

To: Communities & Partnership Scrutiny Committee  
City Executive Board  
Council

29<sup>th</sup> March 2010  
31<sup>st</sup> March 2010  
19<sup>th</sup> April 2010

Item No:

Report of: Head of Service, Community Housing & Community Development

Title of Report: Annual Lettings Plan – Allocations Percentages 2010/11

### **Summary and Recommendations**

**Purpose of report:** Report to recommend new percentage targets for the allocation of social housing in 2010/11, to identify the reason for this and the potential impacts as a result.

**Key decision:** No

**Executive Lead Member:** Councillor Ed Turner

**Scrutiny Responsibility:** Communities & Partnership

**Report Approved by:**

Councillor Ed Turner - Executive Lead Member  
Janine Graham - Financial & Asset Management  
Jeremy King – Legal Services  
Mel Barrett – Executive Director, City Regeneration

**Policy Framework:**

Corporate Plan strategic priority of: “More housing, better housing for all” through “reducing the use of temporary accommodation for the homeless to below 150 households by March 2012”.

**Recommendation(s):**

1. Note the performance against the Lettings Plan in Appendix 1 for 2009/10 (April – December)
2. Recommend the proposed Lettings Plan in Appendix 2 for 2010/11 for approval by Full Council
3. Note the potential impact of the change

## Summary

1. This report looks at the expected results of the Lettings Plan for 2009/10
2. The report seeks to identify the issues influencing a change to the target allocation percentages and the implications of making a change
3. The report proposes that changes to the current allocation percentage targets are implemented from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010. As part of Oxford City Council's homeless prevention agenda these seek to balance the objectives of:
  - A continued reduction of the number of households (particularly families) in temporary homeless accommodation.
  - Housing households (particularly families) on the Transfer and General Register Housing lists identified as being in housing need.
4. The report recommends:
  - (1) Reducing the percentage of properties allocated to families in temporary accommodation on the Homeless List waiting for:
    - Two-bedroom properties by 5% and increasing the allocation of two-bedroom properties to families in housing need on the General Register List by 5%.
    - Three-bedroom properties by 10% and increasing the allocation of three-bedroom properties to the Transfer List by 5% and the General Register List by 5%.
    - Four-bedroom properties by 5% and increasing the allocation of four-bedroom properties (or larger in the rare circumstances they become available) to the General Register List by 5%.
  - (2) Reducing the percentage of one-bedroom non-designated properties allocated to single applicants (and couples) on the homeless list by 10% and increasing the allocation to:
    - "Move-On 2" - Care Leavers referred by the Joint Housing Team having been assessed as ready to move-on by 5%.
    - General Register Applicants in housing need by 5%.
  - (3) Refining the Targets for Sheltered Accommodation to reflect the expectation of no homeless acceptances to this client group.

## **Vision and Strategic aims**

5. Although this report does not produce more affordable housing stock, it is concerned with the effective allocation of social housing and therefore directly relates to the objective of providing more affordable housing.
6. The development of a clear Lettings Plan also links to the Council's vision of service improvement, reducing social exclusion by helping to create more sustainable communities, and improving homeless prevention measures.

## **Background and Context**

7. The Annual Lettings Plan contains allocation percentages, which are targets, set by Council, which seek to determine the proportion of social housing that is offered to different lists within The Council's Housing Register. The current Lettings Plan was agreed on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2009, and the targets are shown in Appendix 1 (including performance up to the 31/12/09).
8. These figures are reported quarterly to Communities and Partnership Scrutiny Committee with an explanation of reasons why there are differences between targets & results.

## **Key Issues and Objectives**

9. The Council had 264 households in temporary accommodation and has accepted a statutory homeless duty to 213 of these (as of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2009). The Corporate Plan for 2009-2012 states by March 2012, the Council will reduce the use of temporary accommodation for the homeless to below 150 households. The Housing Needs Team has successfully reduced the number of households in temporary accommodation from 405 households since the 31/12/08. A reduction in temporary accommodation of 35% over the last year. The proportion of allocations currently made to this group, along with other initiatives, has allowed a planned reduction in the amount of temporary accommodation, and produced year on year budget savings.
10. The Government through Communities & Local Government (CLG) department is continuing to seek reductions in the number of households living in temporary accommodation and set a target of reducing the number of households in temporary accommodation by 50% by 2010 (from the level in January 2005). This target was met in 2008 and the Housing Needs Team is continuing to reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation in accordance with LAA2 and Corporate targets
11. The Housing Needs Team is on target to achieve the target again this year. By reducing applicants in homeless temporary accommodation the long-term aim is to clear the "bottle-necking" of households in

temporary accommodation, and to gradually shift the allocation percentages away from the homeless list, to make re-housing, through other means, a more likely alternative. This is part of the prevention of homelessness agenda.

12. Although the number of households in temporary accommodation has decreased, due to the high demand for Social Housing and the limited amount of properties that become available in Oxford, many households still have to spend a significant time in temporary homeless accommodation before moving to permanent accommodation although in part this depends on how flexible they are/or can be on the type and location of property they can bid for through Choice-Based Lettings. Especially large families and households with specific housing requirements.
13. The length of time applicants, to whom The Council has accepted a homeless duty to, spend in temporary accommodation before being offered permanent accommodation, has generally decreased in recent years. A significant factor in the decrease in the time spent in temporary accommodation has been the homeless prevention work undertaken by the Housing Needs Team in conjunction with other stakeholders. This has resulted, in a steady decrease in the number of households to whom Oxford City Council has had to accept as statutorily homeless. The number of applicants accepted as homeless during 2009/10 compared to 2008/09 has been reduced from 117 (on 31/12/08) to 81 (on 31/12/09).
14. Following the introduction of the Choice-Based Lettings(CBL) two-years ago and more recently the Sub-Regional scheme in July 2009, applicants accepted as homeless now have more control over how long they will have to wait in temporary accommodation. Applicants accepted as homeless are now, within reason, able to express an interest in the type of property and the area within Oxford (or elsewhere in the Oxfordshire Sub-Region) in which they are offered permanent accommodation. By “bidding” for properties that are advertised through the CBL that they are eligible for and that they are interested in moving to.
15. Homeless applicants, who do not have a restriction on the type of property they can live in and/or the area within which they can live, can now affect how long they spend in temporary accommodation.

Applicants can reduce the time it takes before they successfully bid on a property and are offered permanent accommodation by where possible considering bidding for:

1. All property types (including flats and maisonettes) and not just houses and bungalows.
2. Properties in all/or most of areas of Oxford and the Oxfordshire Sub-Region.

16. Consequently, the time a household spends waiting in homeless temporary accommodation can now vary significantly, depending on how often an applicant bids, the type of property they require/or will consider and the areas they need to live in, or will consider moving to. However, this is to be expected where applicants are given more “choice” about their housing.
17. Choice-Based Lettings ensures, within reason, most households are only “housed” in permanent accommodation in the type of property and area within which they want to live. Resulting, it is hoped, in happier tenants, living in more sustainable communities. With the additional benefit of a reduction void costs and repairs because happier tenants are considered to be more likely to look after their home and less likely to want to move.
18. The Housing Needs Team will need to continue to work closely with support workers and other agencies to ensure that applicants understand:
  1. How to access the CBL scheme and vulnerable applicants are provided with support in bidding where required.
  2. The potential impact on the time homeless applicants will be waiting in temporary accommodation, if they only bid for specific types of properties and/or restrict their areas.
  3. In exceptional circumstances homeless applicants who are identified as not engaging in the CBL scheme can and will have bids placed for them, in order to fulfil The Council’s statutory duties in offering an applicant permanent accommodation.
19. Listed below are the *approximate* waiting times for homeless applicants in temporary accommodation. The waiting times are based on the assumption an applicant will, and is able to, consider bidding for most property types and will consider most areas. (As stated previously the time a household spends waiting in homeless temporary accommodation can now vary significantly, depending on how often an applicant bids, the type of property they require/or will consider and the areas they need to live in, or will consider moving to).

<b>Property Type &amp;/or Size</b>	<b>Time On List</b>
One Bed	1 – 2 Years
Two Bed Flats/Maisonettes	1 – 2 Years
Two Bed House	2 – 4 Years
Three Bed	3 – 4 Years
Four Bed	4 Years

20. There are 3 households that have been in temporary accommodation for over five years and have yet to successfully bid on a property and receive an offer of accommodation. Two of these are waiting for four-bedroom accommodation or larger.
21. In addition to homelessness, there is still also much other unmet

housing need in the City. The present allocation percentages give a relatively low chance of re-housing to any family from the **General Register** unless they are assessed as in high housing need. There are currently presently 3634 households registered on this list (excluding statutory homeless households). Many have little housing need, although some have high priority as indicated through the priority banding scheme. For example, 30 households on the General Register have priority for being overcrowded and have been assessed as being two or more bedrooms short of their housing requirements. Around 11% of this list (409 families), receive some level of overcrowding priority for being at least one bedroom short of their assessed needs. The number of households on the General Register is still high. From 1/4/09 to date only around 200 households have been housed from this list.

Significant factors influencing the high numbers still applying for housing to the Council are:

- The current Economic Climate.
- The shortage of Social Housing and Affordable Housing within Oxford.
- The high demand for Social Housing and other Affordable Housing within Oxford.

20. The **Transfer** list currently comprises of 1421 households requesting a move to alternative accommodation. To be eligible to be included on the Transfer List applicants must be existing Council Tenants or tenants of a Registered Social Landlord that is participating in Oxford's Register for Affordable Housing. At present there are 32 families on the Transfer List assessed as being two or more bedrooms short of their housing requirements. Around 19% of the families on the Transfer List have over-crowding priority for being one-bedroom short of their assessed housing requirement.

Mobility within the social housing stock is limited, with many tenants having little prospect of transferring from their current home, especially if they require 3 or 4 bedroom family accommodation. Any tenants applying for a transfer where they are "under-occupying" their current homes (suitable for families) by one or more bedrooms continue to be prioritised in the new Allocations scheme in order to free up more family accommodation. Tenants wanting to move are also encouraged to consider other housing options such as mutual exchanges. The Council together with the other Local Authorities in the Oxfordshire Homechoice partnership (and other partner Housing Associations) has subscribed to a National Exchange Scheme called "Homeswapper" giving tenants free access to this scheme to help improve their chances of exchanging.

21. A profile of the lists is shown below, giving an indication of the size of accommodation that households require on the Housing Register broken down by each Housing List:

<b>Minimum Bedroom Size Required</b>	<b>General Register</b>	<b>Homeless</b>	<b>Transfer Register</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Non-Family</b>				
One-Bed <sup>1</sup>	1224	40	73	<b>1337</b>
One-Bed Designated Elderly/Sheltered	1074	5*	399*	<b>1478</b>
One-Bed Sub-total	2298	45	472	<b>2815</b>
Two-Bed Designated Elderly/Sheltered	79	1	89	<b>169</b>
<b>Family Accommodation</b>				
Two-Bed <sup>2</sup>	814	124	416	<b>1354</b>
Three-Bed	345	39	319	<b>703</b>
Four+Bed	98	5	125	<b>228</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>3634</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>1421</b>	<b>5269</b>

## 22 **Minimum Bedroom Size**

The figures above are based on the minimum bedroom size a household requires. For example households shown as requiring a minimum of a two-bedroom property often have two children and so are eligible to request a move to a three-bedroom property. So although the Transfer List shows a large number of tenants eligible for a two-bedroom property, many of the applicants will be families considered adequately "housed" requesting a move to a three-bedroom property or a move from a two-bedroom flat or maisonette to a two-bedroom house.

### **Designated Elderly Accommodation**

Many one-bedroom properties owned by the Council are "designated elderly" and restrict the minimum age of applicants eligible for these properties to forty years or older. There are also a smaller numbers of two-bedroom properties with similar restrictions. A Scrutiny Review is currently underway to consider whether any such units should be de-designated and offered to a wider age group.

### **One Bed Accommodation**

The table shows a large proportion of the housing list - 2815

applicants are currently waiting for one-bedroom accommodation. However, of the 2815 households 1224 are under 40 and are only eligible to bid for general needs non-designated properties not restricted to applicants aged 40 years or older. Where as most applicants aged 40 years or older are eligible to bid for *any* general needs properties or designated elderly properties (excluding sheltered accommodation unless they have an assessed need for this type of accommodation). So applicants under 40 bidding for one-bedroom non-designated properties are not only competing with the 1224 applicants on the waiting list who are under 40, they are also potential competing with 2815 applicants because most applicants over 40 for non-designated accommodation. There is a currently a Scrutiny Panel Review being undertaken considering whether any stock should be de-designated.

23. It is clear that the main issue is that demand for social rented accommodation in Oxford continues to far outstrip supply. This report is primarily concerned with how this limited resource is allocated between competing interests, although information relating to housing need and the profile of these lists is being increasingly used to make informed decisions concerning the supply of housing, such as in our drive to have an increase in larger family accommodation developed.
24. The process of “labelling” the adverts (in Choice Based Lettings) of some properties to give preference to applicants on the Homeless, Transfer or General Register lists continues to be used to ensure that targets set out in the Annual Lettings plan are met where possible.
25. Appendix 1 shows the current lettings performance to date. The plan shows that the percentage of allocations to each list for each property type is generally on target to meet the 09/10 Lettings Plan. Where adjustments need to be made to ensure that more properties are allocated to a specific housing lists more labelling of adverts will be undertaken to rectify any significant differences.

### **Options considered and evaluation of them**

26. The main issue to consider is can the allocation percentage to the **Homeless list** be reduced further? The Council is required by law to give reasonable preference to certain groups, one of which is those who are statutory homeless. The following possible negative impacts of doing so have been considered in producing the Lettings Plan for 2010/11:
  - That the wait in temporary accommodation for homeless households increases.
  - Due to the current Economic Climate homeless presentations do not fall as quickly as the proposed reduction in re-housing and possibly increase, thus increasing the numbers of households in temporary



accommodation.

- That this results in an increase in temporary accommodation costs and the failure to meet the Homelessness Strategy targets.
27. However, analysing the performance for the year so far in this area has shown that there has not been a significant detrimental impact of reducing the percentage of properties allocated to the homeless list:
- The wait in temporary accommodation, for most homeless applicants who are able to be flexible about the type of property they are willing to consider and/or the area within which they chose to live, has generally decreased. Particularly for applicants requiring one-bedroom properties. Although the reduction has, in part, been assisted by the change of use of 46 houses owned by Catalyst Housing Communities from temporary to permanent stock. Resulting in 34 homeless households accepting offers of their temporary accommodation on a permanent basis and becoming secure tenants. The remaining 12 properties were advertised via CBL and offered to other families in housing need.
  - Following further successful homeless prevention work by the Housing Needs Team, homeless acceptances are again on target to reduce this year. As of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2009 homeless acceptances were down to 81 a fall of 30% compared to the same time last year and are due to be well below the annual target at the end of the March 2010.
  - The cost of temporary accommodation has reduced since last year due to the reduction in temporary accommodation properties required.
28. If the recommendation of reducing the percentage of accommodation allocated to the homeless list is accepted, how best can the “additional” properties becoming available be proportioned over the Transfer and General Register Lists to help others households assessed as in high housing need through the Allocations Scheme?
29. In addition to the benefits of housing more applicants in Housing Need on the General Register (particularly overcrowded families), the resulting increase in allocations to applicants on this list could in the longer term result in a reduction of homeless presentations.
- By the end of the March 2010 it is expected around 90 two-bedroom, 25 three-bedroom and 4 four-bedroom family properties or larger will have been allocated to the general register list. It is fair to assume that many of these households would otherwise have presented as homeless without the offers they were made.
30. In addition to the benefits of housing more households in housing need from the Transfer List (particularly families) the resulting increase in allocations to this list would also result in additional vacancies (albeit

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more likely to be smaller units). Resulting in more social housing becoming available to be offered to other applicants in housing need via the Choice-Based Lettings scheme.

More allocations to the Transfer List would not only increase mobility for existing tenants in housing need requiring a move, but could also help to address issues of over-crowding for existing tenants – a problem which otherwise, is likely to worsen, both in scale and severity. However, analysis of the waiting lists indicates the following in particular:

- Two-bed family properties – there remains much higher unmet demand from households in housing need on the General Register for two-bedroom properties than on the Transfer List. There are almost 250 families on the General Register list living in over-crowded accommodation requiring a two-bedroom property compared to the only 24 on the Transfer List.
- Three-bedroom properties – despite the Transfer List being a smaller list than the General Register List there are actually more households in high Housing Need requiring a three-bedroom property than on the General Register. For example on the Transfer List 155 households are overcrowded and require a three-bedroom property compared to 73 on the General Register List. However, the current Lettings Plan for 2009/10 already allocates double the three-bedroom properties (40%) that become available to the Transfer List compared to General Register (20%). Following a reduction in allocation of three-bedroom properties to the homeless list to only “pass on” the resulting increase in allocations to the Transfer List increases the likelihood of increased homeless presentations from applicants unable to meet their housing need by bidding and receiving an offer of accommodation while waiting on the General Register List.

31. A final group to consider are “**Move-On**” applicants. This is a priority category within the General Register and normally comprises of single applicants that have been referred to the Council for re-housing through the Move-On scheme after they have successfully engaged with the support they have been offered and demonstrated they are ready to live independently. Referrals can be made for applicants from various supported housing projects across the City (described as Move On 1 applicants). However, move-on referrals are also accepted from Social Services where former care-leavers placed with families in supported lodgings are ready to move on to independent accommodation (described as Move On 2 applicants).
32. The “Move-On 2” scheme started in April 2007 and has successfully assisted in meeting the needs of young vulnerable adults and providing much needed support after leaving care prior to moving to independent accommodation. Without this scheme many such adults would be likely to be threatened with homelessness and to approach the Council for assistance. An increase in the percentage of Allocations to this group

would assist in meeting their housing needs and prevent homelessness.

33. Applicants referred as ready to “move on” by various projects are monitored closely and only accepted on to the scheme where there is evidence that they would be suitable as “potential tenants” and there is evidence that they are ready to “move on”. This scheme is reviewed regularly, to ensure the “best use” of the spaces available. Applicants accepted on to the “move on” list are normally housed within a year (often under 6 months). Around 50 “move-on” applicants are expected to be housed through this scheme by the end of the year preventing homeless and bed blocking in much needed supported accommodation across the City.

The Government has set a challenging target of reducing rough sleepers in the UK to zero by 2012. A contributing factor in reducing the number of rough sleepers in Oxford is to ensure that there are “move-on” options available from direct access hostels. The “move-on” scheme is one of these options. However, it is also recognised that the Move-on scheme is not able to provide sufficient or appropriate accommodation for all clients and other options, such as assisting clients to access the private sector are increasingly being encouraged to help meet housing need. This has been effectively provided in part through the Home Choice Team, however the number of 1-bed private properties they are able to access is limited by the competitive private rented market in the city.

34. An option may be to make **no change** to the current Lettings Plan and to leave the allocations percentages as they are. This would essentially maintain the status quo, but would not address the growing housing needs of the General or Transfer lists; the longer-term prevention of homeless issue; or the lack of mobility within the stock.
35. One further option could be to **increase the percentage of allocations to homelessness list**. This would help meet Corporate Objective of reducing the numbers of households in temporary accommodation to below 150 by the end of March 2012, more rapidly. However, the impact on the General, Transfer and Move On lists would be significant, as outlined. In addition, there is a risk that more people will be encouraged to present as homeless if this is the main way of eventually securing social rented accommodation in the city.

### **Specific Proposals**

36. Appendix 2 to this report shows the proposed Lettings Plan for 2010/11.

The Expected Lets figures (Council and RSL combined) are based on the lettings data for 2007/08; 2008/09 and 2009/10 (3<sup>rd</sup> quarter), and adjusted slightly for an increase in some voids created by the change to the proposed transfer percentage allocation figures. Consideration has also been given to expected new build properties for 2010/11.

The Lettings Plan details different (specific) targets for each size of

family accommodation. It splits non-family accommodation into designated elderly (for applicants aged 40 and older) and non-designated accommodation – again with different targets

**The main proposed changes to the 2010/11 Plan are as follows:**

**(1) Reducing the percentage of properties allocated to families in temporary accommodation on the Homeless List waiting for:**

- **Two-bedroom properties by 5% and increasing the allocation of two-bedroom properties to families in housing need on the General Register List by 5%.**

A reduction from 40% to 35% on the Homeless List and increase from 45% to 50% on the General Register List. Based on current estimates of the number of two-bedroom family properties due to become available to let next year this will mean 10 more properties being allocated to the General Register List instead of the Homeless List. It is proposed that the allocation to the transfer list remains 15% because demand for two-bedroom family properties from Transfer List is significantly lower than the General Register.

- **Three-bedroom properties by 10% and increasing the allocation of three-bedroom properties to the Transfer List by 5% and the General Register List by 5%.**

A reduction from 40% to 30% on the Homeless List and an increase from 40% to 45% on the Transfer List and 20% to 25% on the General Register List. Based on current estimates this will mean around 12 less three-bedroom properties being allocated to the Homeless List and 6 each to the General Register and Transfer Lists. This proposed change will increase the number of three-bedroom properties allocated to both lists while still allocating a higher number to the Transfer List where the applicants in high housing need waiting for three-bedroom accommodation is currently the highest.

- **Four-bedroom properties by 5% and increasing the allocation of four-bedroom properties (or larger in the rare circumstances they become available) to the General Register List by 5%.**

A reduction from 35% to 30% on the Homeless List and an increase from 15% to 20% on the General Register List. On current estimates resulting in 1 more four-bedroom house allocated to the General Register instead of the Homeless List. Due to the limited amount of four-bedroom or larger properties that become available this only amounts to a small change but goes some way in addressing the housing need of the General Register which still has the least allocations of four-bedroom accommodation.

**(2) Reducing the percentage of one-bedroom non-designated properties allocated to single applicants (and couples) on the homeless list by 10% (a reduction from 45% to 35%) and increasing the allocation to:**

- **“Move-On 2”** - Care Leavers referred by the Joint Housing Team having been assessed as ready to move-on by 5%. An increase from 5% to 10% resulting in an estimated 5 more one-bedroom properties offered to the “Move-On 2” list instead of the Homeless List. This will help reduce statutory homeless acceptances, and reflects improved joint working with the Children and Families Assessment Teams.
- **General Register Applicants in housing need by 5%.** An increase from 5% to 10% resulting in an estimated 5 more one-bedroom properties offered to the General Register List instead of the Homeless List. To go some way in meeting the housing need on the General Register.

37. There remains an acute shortage of non-designated properties available each year due to the high number of properties that are currently designated for people over the age of 40. If a significant proportion of these properties were de-designated, the current demand for the 18 – 40 years age group could be in part met, consequently reducing the cost and numbers of temporary accommodation units needed and allowing effective move on through hostels and easing the rough sleeping problem in the city. It would also start to make an impact on the ‘hidden homeless/sofa surfing’ problem faced by many people in the city.

- For designated properties, no changes to the percentages are proposed. Based on current figures the allocations towards designated properties are currently on target.
- For sheltered properties it is proposed that up to 100% of all sheltered properties should be allocated to the Transfer and General Register Lists and aim for none to be allocated to the Homeless List. In practice this has been happening already because there is a lower demand for many sheltered properties across Oxford and in the Oxfordshire Sub-Region compared to family and other general needs accommodation. So even if an applicant with an assessed need for sheltered accommodation is faced with homelessness as long as the applicant is able and/or willing to be fairly flexible about the type or area of sheltered property they are interested in moving to, it is normally possible to house them from the General Register. Although the applicant might have to be placed in homeless temporary accommodation on a temporary basis to allow them time to bid for a property via the CBL scheme as a General Register applicant. Particularly since the introduction of Sub-Regional Choice-Based Lettings in July 2009 because up to 100% of all sheltered properties becoming vacant are advertised across the sub-

region giving applicants requiring sheltered accommodation more choice. Where an applicant with a sheltered need The Council, as with the participating districts, can and does label some adverts give preference to residents of Oxford or applicants with a Local Connection to ensure local residents do not miss out.

38. The increased shift to the general register for more allocations is felt to be the area where there will be most impact in homelessness prevention, while not adversely affecting the waiting time in temporary accommodation for these (smaller) households.
39. It is proposed that Communities and Partnership Scrutiny Committee continue to be provided with allocations performance against this Lettings Plan on a quarterly basis.

## **RISK**

### **Climate Change/Environmental Impact**

40. It expected around 180 units of affordable housing will be built during 2010/11 (a large proportion will be social housing) to help meet the demand for affordable housing in Oxford. The Development Team has confirmed all the new build properties will achieve the standard of required by the Housing and Communities Agency to secure funding for affordable housing and some housing associations will achieve a higher level than required (Sustainable Homes Level 4).

### **Equalities Impact**

41. The Housing Needs Team will continue to seek to identify housing applicants within BME groups and with disabilities that are in high housing need. Effective monitoring systems will ensure any shift in allocations do not indirectly discriminate against BME groups and/or applicants with disabilities. The percentage of applicants who have stated they are in a BME group in homeless temporary accommodation is currently around 22%. The percentage of applicants who have stated they are in a BME group on the General Housing Register is currently around 24%. So an increase in allocations to the General Housing List should not impact on the number of properties available to applicants in BME groups. The Allocations Team will continue to monitor applicants in high housing need who are “not bidding” to ensure they receive the support necessary to use the CBL scheme. The development team will continue to seek to ensure that when new properties are built within Oxford that a proportion are suitable for applicants with disabilities. Actions identified in the Equalities Impact Assessment for Allocations and CBL will continue to be progressed in accordance with that plan.

## **Financial Implications**

42. The impact of housing more people (especially in family units) from the general list, thus removing the disincentive to 'stay put' and not present as homeless, is continuing to contribute to a reduction in homeless acceptance rates. Resulting in a decrease in the number of applicants placed in temporary accommodation and a reduction in temporary accommodation costs and meeting budget savings targets.
43. Despite homeless prevention measures that are being put in place the likelihood of an increase in the number of applicants presenting as homeless, and subsequently being accepted as homeless and placed in temporary accommodation, cannot be totally discounted resulting in increased costs. Should this be the case, the Lettings Targets can be reviewed during the year to respond to the new situation.

## **Legal Implications**

44. See the separate confidential Lettings Plan briefing note.

## **Recommendations**

45. That the potential impact of a change to the allocation percentages is considered and noted
46. That the Lettings Plan at Appendix 2 is recommended as the target allocation percentages for 2010/11

## **List of Appendices**

### **Appendix 1:**

Allocations percentages - April 09 to Dec 09 lettings figures

### **Appendix 2:**

Proposed Lettings Plan for 2010/11

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**Background papers:** None

## Appendix 1: Community Housing – Allocations percentages (1) of (2)

### April to December 2009 Family & Non-Designated Accommodation

Family Accommodation						
Property Size		Homeless	Move-on	Transfer	General	TOTAL
Two Bed	Percentage	32.7%	0.0%	18.9%	48.4%	
	Target	40%	0	15%	45%	
	Let	52	0	30	77	159
	Expected lets	78	0	29	88	195
Three Bed	Percentage	49.5%	0.0%	36.8%	13.7%	
	Target	40%	0	40%	20%	
	Let	47	0	35	13	95
	Expected lets	52	0	52	26	130
Four Bed+	Percentage	30.4%	0.0%	56.5%	13.0%	
	Target	35%	0	50%	15%	
	Let	7	0	13	3	23
	Expected lets	10	0	15	4	29

Non-Family (Non-Designated) Accommodation							
Property Size		Homeless	Move on 1	Move on 2	Transfer	General	TOTAL
Studio flat / One Bed	Percentage	26.3%	20.0%	2.5%	12.5%	38.8%	
	Target	45%	30%	5%	5%	15%	
	Let	21	16	2	10	31	80
	Expected lets	45	30	5	5	15	100



## Appendix 1: Community Housing – Allocations percentages (2) of (2)

### April to December 2009 Designated Elderly/Sheltered Accommodation

Designated Elderly Accommodation						
Property Size		Homeless	Move-on	Transfer	General	TOTAL
Any Size	Percentage	18.2%		81.8%		
	Target	20%		80%		
	Let	16		72		88
	Expected lets	26		104		130

Sheltered Accommodation						
Property Size		Homeless	Move-on	Transfer	General	TOTAL
Any Size	Percentage	1.4%		98.6%		
	Target	no target		no target		
	Let	1		72		73
	Expected lets	2		48		50

**Total allocations:**

<b>518</b>
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 +12 CBL sub-regional = 530

**Expected allocations:**

<b>634</b>
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 at year end

Temporary properties converted to permanent with sitting tenant:  
34 properties (11 two-beds, 22 three-beds, 1 four-bed)  
have not been included in the lettings information above  
These properties are not included in the lettings stats

Please Note:

“Expected lets” relates to the full year but “Total allocations” only relates to the first 3 quarters only.

From the 46 units owned by Catalyst Housing Communities, changed from temporary to permanent accommodation, only 12 properties have been included in the lettings information above as they were let as normal via Choice-Based Lettings. The remaining 34 properties (11 two-beds, 22 three-beds and 1 four-bed) have not been included as they were allocated to the existing homeless applicants living in the properties at the time. These homeless applicants all chose to accept the offer of their existing temporary accommodation on a permanent basis and were let as “direct matches”. These properties were not included because as indicated in the previous year’s lettings plan they were discounted from the current years expected lets as it was uncertain whether Catalyst Housing Communities would be able to convert them to permanent accommodation during 2009/10.

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## Appendix 2: Proposed Lettings Plan for 2010/11

Family Accommodation					
Property Size	Expected Lets	Proposed Target % (Expected households housed)			
		Homeless	Move-on	Transfer	General
Two Bed	195	35% (68)	0	15% 29	50% 98
Three Bed	110	30% (33)	0	45% (50)	25% (27)
Four Bed+	10	30% (3)	0	50% (5)	20% (2)

Non-Family (Non-Designated) Accommodation						
Property Size	Expected Lets	Proposed Target % (Expected households housed)				
		Homeless	Move-on	Move-on 2	Transfer	General
One Bed	108	35% (38)	30% (32)	10% (11)	5% (5)	20% (22)

Designated Elderly Accommodation					
Property Size	Expected Lets	Proposed Target % (Expected households housed)			
		Homeless	Move-on	Transfer	General
Any Size	120	5% (6)	15% (18)	80% (96)	

Sheltered Accommodation					
Property Size	Expected Lets	Proposed Target % (Expected households housed)			
		Homeless	Move-on	Transfer	General
Any Size	60	0% (0)		100% (60)	

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