

6 CHAPTER 6: Plan for the Future

6.1 Research and Intelligence

6.1.1 The Council has developed a wide range of information on the City's housing stock, the needs of residents and the dynamics of the housing market. This information is used to inform and develop strategies and services to ensure real needs are being met. The key studies undertaken to date include the:

- Oxfordshire Housing Market Assessment 2007/08;
- Housing Requirements Study 2004;
- Private Sector Housing Condition Survey 2004;
- Sheltered Housing Appraisal 2006;
- Homelessness Strategy Review 2007/08, and;
- HRA Stock Condition Survey 2004/05.

6.1.2 The Council is committed to undertaking continuing research to keep its knowledge of housing needs across the City up to date. A countywide Housing Needs Assessment (to follow-up on the 2004 Housing Requirements Study) is planned for 2008/09. This will identify the housing needs of people from different communities across Oxford and the County enabling the improvement and tailoring of services. Additional study will also take place to establish the reasons for perceived high levels of homelessness among people from BME communities and whether there are any particular housing needs issues affecting these communities that are not being addressed by the Council and its partners.

6.1.3 The Council will also be continuing in its development of an affordable housing development strategy, which will identify medium, and long term plans for delivering the challenging affordable housing targets required to meet known demand. An Affordable Housing Select Committee has been convened in 2008 to look specifically at how these targets can be met, what the barriers to delivery are and how consensus can be achieved.

6.1.4 The Council will undertake an annual review of all of its housing themed strategies (Housing, Homelessness, BME, Older Persons, Private Sector, HRA and Development) to identify what has been achieved, areas where additional effort or resources may need to be targeted to ensure delivery and the addition of new activities where ongoing research and analysis identifies a need. The results of these reviews will be made public as updates to the main strategy document so the people of Oxford are kept informed of progress and new initiatives.

6.1.5 The Council will work with its strategic partners to ensure that existing partnerships are working effectively and are delivering clear outcomes

for residents and providing value for money. In particular the Council will review the City wide strategic housing partnership (SHOP) and work to develop countywide partnerships (OHP, LAA and Supporting People) ensuring they effective for the people of Oxford.

- 6.1.6 The Council will actively lobby for local, regional and national support for its plans to provide significant, additional affordable housing in and around the City to ensure that housing needs of the people living and working in the City are met.

6.2 Value for Money

- 6.3 The Council spends considerable sums of money on delivering housing services and improving the housing stock. See Appendix 7 for financial details of capital investment and revenue expenditure on housing services. Additional detailed budget information is supplied on the Council's web site.

- 6.4 The financial decisions that the Council makes for housing and housing support services are guided by Oxford's key policy aims: to deliver an average of 150 units of social housing per year, reach the Decent Homes Standard for the Council's stock by 2010 and prevent homelessness. The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) sets out the future direction for HRA and General Fund capital investment and revenue expenditure in relation to housing services.

- 6.5 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 sock. 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.

6.6 General Fund

- 6.7 General Fund (GF) revenue expenditure on housing is dominated by the costs of homelessness. Improved performance in this area has resulted in a reduction in spending and a focus on more efficient preventative working. The main area of expenditure where savings have been made is in the provision of temporary accommodation. Use of temporary accommodation has reduced by 45% since 2003/04 and use of bed and breakfast has all but been eliminated. Substantial savings have been made as a result (£3.5M).

- 6.8 The Council has been successful in securing additional funding for homelessness services in the City. This includes an increased grant allocation from CLG for homeless prevention and rough sleeper services (£640,000) and an additional £15,000 funding as a result of the Council's

award as Regional Homelessness Champions in 2008. The Council also receives significant Supporting People funding to deliver tenancy support to homeless households placed in temporary accommodation and to provide the warden call-out service.

6.9 Capital Programme Funding (GF and HRA)

- 6.9.1 In terms of the Council's Capital Investment Programme, the Council's major investment is meeting the Decent Homes Standard for its Council tenancies and sustaining the current level of expenditure on private sector housing. The Council wants to move away from funding non-HRA capital spending by selling assets as this is not sustainable. In future, asset sales will be banked into an investment fund to generate future revenue income. Borrowing will be used to fund investment where there is a sustainable business case. The medium-term aim of the Council's efficiency drive and asset management review is to generate an annual revenue contribution towards capital investment. This investment would be used to reduce the repairs backlog on the Council's retained assets and improve services.
- 6.9.2 Council has approved the HRA Stock, Decent Homes Strategy. This gives direction for immediate, medium and longer-term future of the stock. For the sheltered schemes this involves selling four properties and using the proceeds to fund decent homes and re-modeling works on the remaining blocks. For the tower blocks all five blocks will be brought up to decent homes standard by 31 December 2010 and a specialist consultant will be used to appraise future options. This will include producing a report setting out a realistic timescale and financial profile. The Council owns a number of 'Non-traditional' properties that have known defects. They are currently being assessed. The result of which will determine their longer-term future.
- 6.9.3 Funding the HRA capital programme, most of which relates to decent homes, is dependant upon a number of sources of finance. This includes revenue contributions, asset disposal (capital receipts) and major repairs allowance. If enough funding is not raised from capital receipts the HRA would need to look at prudential borrowing, the repayments of which could mean reducing service provision.

- 6.9.4 The recent trend for investment has been an increase to ensure improvements to the housing stock (primarily Council owned). Capital investment has increased up to a peak of £18.8 million in 2008/09 as the drive to meet the 2010 decent homes target increases. Significant improvement in the HRA financial position has been achieved over the last 3 years. The funding gap is now reduced to circa £6.5 million to achieve the decency deadline of 2010/11. The main area of improvement has been the approval of some £15.5 million of asset sales and improving on the budgeted revenue surplus year on year.
- 6.9.5 The level of additional disposals required is determinate on longer-term strategic decisions on the tower blocks and 'Non-traditional' properties. The concerns with timing of capital receipts and expenditure applies equally to the HRA and care will need to be taken that spend does not outpace funding.
- 6.9.6 The HRA is expected to fund capital expenditure of £0.8m in 2007-08 and onwards from the revenue account. The revenue budget shown in the revenue section of the MTFS shows an ongoing surplus of £0.8m. Any reduction in funding from revenue will mean further proceeds will be required from asset disposals.

- 6.9.7 The capital program includes estimated costs for decency and remodeling of the Sheltered Accommodation. The majority of the proposed expenditure relates to decent homes and is based on the initial data from Savills collected in 2003. This estimated costs by cloning similar housing types. The HRA are undertaking an on-going survey of all houses which is informing the spend figures included in the programme for 2007/08 to 2010/11.
- 6.9.8 The key assumption in the spend figures is that the capital programme excludes major structural works on the tower blocks. Should the long-term decision be to undertake this work there may be a delay in meeting the decent homes target. From a value for money perspective, it is prudent to deal with the longer-term strategy sooner rather than delay.
- 6.9.9 The decisions will determine the level of funding required. The Government of the South East (GOSE) office has indicated that an extension to the decent homes deadline for tower blocks is feasible, provided there is a clear longer-term strategy and an approved plan for financing the expenditure.
- 6.10 The Council is committed to continuing its work of improving the efficiency of its housing services to ensure that value for money is maximised. This work will include ensuring that housing services run efficiently, income is maximised, services are delivered in partnership and continuing savings are made to reduce overall expenditure.
- 6.11 The Council will also continue to develop its performance monitoring framework to provide clear evidence of service improvements (including a range of service user satisfaction measures) and improve its use of benchmarking tools to increase our understanding of the relative costs of services provided in relation to other similar Councils.

6.12 Summary of Main Action Points To Plan for the Future:

Strategic Objective 6: Improve our understanding of housing needs to develop and implement housing strategy.

- Undertake a comprehensive housing needs assessment across the county in partnership with housing authorities and other relevant organisations.
- Commission research on the housing circumstances and needs of BME communities.
- Analyse whether the reasons why BME households become homeless tend to be different from the reasons why households from the British White population become homeless
- Prepare and implement an affordable housing development strategy for the City
- Annual reviews of implementation of suite of housing strategies (Housing; homelessness; BME; Older Persons; Private Sector)

- Develop the range of strategic housing partnerships the City is working with to maximise affordable housing provision and service improvements.
- Lobby for the City's housing needs to be effectively represented in regional and sub-regional community and housing strategies.

Strategic Objective 7: Ensure housing services offer value for money.

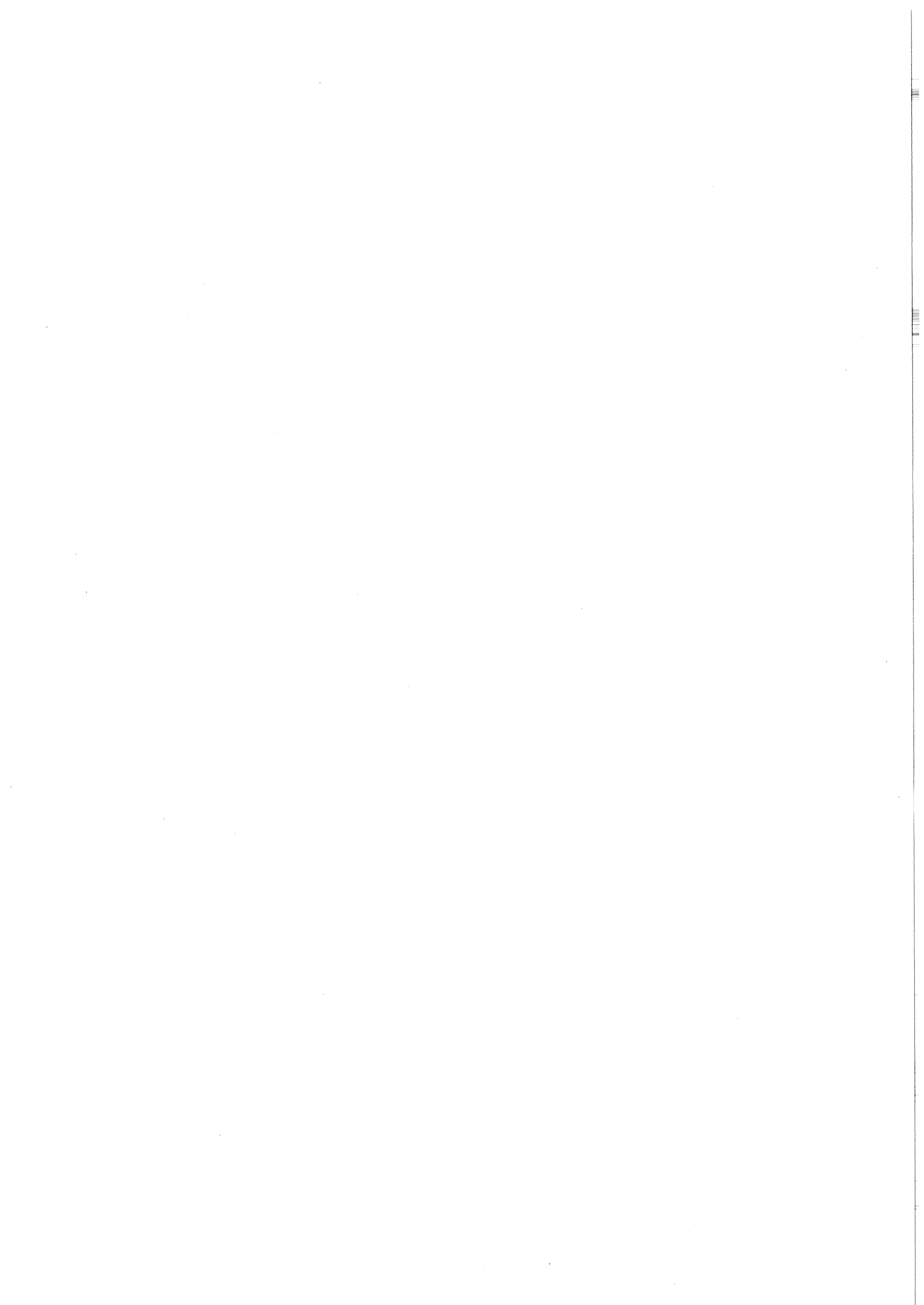
- Manage the HRA finances and assets so that both the capital and revenue budgets are effectively funded year on year to enable the other strategic objectives to be delivered.
- Improve the collection of rents, service charges and arrears, maximising the collection of rent from Council homes (permanent and temporary) garages and shops.
- Improve the efficiency of homelessness prevention work through more effective use of Homechoice deposit guarantee resources through use of Bonds and recovery and recycling.
- Improve efficiency of services through use of improved IT systems (housing advice, Customer Relationship Management).
- Review management of temporary accommodation to ensure faster turnover and collection of arrears and recharges.
- Ongoing strategic reviews of grant funding programme for homelessness service providers in the City.
- Review and improve performance management arrangements to drive the value for money agenda.
- Ongoing benchmarking of housing services to identify and remedy areas of high cost and poor services.

7 CHAPTER 7: How this strategy will be implemented and monitored?

- 7.1 An action plan for this Housing strategy has been developed (see Chapter 8) to focus effort on delivering the strategic objectives identified for each service area. This action plan is directly linked to the action plans for the sub-housing strategies also used by the Council (e.g. homelessness, private sector, older persons, BME, HRA Business Plan) and to the Councils corporate and partnership plans and priorities. These explicit links are identified in the action plan.
- 7.2 All the actions in the plan are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Accountable, Resourced, Time-bound) and so have:
- Clear explanations;
 - Milestones;
 - Challenging but realistic targets;
 - Officer responsibilities;
 - Additional resources required;
 - Timescales, and;
 - Measures of success.
- 7.3 Progress in implementing this strategy is monitored by SHOP and Housing Scrutiny Committee. SHOP's main functions are to:
- Develop and review local housing and homelessness strategies;
 - Monitor progress of the housing and homelessness strategy action plans;
 - Act as a resource for the Oxford Strategic Partnership;
 - Contribute and respond to the regional and sub-regional housing agendas and lobby for recognition of Oxford's supply and affordability issues;
 - Co-ordinate theme or task based sub-groups, taking forward any issues through the political or OSP structure as appropriate.
- 7.4 To ensure focused 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. The groups deal with practical issues relating to implementation, reporting back to SHOP.
- 7.5 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.
- 7.6 This regular review process also enables any slippage in programmes to be considered and either accepted or for remedial action to be taken. Concern over any priority action that could affect the Council's performance 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.

- 7.7 A full annual review and updating of the strategic action plans will take place from 2008, 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.



8 CHAPTER 8: Action Plan

Strategic Objective 1: Provide more affordable housing to meet current and future needs in and around the City.

Action	Target Dates	Responsibility	Additional Resources Required	Success Measures	Links to Other Strategies / Priorities
Deliver an average of 150 affordable new homes each year ensuring that at least 30% are 3 bedroom or larger.	Annually to 2011	Development Manager & RSLs	TBC	Target on new affordable homes met. Meet LAA target.	Sustainable Community Strategy
Obtain the maximum possible affordable homes through the planning system	Annually to 2016	Head of Planning	Funded within existing budgets	Increased numbers of homes delivered via the planning system (minimum of 40% p.a.)	Sustainable Community Strategy Local Plan
Continue to lobby for and progress proposals to develop on development land around the City.	Annually / ongoing	Director City Regeneration, Head of Service Community Housing and Development, Head of Planning	Existing staff resource	New developments progressed and appropriate funding secured,	Sustainable Community Strategy
Achieve local growth targets set in local and structure plans and	Annually to 2016 – 2026	Head of Planning	Existing staff resource	Local growth targets met	

Action	Target Dates	Responsibility	Additional Resources Required	Success Measures	Links to Other Strategies / Priorities
<p>regional housing strategy.</p> <p>Monitor housing affordability using local housing market indicators</p>	<p>Annually</p>	<p>Service Development Manager, Community Housing</p>	<p>Existing staff resource</p>	<p>Ongoing understanding of affordability across tenures and market constituents. Actions developed to tackle key affordability issues.</p>	<p>Sustainable Community Strategy</p>
<p>Exploit all opportunities to provide social and other low cost housing in areas of traditional BME settlement. Ensure that social housing mix reflects the needs of the communities seeking to live in the areas.</p>	<p>Annually / ongoing</p>	<p>Development Manager</p>	<p>TBC</p>	<p>Completed schemes. Reduction and eventual elimination of the disparity applying to social housing lettings to particular BME groups</p>	<p>BME Housing Strategy</p>

Action	Target Dates	Responsibility	Additional Resources Required	Success Measures	Links to Other Strategies / Priorities
Remodel Council owned temporary accommodation to permanent homes.	2009	Housing Needs Manager	TBC	Accommodation remodelled and let.	
Increase availability of affordable supported accommodation for single homeless people (e.g. Littlemore Baptist Church and the Emmaus project)	Varies, but completions form 2009	Housing Needs Manager, Single Homelessness Manager	TBC	Schemes open and increase in suitable accommodation.	Sustainable Community Strategy

Strategic Objective 2: Prevent and reduce homelessness;

Action	Target Dates	Responsibility	Additional Resources Required	Success Measures	Links to Other Strategies / Priorities
Please refer to the Homelessness Strategy 2008 - 2012 for the full action plan.					

Homelessness Strategy 2008 – 2013 Objectives

- Increase the range of housing options and services available to prevent homelessness.
- Reduce the numbers of homeless people against key targets.
- Support families in housing need to prevent homelessness.
- Support rough sleepers into settled accommodation and develop clear pathways into permanent homes, training and employment.
- Support vulnerable young people in housing need to prevent homelessness.
- Improve housing options services.
- Identify and address the specific housing needs of different groups in the community who are at risk of homelessness.
- Ensure housing options services offer value for money.

Strategic Action 3: Address the housing needs of vulnerable people

Action	Target Dates	Responsibility	Additional Resources Required	Success Measures	Links to Other Strategies / Priorities
Implement new housing support services for older people following the Supporting People review.	2009	Head of Service Community Housing and Development, Supporting People partnership	TBC – within Supporting People budgets.	New services implemented, service users satisfied.	Sustainable Community Strategy. Supporting People
Implement new floating support service for people with mental health problems in the City	2008	Head of Service Community Housing and Development, Supporting People partnership	Within Supporting People budgets	New services implemented, service users satisfied.	Sustainable Community Strategy Supporting People Homelessness
Undertake feasibility study for learning and support based accommodation scheme for homeless young people (Foyer)	2009	Head of Service Community Housing and Development	TBC	Feasibility study complete, clear plans for implementation developed.	Supporting People, Homelessness
Improve domestic violence services in the City to reduce harm and risk to women and prevent	2008 – new refuge services in place. Ongoing monitoring of this and sanctuary schemes	Service Development Manager, Housing Needs Manager	Within Supporting People budgets & existing staff resources	New refuge services in place, sanctuary scheme developed and in place. Reduction	Supporting People, Homelessness

Action	Target Dates	Responsibility	Additional Resources Required	Success Measures	Links to Other Strategies / Priorities
homelessness.				in homelessness resulting from DV	
Extend the range of provision for elderly persons housing and support including Telecare and Extra Care.	Annually and ongoing	Head of Service Community Housing and Development; Elderly Services Manager	Supporting People budgets Existing staff resources	New and improved services in place, service users satisfied and proposals for Extra Care scheme in place	Sustainable Community Strategy; Supporting People; Older Persons
Develop clearer understanding of the needs of minority groups (BME, gypsies and travellers, gay and lesbian) and develop appropriate services	Ongoing and annually	Head of Service Community Housing and Development; Elderly Services Manager; Service Development Manager	Housing needs survey (shared cost in OHP).	Housing needs studies complete and proposals for service developments being implemented.	Sustainable Community Strategy ; BME Housing, Older Person Housing, Equality & Diversity.
Develop and improve support offered to residents in temporary accommodation including support beyond 1 st stage.	2008 and annually	Temporary Accommodation Manager	Existing staff resource	Improved support provision and improved service user satisfaction	Homelessness; Supporting People
Review joint	2008 and annually	Housing Needs	Existing staff		Sustainable

Action	Target Dates	Responsibility	Additional Resources Required	Success Measures	Links to Other Strategies / Priorities
working and partnerships for all vulnerable client groups to improve referral routes and services.		Manager, Options Manager, Single Homelessness Manager	resources		Community Strategy Homelessness, Supporting People

Strategic Objective 4: Improve the quality of the existing housing stock across the City:

Action	Target Dates	Responsibility	Additional Resources Required	Success Measures	Links to Other Strategies / Priorities
Meet the decent homes target for Council owned homes.	2010	Head of Oxford City Homes	£18.8M 2008/09 £14.7M 09/10 £14.2M 10/11	Decent homes target met (annual and final target)	HRA Business Plan
Improve energy efficiency in the private sector	2010	Head of Environmental Health	TBC	HECA target reached for 2010 (30% improvement in home energy efficiency) and private sector SAP rating increased.	Private Sector Housing Strategy.
Deliver demonstrable improvements to the private rented sector through use of mandatory and discretionary HMO licensing	2008 and annually	Head of Environmental Health	Funded through HMO licensing fees	Improvements in HMO stock, increase in HMO landlords licensed.	Private Sector Housing Strategy.
Develop the landlord's forum	2010	Head of Environmental Health	Existing staff resources	Landlord's forum and pilot	Private Sector Housing Strategy

Action	Target Dates	Responsibility	Additional Resources Required	Success Measures	Links to Other Strategies / Priorities
and the landlords accreditation scheme (pilot)				accreditation scheme delivering demonstrable service improvements	
Monitor and improve quality of temporary accommodation and Homechoice properties	2008 and annually	Housing Needs Manager	Existing staff resources		Homelessness
Progress renewal and redevelopment work following sheltered housing appraisals.	2008 and annually	Head of Service Community Housing and Development; Elderly Services Manager;	TBC	Redevelopments and renovations delivered as appropriate	Older Persons Housing
Complete redevelopment of Rose Hill.	2009 - 2010	Development Manager	TBC	Redevelopment complete on target and budget	Sustainable Community Strategy
Undertake options appraisal for City Council tower blocks.	2008-2009	Head of Oxford City Homes	Existing staff resources	Appraisal complete and options identified	HRA Business Plan

Strategic Objective 5: Improve housing services, choice and quality of life on estates.

Action	Target Dates	Responsibility	Additional Resources Required	Success Measures	Links to Other Strategies / Priorities
Involve service users more in shaping the services that they use. And that affect their lives.	Ongoing	Tenant Participation Manager, Service Development Manager.	Within existing budgets	More service users involved, increased service satisfaction, improved services.	Sustainable Community Strategy HRA Business Plan
Improve the overall standard of all housing services in a way recognised by service users	Ongoing	Service Heads	Within existing budgets. Scope for efficiencies	Minimum of 2 star standard achieved for all services (measured against AC KLOES).	HRA Business Plan, Older Persons, BME, Private Sector, Homelessness.
Make maximum efficient use of existing affordable rented housing stock (minimise relet times and encourage take up of under-occupations incentive schemes)	Annual	Head of Oxford City Homes; Housing Needs Manager	Incentives budget	Reduced relet times and increased take up of incentives.	Sustainable Community Strategy Homelessness; HRA Business Plan
Ensure CBL is not having any adverse	2008	Housing Needs Manager	Existing staff resources	Research and analysis	Sustainable Community

Action	Target Dates	Responsibility	Additional Resources Required	Success Measures	Links to Other Strategies / Priorities
impact on vulnerable groups in obtaining affordable housing				undertaken. Remedial action taken.	Strategy Homelessness
Develop CBL to cover sub-region (County).	2008	Housing Needs Manager	CBL Budget / partnership	Sub-regional CBL launched across as many districts as able	
Undertake equality impact assessments for all housing services.	2008 and annually	Heads of services	Within existing staff resources	EIA timetable in place, adhered to outcomes integrated in service planning.	Sustainable Community Strategy Equality & Diversity
Develop proposals for enhanced Housing Options Service and multi-agency service hub as part of office redevelopment plans	2008 onwards	Housing Needs Manager	TBC	Research and analysis undertaken. Proposals developed and costed.	Homelessness Strategy
Complete integration and review of Community Housing and	2008	Head of Community Housing and Development	Within existing budgets / staff resources. Scope for efficiencies.		Sustainable Community Strategy

Action	Target Dates	Responsibility	Additional Resources Required	Success Measures	Links to Other Strategies / Priorities
Community Safety / Development functions.					

Strategic Objective 6: Improve our understanding of housing needs to develop and implement housing strategy.

Action	Target Dates	Responsibility	Additional Resources Required	Success Measures	Links to Other Strategies / Priorities
Undertake a comprehensive housing needs assessment across the county in partnership with housing authorities and other relevant organisations.	2008/09	Service Development Manager	£30K – shared cost across OHP	Needs Assessment Complete, action plans to address findings developed and being implemented	Sustainable Community Strategy Homelessness BME Housing
Commission research on the housing circumstances and needs of BME communities.	2008/09	Service Development Manager	£20K	Research complete action plans to address findings developed and being implemented	Sustainable Community Strategy BME Housing
Analyse whether the reasons why BME households become homeless tend to be different from the reasons why households from the British White	2008	Housing Needs Manager	Within existing resources	Analysis undertaken. Issues identified. Communities consulted Actions identified and implemented.	BME Housing Homelessness

Action	Target Dates	Responsibility	Additional Resources Required	Success Measures	Links to Other Strategies / Priorities
population become homeless					
Prepare and implement an affordable housing development strategy for the City	2008	Development Manager	Within existing resources	Strategy complete and being implemented	Sustainable Community Strategy Local Plan
Annual reviews of implementation of suite of housing strategies (Housing; homelessness; BME; Older Persons; Private Sector)	2008 and annually	Service Development Manager	Within existing resources	Demonstrable achievements from all strategies and new targets being developed.	Sustainable Community Strategy Homelessness BME Housing Older Persons Housing Private sector Housing
Develop the range of strategic housing partnerships the City is working with to maximise affordable housing provision and service improvements. SHOP / OSP / OHP / SP / LAA.	2008 and annually	Head of Community Housing and Development	Within existing resources.	Partnerships reviewed and appraised. Changes implemented. Demonstrable benefits to the City identified.	Sustainable Community Strategy Homelessness BME Housing Older Persons Housing Private sector Housing

Action	Target Dates	Responsibility	Additional Resources Required	Success Measures	Links to Other Strategies / Priorities
Lobby for the City's housing needs to be effectively represented in regional and sub-regional community and housing strategies.	2008 and annually	Head of Community Housing and Development	Within existing resources.	City's housing needs addressed – recognition of the long-term level of need in the City.	Sustainable Community Strategy

Strategic Objective 7: Ensure housing services offer value for money.

Action	Target Dates	Responsibility	Additional Resources Required	Success Measures	Links to Other Strategies / Priorities
Manage the HRA finances and assets so that both the capital and revenue budgets are effectively funded year on year to enable the other strategic objectives to be delivered.	Annually	Head of Oxford City Homes	Within existing resources	Strategic objectives delivered within budgets. Medium and long term funding clear and secure.	HRA Business Plan
Improve the collection of rents, service charges and arrears, maximising the collection of rent from Council homes (permanent and temporary) garages and shops.	Annual collection and arrears reduction targets.	Heads of Housing Services	Within existing resources – generates efficiencies	Income collection targets met and improved annually across all teams.	HRA Business Plan Homelessness
Improve the efficiency of homelessness prevention work -	Annually	Housing Needs Manager	Within existing resources – generates efficiencies	More prevention through Homechoice with better use of	Homelessness

Action	Target Dates	Responsibility	Additional Resources Required	Success Measures	Links to Other Strategies / Priorities
more effective use of Homechoice deposit guarantee resources through use of Bonds and recovery and recycling.				existing resources.	
Improve efficiency of services through use of improved IT systems (CBL, housing advice, CRM)	2008 and annually	Housing Needs Manager, Oxford City Homes	TBC	More efficient and effective customer relationship management, more satisfied customers.	HRA Business Plan Homelessness Strategy
Review management of temporary accommodation to ensure faster turnover and collection of arrears and recharges.	2008 and annually	Housing Needs Manager	Within existing resources	Increased income collection, quicker turnover of TA to assist homeless people.	Homelessness
Ongoing strategic reviews of grant funding programme for homelessness service providers in	2008 and annually	Housing Needs Manager	Within existing resources	Continued effective targeting of grant resources at strategic priorities.	Homelessness

Action	Target Dates	Responsibility	Additional Resources Required	Success Measures	Links to Other Strategies / Priorities
the City Review and improve performance management arrangements to drive value for money agenda	2008 and annually	Heads of Services	Within existing budgets.	Better use of CorVu to manage and report performance, increased service user satisfaction monitoring. Improved performance and satisfaction.	
Ongoing benchmarking of housing services to identify and remedy areas of high cost and poor services.	2008 and annually	Heads of Services	Within existing resources (e.g. Housemark and CIPFA fees)	Improved performance and cost effectiveness.	

Appendix 1: Consultation Report

Introduction

In the consultation process for the development of the housing and homelessness strategies, a number of methods were used to try and get as many opinions as possible on housing issues in Oxford. These included a questionnaire (both postal and on the Council website), and focus groups (with Council workers and managers, partner organisations and service users). We also used the Council's Talkback panel (a panel of Oxford citizens), and used Your Say Your Way (a Council tenants feedback forum).

On the 13th of February, we held a conference as part of the consultation and had around 45 attendees, including representatives from local partner organisations and voluntary agencies. The idea was to get as many views as we could on housing in Oxford. This was so that when developing and writing the strategies, we could be sure that the correct issues were addressed. The results of the consultation were taken into account when writing the strategies, and the objectives.

Executive Summary

Some clear patterns emerged from the consultation process, particularly from the questionnaires. The issues that people feel are important showed very clear patterns and priorities. These are (in no particular order) – high house prices, high rents, lack of affordable rented housing for families, Lack of affordable rented housing for singles/couples and Long waiting lists for affordable housing. Street homelessness / rough sleeping came up as an issue that people felt was important, through it had slightly less votes than the top 5 issues mentioned.

People were asked what they felt were the most important potential solutions to Oxford's housing problems, and two which were very popular were Build more homes (both family size, and smaller). After this, the next most popular were related to where houses should be built. From the talkback panel, the number of people who thought that new homes should be built 'in or immediately around the City' and 'away from the City in surrounding towns' were quite similar, with slightly more people voting for building away from the City. The postal questionnaire responses showed more people (37 people) thought it was very important to build in or immediately around the City (23 voted for building away from the City).

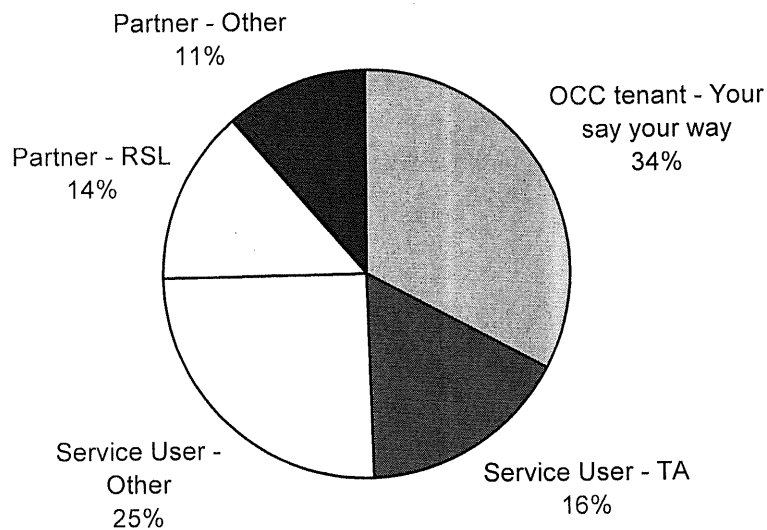
From the service user consultation, we found that the top 3 reasons for becoming homeless were drug or alcohol addiction, asked to leave by family, and health problems (this includes physical and mental health). Through our face-to-face focus group consultation, we found a few issues emerged frequently. These included the fact that service users feel there is not enough information available about the services in the City, and they are relying on word of mouth to find out about services which can help them. Also the problem of Prison leavers being released without support or accommodation was raised, as this can lead to more problems for individuals, as well as

history possibly repeating itself for many people. An issue raised in terms of young people was the issues with young people being given tenancies without support and guidance, and quite often losing their accommodation due to this and not fully understanding the responsibility that comes with a tenancy.

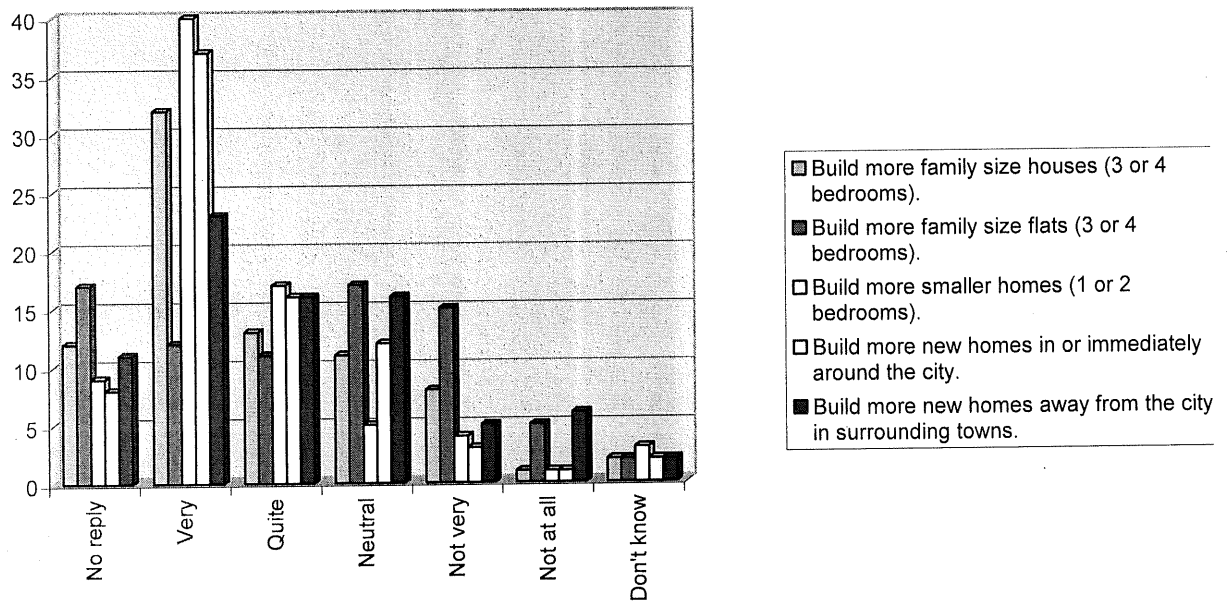
From the conference, which was attended mainly by representatives from partner organisations, we found that there were a few key issues that came up. These included things such as the need to raise homelessness awareness in schools, a need for partner organisations to work together towards the same goals and objectives, and making employment and training more accessible for both homeless people and people already in affordable housing.

Postal Questionnaires

This was distributed to a variety of people – partner organisations, service users, and Oxford City Council tenants (using the Your Say Your Way panel). 79 people filled in the postal questionnaire. Below is a pie chart to illustrate who these people were.

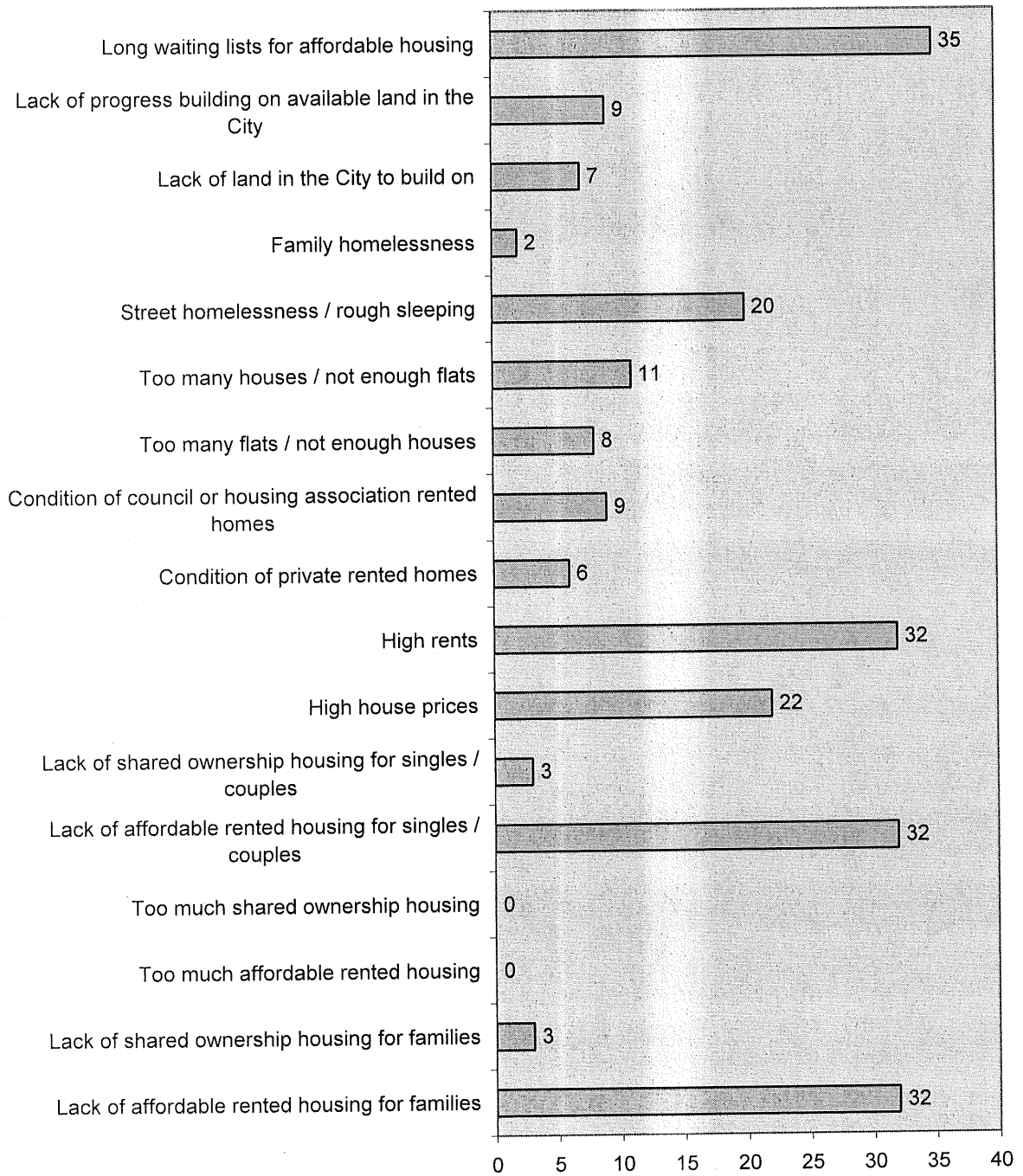


Potential solutions:



As can be seen on the above graph, there are 3 potential solutions that stand out, which people feel are “very” important in solving Oxford’s housing problems. These are: Build more smaller homes (1 or 2 bedrooms), Build more homes in or immediately around the City, Build more family size houses (3 or 4 bedrooms)

Three most important issues:



From the graph above, it is clear that there are 4 main issues that people feel are the most important. These are:

- Lack of affordable rented housing for families
- Lack of affordable rented housing for singles/couples
- Long waiting lists for affordable housing
- High rents

The question “how satisfied are you with the City Council’s overall performance on the following housing related services” got the following results:

	Very	Quite	Neutral	Not Very	Not at all	Don't know / not used
Helping Homeless Families	2.50%	11.40%	7.60%	1.30%	1.30%	24.10%
Helping Homeless Single People	3.80%	8.90%	10.10%	5.10%	-	19.00%
Allocating Council and Housing Association Housing	6.30%	12.70%	11.40%	8.90%	2.50%	11.40%
Providing new affordable housing	6.30%	8.90%	13.90%	11.40%	5.10%	8.90%
Improving the condition of housing	11.40%	10.10%	15.20%	8.90%	2.50%	6.30%

The above Table shows a fairly high level of people with neutral feelings on the Council. It is also worth noting that the percentage of people who are very satisfied with issues to do with homelessness are very low.

Here is a small sample of some of the responses we got when we asked “If you are not satisfied (not very or not at all) with any of the housing services listed above please can you briefly explain why?”

- The real repairs needed are not done. Only easy cosmetic works are done
- Houses should be cheaper to buy and families with children should never be put in flats. More houses should be built.
- New affordable housing is allocated to those who are working, as many are sold off
- I don't think offenders take much priority with Allocations, which is surprising as some of these people will be eligible to be housed, and so it would be in the interest of everyone to assist offenders at the earliest opportunity as their re-offending will impact on many in the community, directly or indirectly
- Condition of housing - I am referring specifically to the private rented sector.

The final question on the postal questionnaire was “Is there anything else you wish to say about Housing in the City of Oxford?”. Here are a few of the responses;

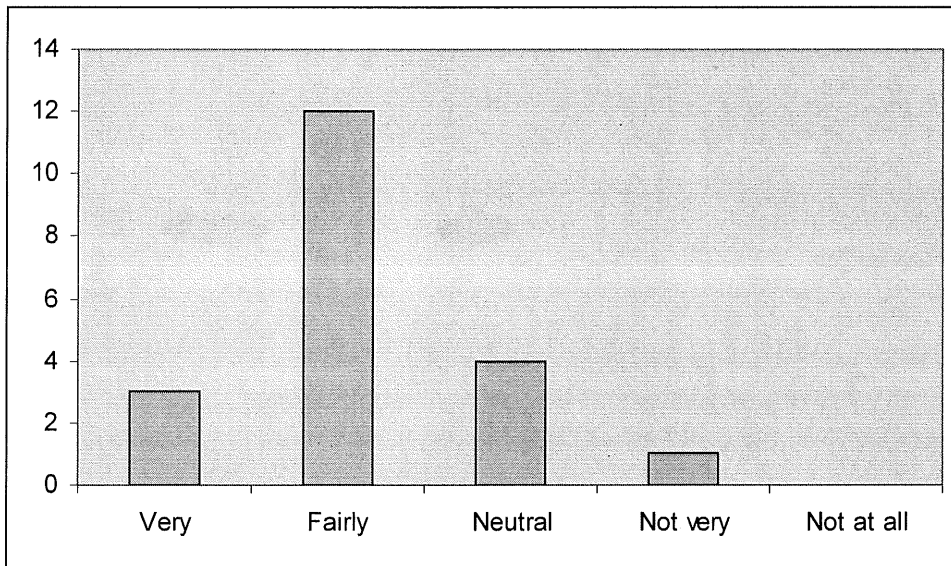
- Links between housing and support must not be forgotten. It isn't just a question of the need for more affordable accommodation!
- Unavailability to people on DSS
- It seems this City thinks that only people 25+ become homeless because there are too many services especially for 25+ and too many people under 25
- As someone who values the environment, also enjoys the benefits of the outdoors, I should like to see more support for Council tenants to improve their surroundings/communities.
- As with the majority of the country we have a serious shortage of affordable housing it is not helped by the majority of social housing

being allocated to the over 40's. Oxford City also seems to be less solution focussed and strategic than other districts.

- o People who work and earn a reasonable wage, should have the same rights as someone on benefits to qualify for affordable housing and not be expected to go for the private rents which take most of the wages they earn in rent. Everyone should have the chance of affordable housing.

Postal Questionnaire – partnership working questions

How supportive do you feel the Council is in helping your organisation in its work with homeless people?



How successful do you think partnership working with the Council is in resolving the following issues in Oxford?

	Very	Fairly	Neutral	Not very	Not at all	Don't know	No reply
Helping homeless families	2	6	3	0	0	7	61
Helping homeless single people	1	10	1	5	1	1	60
Preventing homelessness	0	8	5	4	1	1	60
Allocating Council and housing association homes	1	7	8	0	0	3	60
Providing new affordable housing	1	4	6	7	1	1	59
Improving the condition of housing	0	3	12	1	0	4	59

Considering your answer to the previous question: How do you think the Council could help (if at all) in providing a solution? Below is a selection of the answers to this question.

- Encourage all partner providers to have best practise policies around arrears and invest in early interventions regarding signs of tenancy breakdown.
- Broker relationships between third and statutory sector providers, e.g. health, education.
- Fully staffed team, dedicated staff member to work with specific client groups. More emphasis on the presenting problems of homelessness and less emphasis on keeping the figures deliberately low. Funding a medium to longer term supported housing project for young people with staff access 24 hours.