

Agenda

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Housing Panel (Panel of the Scrutiny Committee)

Date: **Wednesday 26 April 2017**

Time: **5.00 pm**

Place: **St Aldate's Room, Town Hall**

For any further information please contact:

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As a matter of courtesy, if you intend to record the meeting please let the Contact Officer know how you wish to do this before the start of the meeting.

Housing Panel (Panel of the Scrutiny Committee)

Membership

Chair

Councillor David Henwood

Councillor Angie Goff

Councillor Jennifer Pegg

Councillor Gill Sanders

Councillor David Thomas

Councillor Elizabeth Wade

Geno Humphrey (Housing Panel co-optee)

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AGENDA

Pages

1 APOLOGIES

Substitutes are not allowed.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3 EMPTY PROPERTIES

7 - 14

Contact Officer: Frances Evans, Strategy & Service Development Manager
Tel: 01865 252062; fevans@oxford.gov.uk

Background Information
The Panel requested a report on Council approaches to dealing with empty properties ahead of a refresh of the Empty Property Strategy.
Why is it on the agenda?
For the Panel to note and comment on the empty dwellings briefing.
Who has been invited to comment?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cllr Mike Rowley, Board Member for Housing;• Frances Evans, Strategy & Service Development Manager;• Melanie Mutch, Empty Property Officer.

4 GREAT ESTATES UPDATE

15 - 26

Contact Officer: Martin Shaw, Property Services Manager Tel: 01865 252775
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Background Information
The Panel received a presentation on the Council's Great Estates Programme in March 2016 and requested a report back on progress after 12 months.
Why is it on the agenda?
For the Panel to note and comment on progress of the Great Estates Programme.
Who has been invited to comment?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cllr Mike Rowley, Board Member for Housing;• Martin Shaw, Property Services Manager.

5 EMPTY GARAGES AND FORMER GARAGE SITES

27 - 36

Contact Officer: Bill Graves, Landlord Services Manager Tel: 01865 252428
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Background Information
The Panel requested a report on plans and activities relating to the Council's garage assets.
Why is it on the agenda?
For the Panel to note and comment on activities being carried out under the Garage Asset Management Strategy.
Who has been invited to comment?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cllr Mike Rowley, Board Member for Housing;• Bill Graves, Landlord Services Manager.

6 TOWER BLOCK REFURBISHMENT

The Panel has asked to be kept informed about progress of the Tenant Scrutiny Panel (TSP) review of the Council's tower block refurbishment programme.

The TSP's report and senior officer response will be presented at the next Housing Panel meeting. In the meantime the Chair of the TSP may wish to provide a verbal update.

7 HOUSING PANEL WORK PROGRAMME

This is the final Housing Panel meeting of the Council year. The Panel are asked to contribute ideas for the 2017/18 scrutiny work plan.

8 NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

For the Panel to agree and note the record of the meeting held on 1 March 2017.

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9 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Meetings for the 2017/18 Council year are provisionally scheduled as follows:

14 June 2017
12 October 2017
13 November 2017
8 March 2018
9 April 2018

All meetings begin at 5.00pm.

MATTERS EXEMPT FROM PUBLICATION

If the Panel wishes to exclude the press and the public from the meeting during consideration of any of the items on the exempt from publication part of the agenda, it will be necessary for the Committee to pass a resolution in accordance with the provisions of Paragraph 21(1)(b) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000 on the grounds that their presence could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in specific paragraphs of Schedule I2A of the Local Government Act 1972.

The Panel may maintain the exemption if and so long as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

10 EXEMPT APPENDICES - GARAGE ASSET MANAGEMENT

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DECLARING INTERESTS

General duty

You must declare any disclosable pecuniary interests when the meeting reaches the item on the agenda headed "Declarations of Interest" or as soon as it becomes apparent to you.

What is a disclosable pecuniary interest?

Disclosable pecuniary interests relate to your* employment; sponsorship (ie payment for expenses incurred by you in carrying out your duties as a councillor or towards your election expenses); contracts; land in the Council's area; licences for land in the Council's area; corporate tenancies; and securities. These declarations must be recorded in each councillor's Register of Interests which is publicly available on the Council's website.

Declaring an interest

Where any matter disclosed in your Register of Interests is being considered at a meeting, you must declare that you have an interest. You should also disclose the nature as well as the existence of the interest.

If you have a disclosable pecuniary interest, after having declared it at the meeting you must not participate in discussion or voting on the item and must withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is discussed.

Members' Code of Conduct and public perception

Even if you do not have a disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter, the Members' Code of Conduct says that a member "must serve only the public interest and must never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person including yourself" and that "you must not place yourself in situations where your honesty and integrity may be questioned". What this means is that the matter of interests must be viewed within the context of the Code as a whole and regard should continue to be paid to the perception of the public.

*Disclosable pecuniary interests that must be declared are not only those of the member her or himself but also those of the member's spouse, civil partner or person they are living with as husband or wife or as if they were civil partners.

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To: The Housing Panel
Date: 26th April 2017
Report of: Head of Housing and Property
Title of Report: Empty Dwellings (Private Sector)

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	Briefing on the Council's approaches to dealing with empty properties in the City ahead of a refresh of the Council's Empty Property Strategy 2013-18.
Corporate Priority	Meeting Housing Need.
Policy Framework	Housing Strategy 2013-18
Recommendation(s): That the Housing Panel resolves to:	
1. Note the brief ahead of the refresh of the Council's Empty Property Strategy 2013-18	

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Table of empty homes figures from 2009 to March 2017
Appendix 2	Table of New Homes Bonus achieved

Introduction and background

1. The first Empty Property Strategy was introduced in 2009. Since 2009 there has been a substantial reduction in the number of empty dwellings in the City. This has been achieved principally through work by the Empty Property Officer with support from officers within environmental development, revenues/council tax, planning, corporate assets, property services, legal and external services including fire, police and social services. The attached table (appendix 1) shows empty dwelling numbers at the time of the introduction of the first strategy in 2009 to March 2017.
2. Empty dwellings are identified principally from council tax information but also through reports to the Empty Property Officer. Reports can be made by officers from internal and external services, Councillors and the public. The Council's website has a facility where a property can be reported, with a direct link to the Empty Property Officer. Each year in November there is a national Empty Homes Week and the Council ensures it is publicised both internally, by posters and Council Matters, and externally by the press.

3. There are three specific ways in which the Council deals with empty dwellings in the City.

3.1 Firstly, to contact owners of empty dwellings to inquire why their dwelling is unoccupied and to offer support and advice. This may include:

- a letter confirming in excess of 2 years vacancy for the purpose of VAT relief on works to bring a property back into use
- contact with planning and environmental development officers (EDO)
- contact with the home improvement agency
- support from adult social services
- contact details of people interested in purchasing empty dwellings
- provision of information on sale and rental value of their property, including details of agents local to the dwelling.

3.2 Secondly, where an owner is unable or unwilling to bring an empty dwelling back into use there are more formal ways to ensure it is. These include:

- Serving notices to improve the property with the assistance of Environmental Development. Where a notice is not complied with, the Council will carry out works in default. There is an empty dwelling budget to support work carried in default of the notices.
- Applying for an Empty Dwelling Management Order under the Housing Act 2004 (EDMO). The Council has previously applied for three, two of which were granted and one withdrawn. In 2012 the criteria for an EDMO to be applied for changed. Harm must be demonstrated and this usually means that complaints must have been received.
- Applying for a Compulsory Purchase Order to enable the Council to ensure the property is brought back into use. Papers have been served on the Secretary of State for a property in Rose Hill.

3.3 Thirdly, in 2011 the Government introduced the New Homes Bonus (NHB). The NHB is a grant paid by Central Government to local councils to reflect and incentivise housing growth in their areas and includes empty dwellings being brought back into use. The NHB until this year was paid over a 6 year period (now reduced to 4 years) for each new home and empty dwelling brought back into use. The yearly bonus equates to the council tax value for each property. A further major change introduced at a late stage by Central Government to take effect from 2017/18 onwards, was that only growth above 0.4% will attract NHB payments. In practical terms this reduced our allocation for 2017/18 from an estimated £611,193 to only £333,267.

3.4 In response to this a NHB working party, led by the Empty Property Officer, was created with officers from Council Tax/Revenues and Investigations. Each year in June and August, two letters with a questionnaire attached are sent out to establish if dwellings recorded as empty are in fact occupied. Electronic checks and site visits are carried out by Revenues and Investigations Team, particularly on properties where the owner has failed to respond. As a result of this initiative,

those properties found to be occupied are included in the figures submitted for NHB purposes and removed from the empty property database. Details of the results of the NHB since are attached at appendix 2.

Empty Property Strategy 2018-21

4. Work to update the Empty Property Strategy 2013-18 will commence in June 2017 with a period of consultation with those living in Oxford, Councillors and internal and external services. The proposed new strategy will be presented to CEB for approval in autumn 2017.
 - 4.1 Within the new strategy there will be greater emphasis on how we will target and enforce against dwellings under the following categories to ensure they are brought back into use:
 - 'tough' enforcement on properties empty for 10 years or more
 - properties empty for 2 years or more (current figure is 66)
 - properties empty over 2 years which are owned by a deceased person and probate has not been applied for.
 - 4.2 Greater emphasis will also be placed on working to help enable the delivery of new homes. This can be achieved by identifying empty dwellings and commercial sites suitable for development and/or change of use to dwellings and mixed use sites.

Conclusion

5. Whilst most empty dwellings are brought back into use without the need to take formal action, there is a hard-core of properties that will remain unoccupied without intervention. With continuing support and commitment from Councillors and officers from both internal and external services, these dwellings will be brought back into use. In addition, the continuing commitment to support empty property work financially, most recently demonstrated by the application for a Compulsory Purchase Order, will also ensure empty dwellings within the City do not remain unoccupied.

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Appendix 1

Table of empty homes figures from 2009 to March 2017

DATE	April 2009	April 2010	Mar 2011	Mar 2012	Mar 2013	Mar 2014	Mar 2015	Mar 2016	Mar 2017
Long Term Empty (over 6mths)	717	643	586	455	440	383	365	374	303

Source: Council Tax

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Appendix 2 New Homes Bonus achieved from October 2010 to October 2016

	Dwelling additions	Affordable additions	Empty homes brought back	Gypsy pitch additions	Apr 2011 - Mar 2012	Apr 2012 - Mar 2013	Apr 2013 - Mar 2014	Apr 2014 - Mar 2015	Apr 2015 - Mar 2016	Apr 2016 - Mar 2017	Apr 2017 - Mar 2018	Total (for 6 year period)
Year 1 (CTB additions Oct 09 - Oct 10)	415	??	55	0	£472,960	£472,960	£472,960	£472,960	£472,960	£472,960		£2,837,760
Year 2 (CTB additions Oct 10 - Oct 11)	511	??	145	0		£823,536	£823,536	£823,536	£823,536	£823,536	NO	£4,117,680
Year 3 (CTB additions Oct 11 - Oct 12)	329	36	16	0			£388,121	£388,121	£388,121	£388,121	£388,121	£1,940,605
Year 4 (CTB additions Oct 12 - Oct 13)	170	93	102	0				£334,885	£334,885	£334,885	£334,885	£1,339,540
Year 5 (CTB additions Oct 13 - Oct 14)	214	2	135	0					£414,857	£414,857	£414,857	£1,244,571
Year 6 (CTB additions Oct 14 - Oct 15)	543	2	-38	0						£509,952	£509,952	£1,019,904
Year 7 (CTB additions Oct 15 - Oct 16)	210	75	14	0							£333,267	£333,267
Total payment					£472,960	£1,296,496	£1,684,617	£2,019,502	£2,434,359	£2,944,311	£1,981,082	

NB: In calculating NHB, dwellings which have been recorded through the current year as unoccupied are offset against those found to be occupied, hence in Year 6 the number of dwellings recorded as unoccupied outnumbered those found to be occupied.

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To: Housing Panel
Date: 26th April 2017
Report of: Property Services Manager
Title of Report: Great Estates Programme

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	To update the Housing Panel on works completed under the great estates programme and proposals for future works and funding
Corporate Priority	Meeting Housing Needs
Policy Framework	Housing Strategy
Recommendation(s)::	
1. The Panel are asked to note the contents of this report	

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Examples of work completed during 16/17

Introduction and background

1. The Council approved funding for a programme of work designed to improve the external environment of its housing estates. A team has been put together to co-ordinate and programme this work and has worked very closely with Direct Services who have delivered most of the work on site. Works have included off street parking provision, increased block security, environmental improvements, and redesign of refuse areas, installing internal floor coverings to common areas.
2. This report outlines work completed to date and proposals for future works

Funding

3. Below is the budget approved by Council in Feb 2017 along with budget and spend for 16/17

	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21
Approved budget	1,650,621	1,200,000	1,200,000	1,200,000	600,000
Actual spend	1,250,621				
Carry forward on identified schemes		400,000			
TOTAL	-400,000	1,600,000	1,200,000	1,200,000	600,000

4. It will be noted that there is a carry forward of £400,000 from 16/17 into 17/18. This is for schemes which were not completed during 16/17 due to the need to carry out consultation and obtain the necessary approvals which has extended the lead in time for these works.
5. Learning from this, we are now beginning the planning of schemes much earlier and are programming works accordingly, in order to avoid future carry forwards wherever possible.

Identification of schemes

6. Schemes are identified in four ways.
 - i. Requests from ward councillors
 - ii. Identification of specific issues on estates by Tenancy Management Officers
 - iii. Identification of areas where off street parking is uncontrolled and damaging the immediate environment
 - iv. Supplementary works in conjunction with the cyclical painting and repairs programme to provide a co-ordinated response and to maximise the impact of works on an estate to improve the appearance and immediate environment.

Resident consultation

7. Resident consultation is seen as key to the success of any improvements. A process has been developed whereby initial plans are drawn up and tenants are then consulted on the proposals. This is done via open evenings, door knocking and individual letters. Tenant's initiatives have assisted in this approach which has proved to be very successful.
8. During the consultation residents are asked for their views on the proposals and to put forward any ideas that they may have. Wherever possible we incorporate tenant's suggestions into the final scheme. This would include the layout of any landscaping and surface treatments, planting and designation of certain areas for specific uses.
9. Residents are also consulted on security measures where appropriate. One such example is the introduction of wireless door entry which gives residents much better control via smart phones and other similar devices.

Developing the overall approach

10. We have put together a small team to project manage and co-ordinate this work. This includes a project manager, surveyor and architectural assistant.
11. Experience has taught us that detailed planning is essential to ensure smooth delivery of the projects, and lead in times can often be extended in order to undertake resident consultation, finalise the agreed plans and receive planning permissions. In some cases it is also necessary to undertake S20 leaseholder consultation in order to recover some of the costs.
12. Direct Services undertake the majority of the work through their maintenance department, engineering department, and Parks.

Schemes completed during 16/17

Colemans Hill 1-43	Environmental improvements, security,
Druce Way 28-55	New bin stores
Warburg Crescent 31-58	New bin stores
Whitworth Place 1-24	New bin stores
Overmead Green 7-29	Garden environment and bin stores
Preachers Lane/ Friars Wharf	Door entry and new entrance doors
Linnet Close 7-24	Garden environment
Taggs Gate & Stowford Road	Level forecourts on demolished garage sites on HR land
Denny Gardens	Community garden
Various	Floor coverings
Various	Car parking schemes

Proposed works for 17/18

13. The programme currently identified for the coming financial year is below. Other works identified during the year may be added if there is sufficient funding within the year and subject to the statutory approvals required.
14. The main focus of the 17/18 programme is on Townsend Square. This estate has had little done to it over the past ten years and we are combining our resources to improve parking, the external appearance of the blocks, landscaping and security. We hope that by combining works from several budgets in one co-ordinated approach we will increase the overall impact of the works and make a significant difference to the estate environment.
15. We are also undertaking a review of all blocks on Blackbird Leys in order to inform a prioritised programme of improvement works for future years. This will involve developing a design solution for each block type.

Wolsey House 214-240 Riley House 86-212	Door entry
Hawksmoor Road 1-84	Garden environment
Birchfield Close 21-55	Garden environment
Cowley Road 151a, Flats 1-9	Roof Garden/Environment
Townsend Square	Environmental improvements and car parking in association with cyclical painting and repairs
Blocks on blackbird leys	Assessment of all blocks and prioritisation for future improvement works

Financial implications

16. None

Legal issues

17. None

Conclusion

18. The great estates funding has enabled the council to address long standing issues on our estates that have been a concern for members and residents. We have developed our approach to this programme of work with Direct Services who are able to carry out the majority of the work.
19. Feedback from residents where work has been completed is very positive and early consultation with them ensures we address their concerns directly, leading to more effective solutions to some of the problems experienced on the estates.
20. Because there is identified funding for the next four years we are able to plan larger schemes of works and prioritise these going forward. The initial work on Blackbird Leys outlined above is an example of this.
21. We have developed a “one council” approach to this project involving a number of different departments within the council to deliver the programme of work and project teams have been set up where appropriate to co-ordinate and deliver the work

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Appendix 1: Examples of work completed during 16/17

Overmead Green

Environmental Improvements to communal garden includes:
bin stores, privacy closed board fencing, drying area, seating areas and two benches, resurfaced paths.

Before



After



Linnet Close

Environmental Improvements include: refurbishment of drying areas, bin stores, patio area, resurfaced paths, bike racks.

Before



After



Nelson Street

Communal garden only accessible through resident's flats. Cleared and divided into separate gardens, paths laid, fences and gates installed, planting bed, and facility for rotary washing line. Residents were given choice of gravel or grass.

Before



After



Druce Way and Warburg Crescent

Previously waste and recycling bins kept beneath building in storage shed area, creating a fire hazard. The unsightly and often overflowing refuse also posed an environmental hazard. New lockable bin stores erected and waste chutes sealed.



Colemans Hill

Fencing, Signage, Internal Redecoration, Paths overlaid, Anti-slip treads external staircase, Internal Fire Doors, Vinyl Flooring, Bin Store, Bicycle Storage, Landscaping

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Car Parking

Levelling Carparks in Stowford Road and Taggs Gate, Barton



Preachers Lane and Friars Wharf Wireless Door Entry

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To: Housing Panel
Date: 26th April 2017
Report of: Head of Housing
Title of Report: Garage Asset Management Strategy

Summary and recommendations

Purpose of report:	To provide members with an overview of the activities being carried out under the Garage Asset Management Strategy
Key Decision	No
Executive Lead Member	Councillor Mike Rowley, Board Member for Housing
Corporate Priority	An effective and Efficient Council
Report Author	Ann Phillips, Tenancy Management Manager

Recommendation(s):

1. **The Housing Panel is asked to note the contents of this report**

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Garage Data
Appendix 2	Garages – NPV by block - CONFIDENTIAL
Appendix 3	Garage Site Proposals - CONFIDENTIAL
Appendix 4	Garage Marketing Plan 2017 - CONFIDENTIAL

Introduction and background

1. The Council's garage stock is held within the General Fund Budget and passed into the management of the Tenancy Management team in December 2015. There are 2001 garages of which 593 are situated on Blackbird Leys estate. In May 2016 21% of the garage stock was void and during the course of the project the voids have reduced to 16%. The budgeted rental income of the garage stock for 2016/17 was £1,090,000 and the annual void loss £290,000.
2. The condition of the garages varies significantly and historically many of the void garages were boarded up awaiting major repair. The Garage Asset Management Strategic Board was set up in May 2016 to produce and implement a long term plan for the Oxford City Council garage sites.

Options Appraisal

3. The board has gathered and considered information from various sources and specifically considered in each area:
 - The percentage of lettings and any waiting list (demand)
 - Stock condition
 - Cost of repair to bring up to a letting standard
 - Cost of on-going planned maintenance
 - Identification of garages that cannot be let due to condition or popularity
 - The distribution of garages across the city
 - Identification of alternative uses for the land where letting is not an option

Stock condition, responsive repairs, planned maintenance and improvements

4. A survey has been carried out of all the garage sites in the city and minor repairs carried out to bring the garage back into use where there is evidence that there is a demand for the garages.
5. Some major repairs have been carried out including four new roofs to garage blocks in Northway, a new roof, doors and frames to a block in Normandy Crescent and repairs to an asbestos roof in the Grates. Six other block roofs have been prioritised in the maintenance plan for 2017/18. This has resulted in 177 garages being brought back into use.
6. **Appendix 1 – Garage Data** shows occupancy and void rates while **Appendix 2 - NPV by Block (CONFIDENTIAL)** shows an analysis of the (NPV) Net Present Value, based on current rent and void rates and the estimated maintenance cost over thirty years at a discount rate of 3%. This has identified specific garage blocks that have a negative NPV and are therefore uneconomical as they represent a loss in income to the council as repair and management costs exceed projected income. No work will be carried out on these blocks until there has been a full assessment as to the best use for these sites

The data also provides information on the most profitable garage sites and where the limited maintenance income should be directed.

Lettings and marketing strategy

7. As repaired garages have returned to the available stock the Tenancy Management team have contacted those applicants on the waiting list to let the garages. It was found that many applications were historical and the applicant details out of date and this adversely affected the number of lettings anticipated.
8. A new marketing strategy has been created and an early working draft is attached at **Appendix 4 - Garage Marketing Plan 2017 (CONFIDENTIAL)**. This will be implemented in the coming year to attract potential customers. The demand for parking space is continuing to increase in the city and provided the rent is maintained at an appropriate level there is a market for secure parking.

Alternative site uses

9. Each garage site has been considered by the board with reference to current lettings figures, demand, NPV, maintenance costs and development potential.

As a result a number of sites have been identified for development; other sites with no development potential are being considered for additional off street parking provision or landscaping and environmental Improvements. The outcomes of the Board's discussions are shown in **Appendix 3 - Garage Site Proposals (CONFIDENTIAL)**.

Finance

10. A budget provision has been made for 2017/18 of £150,000 for day to day maintenance and repairs of the garages and an additional £77,000 per year for the next four years has been made available from the General Fund budget to carry out improvements to the garage blocks. This will include an initial marketing budget of £4500 to bring the garage properties back into the public eye.

ICT

11. Garage lettings have been handled manually for many years. A new void pathway in the housing management system has been created to automate the lettings process and to provide rigorous monitoring of performance.

Financial implications

12. The work carried out by the board has enabled us to bring valuable garages back into use and identify those sites where alternative use is the best option.
13. The prioritisation of works through the stock condition survey and popularity has enabled us to target the limited funding to best affect and to maximise the income stream from garages into the future

Legal issues

14. None

Conclusion

The vast majority of garages owned by Oxford City Council can be let and will continue to contribute to the General Fund.

15. A number of unpopular garages sites have been identified for development of new housing schemes.
16. Works to garages have been aligned with other works to estates including the provision of off street parking and other schemes falling under the Great Estates programme of works.
17. Work is continuing to identify alternative options where unpopular garage sites are not suitable for redevelopment or the provision of off street parking.

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Appendix 1 - Garage Data

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WAITING LIST AREA	BLOCK REF	NUMBER GARAGES	LET VEHICLE	LET STORAGE	GENERAL VOID	DISREPAIR VOID	TOTAL VOID	% VOID
Blackbird Leys	TUCKERRO73-91	19	5	1		13	13	68.42%
Blackbird Leys	SANDYLA129-160	31	8		1	22	23	74.19%
Blackbird Leys	WILLOWWA494-506	13	2		3	8	11	84.62%
Barton	UNDERHILLC1-7	6	3		3		3	50.00%
Blackbird Leys	CLOVERPL918-922	5	1		4		4	80.00%
Headington	BURYKNOWLEHO1G	1	0		1		1	100.00%
Blackbird Leys	EVENLODETO576-599	24	8	7	3	6	9	37.50%
Barton	MATHERRO1-7	7	5		2		2	28.57%
Blackbird Leys	BLAYCL43-58	16	6	5	3	2	5	31.25%
Marston	JACKDAWLA1-2	2	1			1	1	50.00%
Rose Hill & Littlemore	STAINFIELDRO1-2	1	1				0	0.00%
Blackbird Leys	KNIGHTSRO338G	1	1				0	0.00%
Blackbird Leys	SAWPITRO59-70	14	5	7	2		2	14.29%
Blackbird Leys	KENTCL29-32	4	3	1			0	0.00%
Jericho	PLANTATIONRO2-3	3	2		1		1	33.33%
Headington	TILEHOUSECL1-7	7	6		1		1	14.29%
Blackbird Leys	PERIWINKLEPL1140-1159	19	8	2	2	7	9	47.37%
Blackbird Leys	TIMOTHYWA974-978	4	2	2			0	0.00%
North Oxford	HOLTWEERCL28-30	3	2		1		1	33.33%
Marston	PARKWA3-9	3	2		1		1	33.33%
Jericho	NELSONST1-2	2	2				0	0.00%
Northway	ELIZABETHPL1-6	3	3				0	0.00%
Abingdon Road & Grandpont	ABINGDONRO651-652	2	2				0	0.00%
Blackbird Leys	GENTIANRO926-930	5	3		1	1	2	40.00%
Blackbird Leys	RAMPIONCL963-967	5	5				0	0.00%
Rose Hill & Littlemore	FABERCL1-5	5	3		2		2	40.00%
Rose Hill & Littlemore	SPENCERCR1-5	5	4		1		1	20.00%
Rose Hill & Littlemore	THAMESVIEWRO37-41	5	3		2		2	40.00%
Blackbird Leys	BRAMBLINGWA318-325	8	5		2	1	3	37.50%
Barton	STOWFORD R1-31	25	15	2	6	2	8	32.00%
Headington	LAURELFARMCL1-4	4	3		1		1	25.00%
Jericho	ALBERTST1-2	2	2				0	0.00%
Abingdon Road & Grandpont	LAKEST1-2	2	2				0	0.00%
Headington	HEADLEYWA1-2	2	2				0	0.00%
Blackbird Leys	PEREGRINERO305-317	13	6		1	6	7	53.85%
Blackbird Leys	FLAXFIELDRO923-925	3	3				0	0.00%
Cowley	THEGR1-3	3	3				0	0.00%

Note: a small number of garages could not be surveyed

Appendix 1 - Garage Data

WAITING LIST AREA	BLOCK REF	NUMBER GARAGES	LET VEHICLE	LET STORAGE	GENERAL VOID	DISREPAIR VOID	TOTAL VOID	% VOID
North Oxford	SPARSEYPL14-16	3	3				0	0.00%
Barton	FETTIPLACERO1-6	6	5		1		1	16.67%
Wood Farm & New Headington	DYNHAM PL40-51	5	5				0	0.00%
Northway	UPWAYRO1-9	9	5		4		4	44.44%
Rose Hill & Littlemore	OXFORDRO4-17	9	8		1		1	11.11%
Wood Farm & New Headington	GODFREYCL2-9	8	5		3		3	37.50%
Blackbird Leys	BALFOURRO33-37	5	4			1	1	20.00%
Blackbird Leys	PIMPERNELCL959-962	4	4				0	0.00%
Marston	MORTIMERDR27-31	5	4		1		1	20.00%
Rose Hill & Littlemore	REDMOORCL1-5	5	4		1		1	20.00%
Wood Farm & New Headington	BRACEGIRDLERO1-5	5	4		1		1	20.00%
Barton	BARTON VILLAGERO1-12	12	6	1	3	2	5	41.67%
Wood Farm & New Headington	ATKYNSRO1-4	4	4				0	0.00%
Botley	BULLSTAKECL2-7	6	5		1		1	16.67%
Abingdon Road & Grandpont	RIVERSIDECO1-4	4	4				0	0.00%
Blackbird Leys	BLAYCL120-128	9	6	2	1		1	11.11%
City Centre	PARADISESQAG-CG	3	3				0	0.00%
St Clements	STCLEMENTSST1-4	4	4				0	0.00%
Iffley	DONNINGTONLO1-4	4	4				0	0.00%
Blackbird Leys	LINNETCL326-331	6	5			1	1	16.67%
Blackbird Leys	MALLARDCL332-337	6	5		1		1	16.67%
Rose Hill & Littlemore	WILLIAMSONWA31-36	6	5		1		1	16.67%
Wood Farm & New Headington	OLDRO1-6	6	5		1		1	16.67%
Headington	JOHNSNOWPL1-9	9	9				0	0.00%
Wood Farm & New Headington	PAULINGRO1-6	6	5		1		1	16.67%
Jericho	STPAULSHO2-7	7	5		2		2	28.57%
Blackbird Leys	FURLONGCL38-42	5	5				0	0.00%
Blackbird Leys	MERCURYRO945-949	5	5				0	0.00%
Blackbird Leys	PENNYCRESSRO950-954	5	5				0	0.00%
Cowley	CARPENTERCL1-5	1	0		1		1	100.00%
Headington	HEATHCL26-30	5	5				0	0.00%
Iffley	GEORGEMOORECL1-5	5	5				0	0.00%
Marston	RIPPINGTONDR1-5	5	5				0	0.00%
Rose Hill & Littlemore	CARPENTERCL1-5	5	5				0	0.00%
Blackbird Leys	POULTONPL1600-1607	8	6	1	1		1	12.50%
North Oxford	PRIORSFO1-27	8	8				0	0.00%
Blackbird Leys	WINGATECL20-27	8	6	1	1		1	12.50%

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Appendix 1 - Garage Data

WAITING LIST AREA	BLOCK REF	NUMBER GARAGES	LET VEHICLE	LET STORAGE	GENERAL VOID	DISREPAIR VOID	TOTAL VOID	% VOID
Blackbird Leys	ALLINCL1-7	7	6		1		1	14.29%
Cowley	WOLSELEYHO1-7	7	7				0	0.00%
Cowley	BARTHOLOMEWRO1-35	8	8				0	0.00%
Blackbird Leys	WARBURGCR1608-1613	6	6				0	0.00%
Headington	WILLIAMKIMBERCR1-6	6	6				0	0.00%
Wood Farm & New Headington	STANSFELDPL1-9	8	6		2		2	25.00%
Blackbird Leys	LADENHAMRO1-19	12	6	2	2	2	4	33.33%
Blackbird Leys	ERICACL1390-1397	8	7		1		1	12.50%
Rose Hill & Littlemore	GILES RO1-21	21	18		3		3	14.29%
Blackbird Leys	HAREBELLRO1115-1128	14	9	3	1	1	2	14.29%
Barton	MALFORDRO1-7	7	7				0	0.00%
Blackbird Leys	RESTHA1129-1138	10	9		1		1	10.00%
Blackbird Leys	JASMINECL1357-1365	9	8		1		1	11.11%
North Oxford	MILLERSAC31-39	9	8		1		1	11.11%
Abingdon Road & Grandpont	COBDENCOAG-FG	6	6				0	0.00%
Wood Farm & New Headington	SLADECL1-8	8	8				0	0.00%
Northway	AMBLESIDEDR1-8	8	8				0	0.00%
Wood Farm & New Headington	THESL1-14	14	13		1		1	7.14%
Iffley	TOWNSENDSQ1-10	10	9		1		1	10.00%
Cowley	NORMANDYCR27-50	24	14		1	9	10	41.67%
Barton	LYDIACL1-7	7	7				0	0.00%
Headington	GLADSTONERO1-9	9	9				0	0.00%
Barton	CRESSHILLPL1-12	12	10		2		2	16.67%
Rose Hill & Littlemore	NOWELLRO50-61	12	10		2		2	16.67%
Blackbird Leys	LOBELIARO931-944	14	11	1		2	2	14.29%
Jericho	GREATCLARENDONST1-9	9	9				0	0.00%
Northway	SAXONWA1-23	19	14		5		5	26.32%
Blackbird Leys	DRUCEWA1420-1451	13	13				0	0.00%
Blackbird Leys	ASHMOLEPL1440-1453	13	12		1		1	7.69%
Cowley	LIDDELLRO36-47	12	12				0	0.00%
Jericho	DAWSONPL1-10	11	11				0	0.00%
Jericho	JERICHOST1-12	11	11				0	0.00%
Marston	RAYMUNDRO1-11	12	11	1			0	0.00%
Wood Farm & New Headington	CHILLINGWORTHCR1-15	15	14		1		1	6.67%
Blackbird Leys	SAMPHIRERO1102-1112	11	11				0	0.00%
St Clements	LITTLEBREWERYST1-11	11	11				0	0.00%
Cowley	PAGETRO51-65	15	10	1	1	3	4	26.67%

Note: a small number of garages could not be surveyed

Appendix 1 - Garage Data

WAITING LIST AREA	BLOCK REF	NUMBER GARAGES	LET VEHICLE	LET STORAGE	GENERAL VOID	DISREPAIR VOID	TOTAL VOID	% VOID
Cowley	CORUNNACR15-26	12	12				0	0.00%
Cowley	HORSPATHRO1-14	14	13		1		1	7.14%
North Oxford	DAVIDWALTERCL70-83	14	13		1		1	7.14%
Rose Hill & Littlemore	ALICESMITHSQ1-16	17	14	1	2		2	11.76%
St Clements	UNIONST1-12	12	12				0	0.00%
Northway	JOHNBUCHANRO1-13	13	13				0	0.00%
North Oxford	HAWKSMOORRO1-16	16	14	1	1		1	6.25%
Iffley	CATHERINEST1-20	16	13		3		3	18.75%
Iffley	CATHERINEST1-20	1	1				0	0.00%
Blackbird Leys	KESTRELCR300-407	58	27	6	1	24	25	43.10%
Barton	EDGECOMBERO1-20	20	15		5		5	25.00%
Barton	ILSLEYRO1-18	18	15		2	1	3	16.67%
Blackbird Leys	SORRELRO969-1371	44	23	1	8	12	20	45.45%
Jericho	CARDIGANST1-16	16	16				0	0.00%
Wood Farm & New Headington	WARRENCR16-38	16	15		1		1	6.25%
Cowley	BARNSRO9-31	18	17		1		1	5.56%
Jericho	WHITWORTHPL1-14	12	12				0	0.00%
Cowley	BARNSCO1-20	20	17		2	1	3	15.00%
Wolvercote	ULFGARRO1-20	20	18	1	1		1	5.00%
Headington	GREENRO1-16	16	15			1	1	6.25%
Cowley	HOCKMOREST1-22	14	12		1	1	2	14.29%
Rose Hill & Littlemore	PRIORYRO1-23	23	19		4		4	17.39%
Wood Farm & New Headington	GIRDLESTONERO1-46	19	18		1		1	5.26%
Summertown	BANBURYRO1-17	17	17				0	0.00%
Blackbird Leys	PEGASUSRO550-619	45	26	12	3	4	7	15.56%
Blackbird Leys	STRAWBERRYPA1012-1039	28	23	4	1		1	3.57%
Rose Hill & Littlemore	MINCHERYRO1-28	27	23	1	2	1	3	11.11%
Jericho	VENABLESCL1-21	21	20		1		1	4.76%
North Oxford	PENNYWELLDLDR1-99	27	24		1	2	3	11.11%
Blackbird Leys	COMFREYRO1200-1226	21	17		1	3	4	19.05%
Blackbird Leys	FIELDV900-1011	40	27	7	4	2	6	15.00%
City Centre	PREACHERSLA1-20	20	19		1		1	5.00%
Iffley	BOUNDARYBROOKRO1-59	35	31		4		4	11.43%
North Oxford	KENDALLCR40-67	28	26		2		2	7.14%
Headington	COLEMANSHI1-35	24	22		2		2	8.33%
Northway	BORROWMEADRO1-36	35	32		3		3	8.57%
Wood Farm & New Headington	LEIDENRO1-46	46	39		5	2	7	15.22%

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Appendix 1 - Garage Data

WAITING LIST AREA	BLOCK REF	NUMBER GARAGES	LET VEHICLE	LET STORAGE	GENERAL VOID	DISREPAIR VOID	TOTAL VOID	% VOID
Cowley	KERSINGTONCR1-109	63	53	5	5		5	7.94%
Southfield Park	SOUTHFIELDPA301-428	121	110	1	9	1	10	8.26%

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HOUSING PANEL (PANEL OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE)

Wednesday 1 March 2017

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillors Goff, Henwood (Chair), Pegg, Sanders, Thomas, Wade and Humphrey.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Andrew Brown (Scrutiny Officer), Stephen Clarke (Head of Housing and Property), Clare Bold (Options Officer), Ossi Mosley (Rough Sleeping & Single Homelessness Officer) and David Rundle (Private Rented Team Leader)

82. APOLOGIES

No apologies.

83. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations.

84. HOUSING PERFORMANCE - QUARTER 3

The Head of Housing said that there had been no significant changes since the previous performance report and that the quarter 3 report represented a good set of results. He highlighted the following points:

- The use of temporary accommodation was within target but the Council was using some of its general needs stock as temporary housing.
- The number of people sleeping rough was high and challenging to contain.
- There had been some delays in the delivery of new affordable housing.
- A housing company had been established and its two-year development plan would deliver 260 new units.

The Panel questioned how many units would be delivered at Dora Carr Close as this was referenced in two indicators that had different targets. The Head of Housing said that HP006 included other schemes too but that he would provide details separately on how many new units would be delivered where and when.

The Panel questioned whether social housing owned by the housing company would be subject to Right to Buy. The Panel heard that the government intended to extend Right to Buy to social housing stock owned by local authority housing companies. The details, such as qualification periods and discounts, had not yet been announced and could be different than for social housing owned by local authorities directly.

The Head of Housing offered to look into an empty property case in Northway.

85. COUNCIL SUPPORT FOR HOUSING BENEFIT CLAIMANTS ACCESSING THE PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR

The Private Rented Team Leader introduced the report and said that it was potentially relevant to everyone because anyone could lose their job or become ill and need Housing Benefit. Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates paid to Housing Benefit recipients are based on an area within a 30 minute commute of Oxford, not on market rent levels within the city itself. The Panel commented that it was an excellent report.

The Panel questioned whether the 3% of landlords who accepted Housing Benefit tenants included landlords of houses in multiple occupations (HMOs). The Private Rented Team Leader said that they did not. The Council did not use HMOs for statutory homelessness and had no powers to require landlords to accept tenants in receipt of Housing Benefit. Landlords tended to perceive Housing Benefit recipients as high risk tenants and often faced paying a 30% insurance premium and higher mortgage interest rates when letting properties to them. The 3% ranged from ethical landlords to those who were maybe looking to take advantage of people but in his experience, most landlords were good.

The Panel noted that half of statutory homelessness cases resulted from private rented sector (PRS) evictions and asked about the typical reasons for PRS evictions. The Private Rented Team Leader advised that approximately one quarter of PRS evictions were due to a breach of tenancy (e.g. non-payment of rent). The remainder of evictions tended to stem from a change in the landlord's circumstances, e.g. a decision to sell the property, or in some cases, seeking higher rents from tenants in work. However, there was no duty on landlords to provide a reason so analysis was difficult.

The Panel noted the difficulty people on Housing Benefit in particular faced in providing three months rent in advance and heard that some landlords even required 12 months rent in advance.

The Panel welcomed the Council's new Rent Guarantee Scheme as an excellent initiative and asked for initial feedback. The Private Rented Team Leader likened the scheme to a small snowball that was rolling. There had been 8 lets to date and the scheme had just received national publicity, which had resulted in four phone calls from other local authorities in one day. The scheme was consistent with the government's Homelessness Reduction Bill which was focused on providing help at an earlier stage. He was confident that it was a good model that was working but there was a financial risk to the Council in guaranteeing rents. Tenants were selected from a prevention list and those in temporary accommodation. There were some difficult cases and it may be that some people would fall out of the scheme but the Council had not had to pay out yet.

The Head of Housing added that the scheme was aligned with the Council's approach to Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP), attaching conditionality and helping people into work through training. The scheme was experimental but was making inroads at the margins.

In response to a question the Panel heard that landlords had to pass a fit and proper person test. All properties were visited and checked and the Council did not use any properties with a category 1 hazard. The Panel heard that the banning of letting agent fees was unlikely to have a significant impact on the market because the costs would be passed on in other ways.

The Panel thanked officers for an excellent report and commented that the significant gap between Local Housing Allowance Rates and market rents in the city was likely to continue getting worse.

86. SERVICES FOR ROUGH SLEEPERS

The Rough Sleeping & Single Homelessness Officer said that the number of rough sleepers in the city was currently high (186 individuals had slept rough during September to December 2016) and that rough sleepers tended to have significant needs. Rough sleeping was not illegal or banned but the Council's view was that sleeping rough was dangerous and harmful to individuals. An assertive outreach team totalling 10 people were commissioned to support and engage rough sleepers, undertake an initial assessment and provide options for accommodation, which could include private rented accommodation, family, the homelessness pathway or contacting other areas where rough sleepers had a local connection. It was recognised that this model did not work for all rough sleepers so the Council had commissioned small specialist projects totalling 10 beds to provide accommodation and intensive support to entrenched rough sleepers and those with multiple complex needs. The Council funded a lot of services in the city but there were particular challenges around individuals who refused to engage, those who were not eligible for services (e.g. because they had no recourse to public funds), those did not wish to leave the city and those who continued to sleep rough despite having access to accommodation.

The Panel raised concerns about people sleeping in tents including people whose tents had been slashed. The Rough Sleeping & Single Homelessness Officer said that the Council did not issue tents and that these people should speak to the outreach team. This team visited all the places where people were known to be sleeping rough, either late at night or early in the morning. The police and day services were all aware of the work of the outreach team and how to refer people to them.

The Panel questioned whether clear guidance was provided to recipients and providers on how the local connection rules were applied and what peoples' rights were. The Panel heard that these rules flowed from the Council's Allocations Policy which had been agreed by full Council but that the homelessness pathway was less stringent than the Allocations Policy.

The Panel asked about a group of people sleeping at Osney power station who had recently moved there from a former car showroom site on Iffley Road, and how the Council was engaging with them. The Head of Housing said that the Council had made efforts to engage with this group but had been refused. Because of this the Council had no way of verifying whether these people were from Oxford and had previously been sleeping rough in the City. The Panel questioned whether the assertive outreach model may be too intrusive and pushy to be effective with groups such as this. The Panel commented that some rough sleepers had agency and a voice and could potentially provide useful

feedback to the Council. The Head of Housing said that dialogue was key but that the model was deliberately assertive because the Council believed that sleeping rough was bad for people.

The Panel questioned how the repatriation process worked for people with no recourse to public funds and whether embassies were involved. The Rough Sleeping & Single Homelessness Officer said that this was part of the commissioned service. In practice it involved accompanying people to an airport or bus terminal and ensuring there would be someone to meet them at the other end. Only a small number of people accepted support with repatriation.

A member of the public was invited to comment and suggested that former rough sleepers should be utilised as middlemen as this can help to gain the trust of rough sleepers and make for more effective engagement. This approach had worked successfully in Hong Kong. The Rough Sleeping & Single Homelessness Officer said that St. Mungo's did use some peer workers but that she would take this suggestion away.

The Panel resolved to:

- Welcome the excellent report.
- See any comments made about the outreach service by rough sleepers.
- See any documents or leaflets given out by the outreach service.
- Request further information about the repatriation process.

87. ALLOCATION OF HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION FUNDS

The Rough Sleeping & Single Homelessness Officer introduced the report which set out how the Council would spend £1.4m of homelessness prevention funds in 2017/18. The provision of homelessness services were about to go through unprecedented changes due to the phased withdrawal of 100% of the County Council £1.5m budget for housing related support, which would end completely in 2019. A pooled budgeting arrangement involving the City Council, the other Oxfordshire district councils and the Clinical Commissioning Group would replace some of the homelessness beds that were being lost. Through this arrangement the Council had committed £161k of prevention funding to maintaining some supported accommodation services that had previously been funded by the County Council. The Head of Housing said that the city needed a minimum of 150 beds and the Council would prioritise making up the shortfall (108 beds are funded from pooled budgets in the city beyond April 2018). The most pressing issue was the replacement of Julian Housing (dispersed housing across the city) as 83 beds would be lost from April 2017. The Council was already in discussions about this.

In response to a question, the Rough Sleeping & Single Homelessness Officer confirmed that no prevention activities would stop in 2017/18, aside from one small funding reduction to a provider that was becoming self-sufficient. In 2018/19 there would be a need to reallocate funding to meet the challenges from County Council cuts. At this stage there were uncertainties about the impacts of the Homelessness Reduction Bill and Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer funding but officers would come back to members with costed proposals for 2018/19 at the appropriate time. The Panel also noted that £250k previously allocated to topping up Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) was being removed in 2017/18 but heard that only a fraction of this funding was likely to be

utilised in the current year and the Council's DHP grant allocation had been significantly increased for the coming year.

The Panel questioned whether the severe weather emergency provision was sufficient. The Head of Housing said that there was adequate flexibility to meet need and that any people seen sleeping rough during severe weather had done so not because of a lack of provision but through choice.

88. REPORT FOR APPROVAL: UNIVERSITY HOUSING NEEDS

The Panel agreed that the report should better reflect the following areas of disagreement between the Panel and the University of Oxford:

- The University's claim that the Council had not delivered new housing.
- The University's claim that sites in Wolvercote and Northern Gateway are too far from university facilities to be suitable for student or postdoc accommodation.
- The Panel's view that the University should do more to maximise accommodation on sites it owns.
- The Panel's view that the University should do more to ensure that their lower paid support staff can be suitably accommodated in the city.

The Panel agreed that the recommendations should include the following points:

- The need for a continued dialogue with the universities aimed at building shared concerns and shared effort.
- The need to encourage the University to present their plans for accommodating students and postdocs.
- The need for the University to do more to ensure that their lower paid support staff can be suitably accommodated in the city.

89. HOUSING PANEL WORK PLAN

Noted.

90. NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Agreed.

91. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Cllr Goff apologised that she would be unable to attend the next meeting.

The Panel questioned whether substitutes could be allowed. The Scrutiny Officer said that he would advise against this and that consistency of membership was important due to the focused nature of the Panel's remit. Suggested meeting dates for next year would be shared with Panel members soon for their agreement.

The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 6.55 pm

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