRA) properties

How is it relevant for the housing strategy? The Council's ability to use its own assets to contribute to increasing the supply of affordable housing will affect our ability to meet housing need.

To find out more:

Phone:	01865 252137
Email:	rtregidga@oxford.gov.uk
Fax:	01865 252440
Address:	Oxford City Council Asset Management 2nd Floor St Aldate's Chambers Oxford OX1 1DS

Equality Standard

What does it do? There is an agreed national Equalities Standard for local government to ensure equality of access, service delivery and representation. We are implementing the Equalities Standard as it provides a framework for us to ensure we deliver positive changes in a comprehensive and consistent manner. Progress against the standard is measured through five levels. We have achieved our target of reaching Level 1 by March 2005 and have set ourselves a series of targets leading to achievement of Level 4 by March 2008.

How is it relevant for the housing strategy? Housing services are often used by the most vulnerable people in society. For example, black and minority ethnic households are more than twice as likely as white households to become homeless. The strategy sets out areas where we aim to improve equality of access to housing and service standards.

To find out more:

Website:	www.oxford.gov/council/diversity-and-equality.cfm
Phone:	01865 249811. Ask for our Diversity Co-ordinator

APPENDIX 4: WIDER POLICY LINKAGES - Matching national priorities and local needs.

This table shows recent housing law and housing-related policy areas at all levels. Although they are not identical, there is a high degree of similarity between the national, regional and local priorities.

NATIONAL	REGIONAL (Priorities in the South East Regional Housing Strategy)	COUNTY (Priorities for Oxfordshire Community Partnership, Supporting People Commissioning Body and County Council)	OXFORD CITY Links to the Council's Vision and strategic housing priorities	OXFORD CITY Recent Achievements and Strategic Housing Actions for 2005 - 8
Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future; Homes for All 5-year Plan.	Affordable Housing	Affordable housing – support for development, setting planning controls	Provide more affordable housing	Increase the supply of affordable housing by 150 units per year
	Key workers	Key Worker PSA scheme; research into key workers	Provide more affordable housing	Joint working with OCP on PSA and research
	Decent Homes in the public and private sectors	Partnership working on Houseproud and “bed blocking” schemes	Improve the condition of housing in Oxford	Working towards Decent Homes and stock option appraisal; private sector survey completed
	Support for affordable housing to sustain rural communities	Oxfordshire Rural Housing Partnership	Oxford is an urban area but recognises the importance of support for small and isolated communities	n/a
Homelessness Act 2002	Increase supply of social rented housing to reduce homelessness	Homelessness – joint working and shared statement in all districts Homelessness Strategies; Social and Health Care policy framework for homelessness	High cost of homelessness and temporary accommodation	Tackle homelessness by prevention and intervention

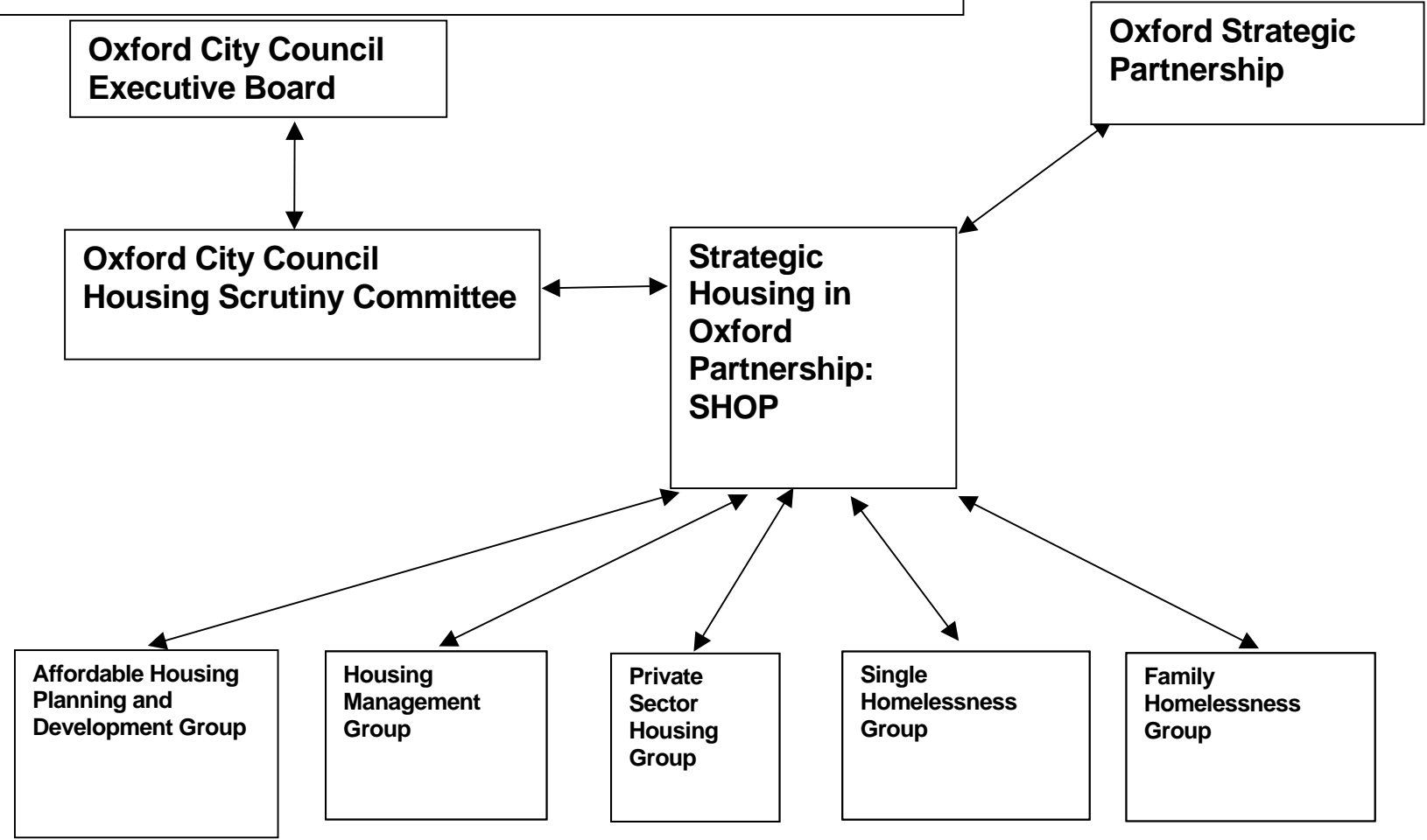
NATIONAL	REGIONAL (Priorities in the South East Regional Housing Strategy)	COUNTY (Priorities for Oxfordshire Community Partnership, Supporting People Commissioning Body and County Council)	OXFORD CITY Links to the Council's Vision and strategic housing priorities	OXFORD CITY Recent Achievements and Strategic Housing Actions for 2005 - 8
Race Relations (amendment) Act	Needs of Black and Minority Ethnic communities recognised	Equality policies in place	Legal requirements included in local policies; disproportionately high numbers of BME homeless households	BME Good Practice Guides published March 2005; BME housing strategy to be developed
Supporting People	Supported Housing capital funding through the Housing Corporation	Supporting People Commissioning Body working with all districts	Needs of vulnerable groups identified in Single Homeless Statement (part of Homelessness Strategy)	Review of housing provision for elderly people: housing strategy for older people planned ; support for vulnerable homeless groups including teenage parents
Anti-social Behaviour Act	Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour through building sustainable communities	Participates in Community Safety Partnership	Make Oxford a Safer City;	Street Warden service to be expanded
Housing Act 2004	Investment in private sector renewal		Improve the condition of housing in Oxford	Pilot HMO registration effective;
Home Energy Conservation Act	Funded developments must achieve EcoHomes "Very Good"		Improve the condition of housing in Oxford	Energy efficiency work on track to meet HECA targets

APPENDIX 5 - Strategic Housing Action Plan 2001 – 2004

Key Goal	Action	Responsible Lead Officer(s)	Proposed Target Date	Progress by 2004
<i>SHAP 1</i> To ensure a provision of housing across all tenures that is affordable, accessible, soundly managed and of a decent standard	To undertake a housing needs survey and related research. Including an assessment of older persons and key worker housing	David Hill Strategic Policy & Research Unit	Completed by November 2002	Survey report published April 2004. Includes needs analysis of key workers, elderly and disabled people and BME community
<i>SHAP 2</i> To bring the condition of homes in all tenures up to the "Decent Standard" by 2010	The Housing Revenue Account Business Plan has identified funding for a Stock Condition Survey to be undertaken	David Hill Strategic Policy & Research Unit	Completed by April 2003	Council Stock survey completed- final report publication Sept 2003. Private sector stock survey completed November 2004.
<i>SHAP 3</i> To provide 100 social rented and shared ownership homes per year, that people in housing need want and can afford	Through development work with our Housing Association Partners and through planning gain we will continue to facilitate the provision of affordable social housing. Housing Association Partnerships to be reviewed in 2002-03	Steve Northey Neighbourhood Renewal Unit Steve Northey Neighbourhood Renewal Unit	To be monitored on annual basis	46 units completed 2002/3, 128 in 2003/4. On track to meet target of 150 for 2004/5. Key worker & affordable housing targets in draft Local Plan. Partnership review deferred due to Housing Corporation policy change on partnering – initial event held February 2005.

Key Goal	Action	Responsible Lead Officer(s)	Proposed Target Date	Progress by 2004
<i>SHAP 4</i> To improve access and publicity on services to private sector residents & strengthen enforcement action	To continue the current work and to develop and action plan to implement the key goal	Andy Forbes Gail Siddall Environmental Health	To be monitored on annual basis	Service being maintained but unable to be proactive due to resource constraints. Position to be reviewed in developing private sector strategy.
<i>SHAP 5</i> To co-ordinate work with the Health Authority, Social Services, and voluntary organisations	To implement Supporting People by 2003 To assess the housing needs of lone parents and teenage mothers	Val Johnson Neighbourhood Renewal Unit	Completed by April 2003	Supporting People team and OCC links on schedule. Teenage pregnancy issues in hand with PCT – information sharing on need is informing service development
<i>SHAP 6</i> To carry out a multi-agency review of Homelessness and publish a general Homelessness Strategy	To co-ordinate the work of the Homelessness Task Force and produce a new general homelessness strategy To carry out a review of services to homeless people	David Hill Strategic Policy & Research Unit Neil Gibson Strategic Director Housing Health & Communities	Completed by July 2003 Completed by December 2002	Strategy published July 2003 Review completed, changes implemented from October 2003.
<i>SHAP 7</i> To develop a co-ordinated approach to neighbourhood renewal in partnership with other agencies	This is now the core remit of the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit	Val Johnson Neighbourhood Renewal Unit	To be monitored on annual basis	Range of new initiatives and partnership developed including E Oxford housing improvement Project, Street Wardens.
<i>SHAP 8</i> To improve the energy efficiency of all dwellings across all tenures by 30% by 2010	To continue the current work and to develop and action plan to implement the key goal	Dr Paul Robinson Environmental Health	To be monitored on annual basis	On schedule or slightly ahead.

APPENDIX 6: SHOP STRUCTURE AND MEMBERSHIP

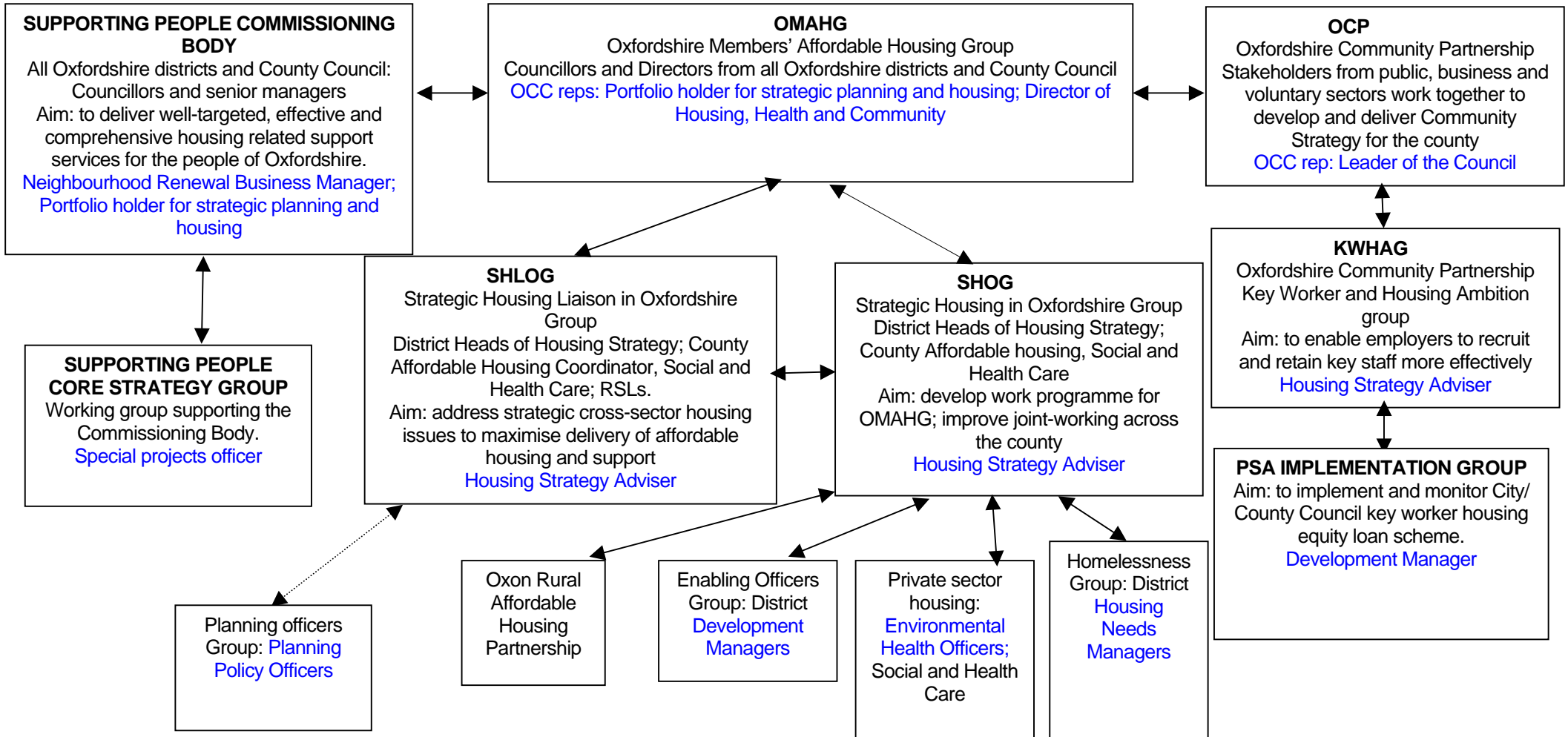


WHO'S WHO at SHOP

Name and job title	Role	Organisation	Name and job title	Role	Organisation
Michael Lawrence (Chair)	Strategic Director, Housing Health & Community	Oxford City Council	Andy Forbes (Chair, Private sector Group)	Environmental Health Policy and Performance Manager	Oxford City Council
Lesley Dewhurst (Chair, Single Homeless Group)	Director	Oxford Nightshelter	Geoffrey Ferres	Acting Manager	Oxfordshire Supporting People Team
Paula Jackson	Public Health Manager	Oxford Primary Care Trust	Cath Stubbings	Housing Strategy Adviser	Oxford City Council
Robyn Noonan	Partnerships Manager	Oxfordshire County Council Social and Health Care	Dennis Boobier	Housing Needs Manager	Oxford City Council
Kathy Mumby-Croft (Chair, Family Homeless Group)	Specialist Health Visitor	Oxford Primary Care Trust	Dawn Pettis	Affordable Housing Project Leader	Oxfordshire Community Partnership
David Truesdale (Chair, Housing Management Group)	Area Manager	Catalyst Housing Group			
Steve Northey (Chair, Development Group)	Development Manager	Oxford City Council			

APPENDIX 7: COUNTY-WIDE PARTNERSHIPS

(Oxford City Council representation is shown in blue)



APPENDIX 8: LOCAL PLAN HOUSING SITES

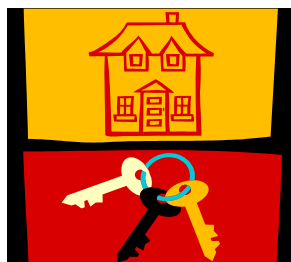
Urban Capacity Study (September 2004 following reappraisals and latest planning applications)					Non-discounted (included) sites
Local Plan policy (see note below)	Location	Area	Phase	Owner	Capacity
DS.2	Abbey Place Car Park, Thames Street	n/r	m	Private	25
DS.4A	Arthur Street (off Mill Street)	0.3	m	University of Oxford	20
DS.5	Barton Village School, Fettiplace Road	1.1	s	Oxfordshire County Council	54
DS.6	Bernwood School, North Way	1.7	s	Oxfordshire County Council	69
DS.7B	Between Towns Road	0.6	m	Private	40
DS.8	BMW, Banbury Road	0.4	s	Private	32
DS.11	BT site, Paradise Street	0.6	s	BT	95
DS.12	Canalside land off Cardigan Street	0.5	s	BWB and Oxford City Council	42
DS.14B	Cooper Callas site, Paradise Street	0.1	s	Cooper Callas Ltd	20
DS.15	Cowley Centre	n/r	m	Templars Square Ltd	20
DS.15A	Cowley Marsh Depot site, Marsh Road	1.8	m	Oxford City Council	150
DS.17	Bus Depot site, Cowley Road	4	s	Go Ahead Group	227
DS.20	Diamond Place (Ferry Pool Car Park site)	n/r	m	Private and Oxford City Council	50
DS.22	Donnington Middle School, Cornwallis Rd	1.8	s	Oxfordshire County Council	40
DS.25	Elsfield Hall, Elsfield Way	0.8	s	Oxford Psychologists Press Ltd	24
DS.26	Garden House, Hollow Way	0.5	s	Oxfordshire County Council	10
DS.38A	Leiden Road	0.5	m	Oxfordshire County Council	25
DS.40	Lucy's Factory site, Walton Well Road	2.1	s	W Lucy & Co	266
DS.41	Mable Pritchard School, St. Nicholas Road	0.4	s	Oxfordshire County Council	19
DS.42	Manor Ground, London Road	2	s	Mr Kassam	87
DS.44	Milham Ford School, Marston Road	2.8	s	Oxfordshire County Council	109
DS.47A	Northfield School site, Kestrel Crescent	2.1	m	Oxfordshire County Council	85
DS.49	OAC Factory site, Woodstock Road	3.7	s	Berkeley Homes	188
DS.52	Oseney Court, Botley Road	0.4	s	Oxfordshire County Council	44
DS.54	Osney Mill and Works, Mill Street	0.7	m	W H Munsey Ltd and others	30
DS.58A	Oxford Railway Station and Becket Street Car Park	n/r	l	Railtrack Property	60

DS.63A	Park End Street / St Thomas' Street	0.4	s	T H Kingerlee & Sons Ltd	55
DS.66A	Railway Lane (former oil depot)	1	s	BP Oil UK Ltd	30
DS.68A	Fire Station, Rewley Road	0.5	m	Oxfordshire Fire Authority	0
DS.69	Rivermead Hospital, Abingdon Road	1.8	s	Nuffield Orthopedic Centre NHS Trust	132
DS.70	Scrap Yard, Jackdaw Lane	1.5	m	Metal Salvage Ltd	70
DS.72	Speedwell First School, Sandford Road	1.3	s	Oxfordshire County Council	46
DS.72A	Telephone Exchange, Speedwell Street	0.4	m	BT	50
DS.73	west of St. Aldate's south of Queen Street	n/r	m	Private and Oxford City Council	25
DS.73B	Police Station, St Aldate's	n/r	l	Thames Valley Police, Benefits Agency	25
DS.74	St. Augustine's School, Iffley Turn	1.5	s	RC Diocese of Birmingham	50
DS.75	Suffolk House, Banbury Road	n/r	s	Private	0
DS.79	Temple Cowley Middle School	2.1	s	Oxfordshire County Council	92
DS.80	Trap Grounds off Aristotle Lane	1.3	s	Oxford City Council	45
DS.82	Upper Meadow / Quarry Bank, Old Road	0.7	s	Private	26
DS.85	Westgate Centre	n/r	m	Oxford City Council	25
DS.86	Windmill First School, Margaret Road	0.5	s	Oxfordshire County Council	29
DS.87	Wolvercote Paper Mill, Mill Road	4.5	l	Oxford University Press	150
DS.19	Cuttleslowe Court				
DS.88	Worcester St Car Park				
Regeneration Zones (capacity excludes identified sites within zone)					
DS.7D	Blackbird Leys Road		n/r	l	50
DS.73B	St Aldate's		n/r	l	30
Allocated sites but no housing capacity estimated					
DS.4	Albion Place Car Park and Magistrates' Court		n/r	m	0
DS.14A	Oxford College of Further Education, Oxpens Road		n/r	l	0
DS.59	Oxpens Road site		n/r	l	0
DS.84	Warneford Meadow site		n/r	m	0
The Local Plan policy number refers to the site specific policy in the Second Draft Oxford Local Plan 2001 - 2016					
n/r = not relevant					
phase means estimated timescale: short (2001-2006), medium (2006-2011), long (2011-2016)					

APPENDIX 9: LORD MAYOR'S DEPOSIT GUARANTEE SCHEME

LORD MAYOR'S DEPOSIT GUARANTEE SCHEME

Helping people in housing need rent a home



Major Achievements April-December 2004

- 40 New Bonds/tenancies provided
- 71 Number of people housed this year
- 35 Existing Bonds/tenancies renewed
- 306 Number of people applying and interviewed
- Set up two drop in surgeries at St. Aldates Chambers and East Oxford
One stop shop OCC offices to Increase access to the Scheme
- 277 Visited- Bond holders in their own homes
- Introduced a Savings Scheme (currently over 70% of Bond Holders
Saving into the Scheme)
- Provide Starter Packs of household items for Bond Holders

Financial Inclusion: The Savings Scheme offers a way for people to contribute towards their own deposit while they are living in properties with our support. This has proved to be financially beneficial to Bondholders as, providing that there are no claims on the property, they are saving money that they can take away to use as a deposit on their next property, or to pay moving costs, for example. This in turn means that more of our funds are available to help more people.

Oxford City Council Homelessness Strategy delivery plan;
To 'Introduce a comprehensive flexible funding scheme to meet the needs of homeless households and private sector landlords'
Partners included; the Lord Mayor's Deposit Guarantee Scheme
Outcome of this strategy; less presentations to OCC and reduced demand.

The Scheme provides a clear path in tackling and preventing homelessness, by providing access to affordable housing with ongoing support. In order to achieve this LMDGS has encouraged landlords to use the Scheme by offering a comprehensive service. This includes liaising with other agencies to provide ongoing support to tenants to achieve a successful tenancy, providing increased access to the Scheme by setting up local surgeries and providing information in other languages in order to provide access to all. In tackling issues surrounding poverty it promotes a stable environment for those who have lived chaotic lives through constant movement resulting from lack of access to accommodation

**To find out more about the scheme, contact us at Oxford Citizens' Housing Association,
244 Barns Road, Oxford. OX4 3RW. Tel: 01865 773000**

APPENDIX 10: PERFORMANCE AGAINST BEST VALUE INDICATORS

This table shows how the Council has performed in a range of important housing-related areas. In most cases these are shown with the targets set in the 2003-4 Best Value Performance Plan. We have also included some new indicators that are particularly relevant for Oxford.

Code	Description	Position at 30 March 2004*	Target 2004-5	3 rd quarter	On target?	Projected at year-end
BVPI 66a	Percentage of rent collected	95.85%	96.6%	94.75%	Yes	97%
BV 184a	The proportion of local authority homes which were non-decent at start of financial year	51%	33.3%	39.88%	Yes	38.3%
BV 202	The number of people sleeping rough on a single night within the area of the local authority	7	Local target 35; ODPM target 7	12	Yes	5
BV 203	The % change in the average number of families, which include dependant children or a pregnant woman, placed in temporary accommodation under the homelessness legislation compared with the average from the previous year.	236 (total for year)	None (new for 2005/6)	Decrease of 11.6%	N/a	N/a
BV (X16) (new)	Households who considered themselves as homeless, who approached the local housing authority's housing advice service and for whom housing advice casework intervention resolved their situation.	Not reported	None (new for 2005/6)		N/a	N/a
BVPI 74	Tenant satisfaction	72.77%	79%	N/a	No	No change

* Source: 2004/5 HIP Return

APPENDIX 11: EXTRACT FROM HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2004/05

Items in italics were not included in the original Committee work programme.

17th March 2005	Tenancy Services	Simon Price	Update on progress against the Tenancy Services Action Plan, produced following an inspection by the Audit Commission.
	Voids	Graham Stratford/Simon Price	Update on the number of void properties and the average time to re-let voids.
	Rough Sleepers Review – Progress Update	Nerys Parry	The Committee has asked for a report back on developments following the review of rough sleeping carried out in February 2004.
	Affordable Housing Procurement/Review of the Housing Development Team	Val Johnson	The Committee is asked to comment on the outcome of a workshop that will be held to review affordable housing procurement and existing partnership arrangements with RSL's.
	Housing Strategy	Cath Stubbings	The Council has developed its 2005-2008 Housing Strategy. The Committee is asked to comment on the Strategy. This item may be delayed until the 28 th April 2005.
	Staff Headcount	Anne Marie Scott	The Human Resources Business Manager has produced a report, which provides information on the changes to Full Time Equivalent Staff (FTE) headcount, excluding casual and seasonal staff for the period 2001-2005.
	Kendric Ash Contract Monitoring	Richard Josephs	The Internal Audit Business Unit is to carry out an audit of the Kendric Ash partnership contract to assess whether it has met performance targets. The Committee will be updated on progress with this.
28th April 2005	Stock Options Appraisal	Karen Ravenhill	The Stock Options Appraisal report will be presented to the Committee for consultation prior to approval by the Housing Advisory Board and Council. The Committee may wish to highlight to the implications of the recommended options for housing in the city.
	Voids	Graham Stratford/Simon Price	<i>Update on the number of void properties and the average time to re-let voids.</i>
	Homelessness Research	Simon Price	The Housing Services Business Unit has commissioned research into

	Tenant Reward Scheme Review	Andrew Davies	Homelessness in Oxford. The results will be presented to the Housing Scrutiny Committee. Final report from the Tenant Reward Scheme Review Group.
--	-----------------------------	---------------	--

Still to be timetabled:

- Business Plan deliverables in Housing Services and OBS
- Private Sector Housing Strategy
- Older Person Housing Strategy
- Sheltered Housing Review
- Allocation Percentages Review – October 2005
- Allocations Review
- Demoted Tenancies – 6 month review (September/October 2005)
- CSDPA (Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act)
- BME Housing Strategy Consultation Results
- Private Sector Stock Condition Survey timetable and action plan
- Staff numbers

Review Subjects:

The following subject areas were suggested as possible reviews at the Housing Scrutiny Committee on 8th July 2004. The Committee is asked to select a third review topic for the 2004/05 municipal year.

- HMO's
- Housing Vulnerable Young People
- Long Term Voids

APPENDIX 12: CONTACTS FOR MORE INFORMATION

Thank you for taking time to read this strategy. We would welcome any comments you have to make. You can contact Catherine Stubbings, Housing Strategy Adviser, by phone (01865 252131), e mail (cstubbings@oxford.gov.uk) or post (Strategy and Review, Town Hall, Oxford, OX1 1BX) with any general comments or questions.

If you would like to know or say more about a particular aspect of our plans, please use this list to help you find the right person. The list gives details fro all officers listed in the Action Plan. Officers are based in a variety of locations but post addressed to the Town Hall will reach them.

Job title	Name	Telephone	E Mail
Development Manager	Steve Northey	01865 252717	snorthey@oxford.gov.uk
Environmental Health Business Manager	John Copley	01865 252386	jcopley@oxford.gov.uk
Financial Services Business Manager	Sarah Fogden/ Penny Gardner	01865 252708 (for both officers)	sfogden@oxford.gov.uk pgardner@oxford.gov.uk
Housing Allocations Manager	David Scholes	01865 252636	dscholes@oxford.gov.uk
Housing Needs Manager	Dennis Boobier	01865 252660	dboobier@oxford.gov.uk
Housing Strategy Adviser	Catherine Stubbings	01865 252131	cstubbings@oxford.gov.uk
Housing Services Business Manager (acting)	Graham Stratford	01865 252447	gstratford@oxford.gov.uk
Housing Services Business Manager (seconded to stock option appraisal)	Karen Ravenhill	01865 252071	kravenhill@oxford.gov.uk
Neighbourhood Renewal Business Manager	Val Johnson	01865 252662	vjohnson@oxford.gov.uk
Oxford Building Solutions Business Manager	Graham Bourton	01865 253634	gbourton@oxford.gov.uk
Oxford Strategic Partnership Manager	Gavin Musk	01865 252505	gmusk@oxford.gov.uk
Planning Service Business Manager	Michael Crofton-Briggs	01865 252360	mcroftonbriggs@oxford.gov.uk
Policy and Performance Manager (Housing Services)	Simon Price	01865 252751	sprice@oxford.gov.uk
Policy and Performance Manager (Private Sector Housing)	Andy Forbes	01865 252564	aforbes@oxford.gov.uk
Policy and Performance Officer	Jo Bullock	01865 252119	jbullock@oxford.gov.uk
Revenues and Benefits Business Manager	Paul Warters	01865 252290	pwarters@oxford.gov.uk
Strategy and Review Business Manager	Janet Banfield	01865 252692	jbanfield@oxford.gov.uk
Strategic Director of Housing, Health and Community	Michael Lawrence	01865 252472	mlawrence@oxford.gov.uk
Tenant Participation Officer	To be confirmed	01865 252706	sprice@oxford.gov.uk (pending appointment of new post holder)

APPENDIX 13: GLOSSARY

This Glossary is a tool to help readers make the most of the housing strategy. It is not intended to give a precise or legal definition of the terms used.

<p>Affordable Housing Housing for people who are unable to resolve their housing needs in the local private market due to the relationship between housing costs and income.</p>	<p>Choice Based Letting (CBL) Method of allocating social housing that offers more choice to applicants. Due to be introduced nationally by 2010.</p>	<p>Executive Board The Council's core decision-making body, similar to the Cabinet in national Government</p>	<p>HIP (Housing Investment Programme) Annual statement by councils to government of local statistical and financial information about housing conditions and needs and proposed plans for housing.</p>
<p>Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) A set of national indicators used to assess and compare performance across a range of council services</p>	<p>Community Strategy Under the Local Government Act 2000, councils must produce a strategy for improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of their communities.</p>	<p>Fuel Poverty Households having to spend more than 10% of their income on fuel in order to maintain a reasonable degree of comfort throughout their home are regarded as experiencing fuel poverty</p>	<p>Housing Association Not for profit organisation, usually registered with the Housing Corporation, which builds and manages affordable housing.</p>
<p>Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Generic term for people or communities who are not White British</p>	<p>Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) An assessment of a council's overall performance at a particular point in time</p>	<p>HECA (Home Energy Conservation Act) This Act places responsibility on councils to produce reports outlining practical, cost-effective measures for achieving energy saving in homes in their area.</p>	<p>Housing Corporation The official body which provides funding for registered housing associations. It also regulates their performance.</p>
<p>Capital Capital expenditure is money spent on long-term assets, for example the purchase or the improvement of property, vehicles and machinery</p>	<p>Disabled Facility Grant A grant available to disabled people to adapt their homes so that they can live more independently</p>	<p>Homes for All 5 year national strategy for housing published by ODPM February 2005</p>	<p>Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Funding provided by the Government to help meet the costs of providing the housing service and related activities</p>

<p>LSP Local Strategic Partnership: a multi-agency, multi-sector partnership responsible for the Community Strategy. Designed to coordinate local services, agencies and bodies to ensure coherence and effective working at the local level.</p>	<p>Revenue Revenue expenditure is money spent on day-to-day running costs, such as salaries, stationery, telephone charges</p>	<p>S106 Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act enables local authorities to charge developers for additional amenities needed in the neighbourhood, including affordable housing.</p>	
<p>MRA The sum of money allocated by the government each year for every property the council owns, to enable essential repair and improvement work to be done.</p>	<p>RSL (Registered social landlord) Generally used to mean the same as housing association.</p>	<p>Talkback A panel made up of volunteers from the community, who provide feedback to Council consultation on a range of topics. This information is used to guide the development of policies and services to ensure that they meet the needs and desires of the public.</p>	
<p>Move-on This is permanent accommodation provided for people moving out of short-stay housing projects such as hostels.</p>	<p>SAP Standard Assessment Procedure. Standard way of measuring the energy efficiency of a building.</p>	<p>Tenants' Panel A group of elected tenants who provide feedback on council consultation, policies and services, on behalf of all tenants</p>	
<p>MoveUK National scheme to promote housing opportunities linked to employment, proposed in Homes for All.</p>	<p>Stock Options Appraisal A process that the Council must go through to determine the most appropriate way of managing its housing stock in the future</p>	<p>Void A vacant property</p>	
<p>ODPM Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. The government department responsible for housing.</p>	<p>Stakeholder A person or organisation with an interest in the council's housing services.</p>		

