

## Appendix one

### Background

1. Rose Hill Flats are owned & managed by Oxford City Council.
2. It is a development of 28 properties comprising 16 studio flats, & 12 1-bedroom flats. Also attached are 4 flats in Ashurst Way, which are considered integral to this block (these tenants are included wherever Rose Hill Flats are referred to). There are no internal communal areas in the block but there are communal gardens & drying areas.
3. Oxford City Council currently allocates these properties to applicants over the age of 40 with support needs (due to the hard-wired alarms available). The block has been chosen as the pilot for de-designation given strong evidence that the majority of demand for single persons accommodation is from applicants under the age of 40.
4. As part of the de-designation process, current tenants over the age of 55 (proposed higher age limit for designated properties) will be given the opportunity to transfer away from the block if they so wish. There will be close management of any moves that are necessary & tenants will be compensated for moving.
5. There will be consultation with each tenant on an individual basis about the proposed changes to the way the block is allocated.
6. There have been some serious management problems at the scheme in recent years. These problems have included vandalism & behavioural issues related to drug & alcohol abuse.
7. Additionally, the location of the block, adjacent to the parade of shops, has also lead to incidents of anti-social behaviour from non-tenants in the area.
8. Turnover in the scheme has been reasonably high. In the last 2 years, 12 tenancies were ended for the following reasons:
  - Transfer
  - Death
  - Moving to private address
  - Rehabilitation
9. Of the 32 current tenants of Rose Hill Flats, most have an identified support need (which include mental health issues & suspected substance abuse issues). Several agencies provide support to the tenants.

10. Of the 32 current tenants of the scheme, over 80% are in receipt of benefits.
11. These properties have been difficult to let in recent years because they are designated for older applicants with support needs. On average a successful allocation has taken between 2 & 5 offers. Average void time is 19 weeks for these properties due to the difficulty in letting them.

### **Purpose of the Local Lettings Plan**

12. To stabilise the scheme following de-designation by having tenants who want to live in the environment of the scheme & who value the property as their settled home.
13. To build a sustainable community within the scheme by having a mix of tenants & offering a range of management initiatives to reduce the number of tenancies that end.
14. To improve the quality of life for all the tenants living in Rose Hill Flats.

### **Management Initiatives**

15. Having a robust management plan for the scheme is integral to implementing a successful lettings plan for any scheme.
16. Cherwell Housing Trust has already set up management & environmental improvements at Gibbs Crescent, working in conjunction with the Crime prevention Officer & the Local Community Beat Officer.
17. These improvements include:
  - Support & advice during Accompanied Viewing & Sign-up from Void Property Officer & Rent Officer
  - Support from Tenancy Sustainment Officer as required
  - Weekly scheme inspections by the Estate Manager during their walkabout
  - 28 Day Welcome visits by the Estate manager after tenants move in. This is to ensure they have settled in & have no outstanding issues that need to be dealt with
  - Regular patrols by Street Wardens & Police Community Officers
  - Enhanced repairs service for issues of security & exterior damage to the block

## **Lettings Proposals**

18. It is proposed that the Local Lettings Plan will be introduced for Rose Hill Flats for 12 months initially, with an in-built 6-month review.
19. The following criteria will be adhered to by Oxford City Council:
  - Tenants must usually be at least 18 years old (although younger tenants may be considered with a guarantor)
  - No children allocated as part of the household for the flats in the scheme
  - Introductory Tenancies are offered to all new tenants where appropriate
  - Up to 25% of all vacancies can be offered specifically to applicants in employment to prevent a polarised area of deprivation
  - Prospective tenants who have identified support needs will only be allocated to the scheme if they have an on-going & effective support package/plan in place, which is standard Allocations practice for any single accommodation
  - Careful consideration must be made before offering a tenancy to anyone with a history of being vulnerable to exploitation by others
  - No cats or dogs will be allowed in the scheme
20. It is proposed that a formal review of the scheme is carried out after 6 months & 12 months to assess the effectiveness of the Local Lettings Plan & consider extending the term of the Plan