

# Agenda

## Cabinet

This meeting will be held on:

Date: **Wednesday 15 March 2023**

Time: **6.00 pm**

Place: **Long Room - Oxford Town Hall**

**For further information** please contact:

Emma Lund, Committee and Member Services Officer

📞 01865 252367

✉ DemocraticServices@oxford.gov.uk

### **Members of the public can attend to observe this meeting and:**

- may submit a question about any item for decision at the meeting in accordance with the [Cabinet's rules](#)
- may record all or part of the meeting in accordance with the Council's [protocol](#)

Details of how City Councillors and members of the public may engage with this meeting are set out later in the agenda. Information about recording is set out later in the agenda and on the [website](#)

Please contact the Committee Services Officer to submit a question; to discuss recording the meeting; or with any other queries.

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[mycouncil.oxford.gov.uk](https://mycouncil.oxford.gov.uk).*

*All public papers are available from the calendar link to this meeting once published*

## **Cabinet Members**

Councillor Susan Brown	Leader, Inclusive Economy and Partnerships
Councillor Ed Turner	Deputy Leader (Statutory) - Finance and Asset Management
Councillor Shaista Aziz	Cabinet Member for Inclusive Communities and Culture
Councillor Nigel Chapman	Cabinet Member for Citizen Focused Services
Councillor Alex Hollingsworth	Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery
Councillor Chewe Munkonge	Cabinet Member for Leisure and Parks
Councillor Anna Railton	Cabinet Member for Zero Carbon Oxford and Climate Justice
Councillor Linda Smith	Cabinet Member for Housing
Councillor Louise Upton	Cabinet Member for Health and Transport
Councillor Diko Walcott	Cabinet Member for Safer Communities

Apologies received before the publication are shown under *Apologies for absence* in the agenda. Those sent after publication will be reported at the meeting.

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# Agenda

Items to be considered at this meeting in open session (part 1) and in confidential session (part 2).

Future items to be discussed by the Cabinet can be found on the Forward Plan which is available on the Council's [website](#)

	Pages
1 <b>Apologies for Absence</b>	
2 <b>Declarations of Interest</b>	
3 <b>Addresses and Questions by Members of the Public</b>	
4 <b>Councillor Addresses on any item for decision on the Cabinet agenda</b>	
5 <b>Councillor Addresses on Neighbourhood Issues</b>	
6 <b>Items raised by Cabinet Members</b>	
7 <b>Scrutiny reports</b>	
<p>Scrutiny Committee met on 6 March 2023; Climate &amp; Environment Panel will meet on 9 March 2023; and Housing &amp; Homelessness Panel will meet on 13 March 2023. The following reports are expected and will be published as a supplement, together with any other recommendations from those meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Annual Update of the Council's Business Plan</li><li>• Integrated Care Strategy Update</li><li>• Integrated Performance Report for Q3 2022/23</li><li>• Development of a Biodiversity Strategy for Oxford</li><li>• Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy</li></ul>	
8 <b>Delivery of Affordable Housing</b>	13 - 26
<p><b>Lead Members:</b> Cabinet Member for Housing (Councillor Linda Smith), Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery (Councillor Alex Hollingsworth), Deputy Leader (Statutory) - Finance and Asset Management (Councillor Ed Turner)</p>	

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The Executive Director (Development) has submitted a report to seek further project approvals and delegations to enable the continued delivery of more affordable housing in Oxford.

Cabinet is recommended to:

1. **Give project approval** for the acquisition of affordable dwellings developed by Oxford City Homes Ltd (OCHL) for which budgetary provision has been made in the Council's Housing Revenue Account in respect of:
  - a) Oxford North (referenced in paragraphs 9 to 18 of the report), and
  - b) Goose Green, Wolvercote (referenced in paragraphs 19 to 34 of the report), and
  - c) Meadow Lane, Iffley (referenced in paragraphs 35 to 49 of the report);
2. **Delegate authority** to the Executive Director (Development), in consultation with the Executive Director (Communities and People); the Cabinet Member for Housing; the Head of Financial Services/Section 151 Officer; and the Head of Law and Governance/Monitoring Officer, to finalise the scheme design and financial appraisals and enter into agreements and contracts to facilitate the agreed purchase by the Council of the affordable housing (to be held in the HRA) and any associated land, within the identified budget, for the provision of the affordable housing (111 affordable homes) on the Oxford North development, within the project approval;
3. **Delegate authority** to the Executive Director (Communities and People) in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery; the Cabinet Member for Housing; the Head of Financial Services/Section 151 Officer and the Head of Law and Governance/Monitoring Officer to finalise the scheme design and financial appraisals and enter into agreements and contracts to facilitate the purchase by the Council of the social rent and shared ownership homes (to be held in the HRA) and any associated land, within the identified budget and within this project approval for Goose Green, Wolvercote (16 affordable homes);
4. **Delegate authority** to the Executive Director (Development), in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management; the Head of Financial Services/Section 151 Officer; and the Head of Law and Governance/Monitoring Officer, to approve the final terms and enter into the transfer in relation to Goose Green from the General Fund to OCHL;
5. **Delegate authority** to the Executive Director (Development), in consultation with the Executive Director (Communities and People);

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the Cabinet Member for Housing; the Head of Financial Services/Section 151 Officer; and the Head of Law and Governance/Monitoring Officer, to finalise the scheme design and financial appraisals and enter into agreements and contracts to facilitate the agreed purchase by the Council of the affordable housing (to be held in the HRA) and any associated land, from OCHL, for the provision of the affordable housing on the Meadow Lane, Iffley development (32 affordable homes), and within the identified budget and this project approval; and

6. **Recommend to Council** that it approves a revision to the HRA capital budget of an additional £825,000, with the realignment of budgets and schemes within the HRA new build programme, in order for the schemes listed below to be delivered within the capital programme funded predominantly from borrowing. This additional spend to be profiled into 2024/25.
  - a) Increase Northfield Hostel budget by £3.25m (see paragraph 52)
  - b) Increase Lanham Way budget by £361k (see paragraph 53)
  - c) Reduce East Oxford Community Centre budget by £700k (see paragraph 54)
  - d) Close Juniper Close scheme (see paragraph 55).

## 9 **Housing, Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-28**

27 - 240

**Lead Member:** Cabinet Member for Housing (Councillor Linda Smith)

The Executive Director (Communities and People) has submitted a report to seek approval of the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-28 and associated appendices.

Cabinet is recommended to:

1. **Note** the progress made to develop the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Action Plan for Oxford following feedback from the statutory public consultation;
2. **Recommend to Council** the adoption of the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-28 and its associated appendices;
3. **Recommend to Council** the adoption of the Strategy's Action Plan for 23-24; and
4. **Recommend to Council** that authority be delegated to the Executive Director (Communities and People), in consultation with

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the Cabinet Member for Housing, to update the Action Plan when required.

10	<b>Commercial Tenant Rent Arrears Write-Offs</b>  <b>Lead Member:</b> Deputy Leader (Statutory) - Finance and Asset Management (Councillor Ed Turner)  The Head of Corporate Property has submitted a report to seek approval for the write-off of commercial rent arrears above the limit which officers can approve under the Scheme of Delegation. Cabinet is recommended to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <b>Approve</b> the write-off of arrears relating to Edinburgh Woollen Mill (141 High Street) as detailed in this report;</li><li>2. <b>Approve</b> the write-off of arrears relating to Nosebag Restaurants Limited (6 St Michaels Street &amp; 6-8 St Michaels Street) as detailed in this report; and</li><li>3. <b>Approve</b> the write-off of arrears relating to the properties identified in the exempt Appendix 1.</li></ol>	241 - 246
11	<b>Integrated Care System Draft Strategy Update</b>  <b>Lead Member:</b> Cabinet Member for Health and Transport (Councillor Louise Upton)  The Head of Corporate Strategy has submitted a report to present information on the production of a new Integrated Care Strategy by the Integrated Care Board for Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West. Cabinet is recommended to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <b>Note</b> the contents of the report for information.</li></ol>	247 - 304
12	<b>Development of a Biodiversity Strategy for Oxford</b>  <b>Lead Member:</b> Cabinet Member for Zero Carbon Oxford and Climate Justice (Councillor Anna Railton)  The Head of Corporate Strategy has submitted a report to present Cabinet with a proposed approach to the development of a Biodiversity Strategy for the City of Oxford.	305 - 310

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	<p>Cabinet is recommended to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Note</b> the report and the proposed establishment of steering group in connection with the preparation of the Biodiversity Strategy.</li> </ol>	
13	<p><b>Annual Update of the Council's Business Plan</b></p> <p><b>Lead Member:</b> Leader - Inclusive Economy and Partnerships (Councillor Susan Brown)</p> <p>The Head of Corporate Strategy has submitted a report to approve Oxford City Council's Corporate Business Plan priorities for 2023/24.</p> <p>Cabinet is recommended to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Agree</b> the draft Oxford City Council Corporate Business Plan priorities 2023/24, which set out the Council's priority work for the next financial year;</li> <li>2. <b>Delegate authority</b> to the Head of Corporate Strategy in consultation with the Council Leader to make further minor amendments to the draft Business Plan priorities before implementation; and</li> <li>3. <b>Note</b> the progress made in delivery against the actions set out in the current year's Corporate Business Plan 2022/23.</li> </ol>	311 - 388
14	<p><b>Integrated Performance Report for Q3 2022/23</b></p> <p><b>Lead Member:</b> Deputy Leader (Statutory) - Finance and Asset Management (Councillor Ed Turner)</p> <p>The Head of Financial Services has submitted a report to update Cabinet on Finance, Risk and Corporate Performance matters as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022.</p> <p>Cabinet is recommended to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Note</b> the projected financial outturn for 2022-23 as well as the current position on risk and performance as at 31 December 2022; and</li> <li>2. <b>Note</b> the change in timing of the insurance contract procurement exercise for the new contract to commence from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024 as outlined in paragraph 18.</li> </ol>	389 - 408
15	<p><b>Flag Flying and Bell Ringing Arrangements</b></p>	409 - 420

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**Lead Member:** Leader - Inclusive Economy and Partnerships  
(Councillor Susan Brown)

The Head of Law and Governance has submitted a report to seek agreement of the lists of annual flag flying and bell ringing commitments and approval for a minor amendment to the Oxford City Council Protocol for Flag Flying and Bell Ringing.

Cabinet is recommended to:

1. **Agree** the List of Annual Flag Flying Commitments attached at Appendix A;
2. **Agree** the List of Annual Bell Ringing Commitments attached at Appendix B; and
3. **Approve** the minor amendment to the Oxford City Council Protocol for Flag Flying and Bell Ringing set out in Appendix C to the report.

## 16 Minutes

421 - 430

**Recommendation:** That Cabinet resolves to **approve** the minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2023 as a true and accurate record.

## 17 Dates of Future Meetings

Meetings are scheduled for the following dates:

19 April 2023  
14 June 2023  
12 July 2023  
9 August 2023  
13 September 2023  
18 October 2023

All meetings start at 6.00pm.

## Matters Exempt from Publication

If Cabinet 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 Cabinet to pass a resolution in accordance with the provisions of Paragraph 4(2)(b) of the Local

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Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 on the grounds that their presence could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in specific paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Cabinet 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.

## **Part Two – matters exempt from publication**

<b>18</b>	<b>Delivery of Affordable Housing</b>	<b>431 - 442</b>
<b>19</b>	<b>Commercial Tenant Rent Arrears Write-Offs</b>	<b>443 - 448</b>

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## **Information for those attending**

### **Recording and reporting on meetings held in public**

Members of public and press can record, or report in other ways, the parts of the meeting open to the public. You are not required to indicate in advance but it helps if you notify the Committee Services Officer prior to the meeting so that they can inform the Chair and direct you to the best place to record.

The Council asks those recording the meeting:

- To follow the protocol which can be found on the Council's [website](#)
- Not to disturb or disrupt the meeting
- Not to edit the recording in a way that could lead to misinterpretation of the proceedings. This includes not editing an image or views expressed in a way that may ridicule or show a lack of respect towards those being recorded.
- To avoid recording members of the public present, even inadvertently, unless they are addressing the meeting.

Please be aware that you may be recorded during your speech and any follow-up. If you are attending please be aware that recording may take place and that you may be inadvertently included in these.

The Chair of the meeting has absolute discretion to suspend or terminate any activities that in his or her opinion are disruptive.

### **Councillors 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; licenses 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". 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.

#### **Members' Code – Other Registrable Interests**

Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to the financial interest or wellbeing\*\* of one of your Other Registrable Interests\*\*\* then you must declare an

interest. You must not participate in discussion or voting on the item and you must withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is discussed.

### **Members' Code – Non Registrable Interests**

Where a matter arises at a meeting which ***directly relates*** to your financial interest or wellbeing (and does not fall under disclosable pecuniary interests), or the financial interest or wellbeing of a relative or close associate, you must declare the interest.

Where a matter arises at a meeting which affects your own financial interest or wellbeing, a financial interest or wellbeing of a relative or close associate or a financial interest or wellbeing of a body included under Other Registrable Interests, then you must declare the interest.

You must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room, if you answer in the affirmative to this test:

“Where a matter affects the financial interest or well-being:

- a. to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
- b. a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting.”

Otherwise, you may stay in the room, take part in the discussion and vote.

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

\*\* Wellbeing can be described as a condition of contentedness, healthiness and happiness; anything that could be said to affect a person's quality of life, either positively or negatively, is likely to affect their wellbeing.

\*\*\* Other Registrable Interests: a) any unpaid directorships b) any Body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority c) any Body (i) exercising functions of a public nature (ii) directed to charitable purposes or (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management.



## **How Oxford City Councillors and members of the public can engage at Cabinet**

### **Addresses and questions by members of the public (15 minutes in total)**

Members of the public can submit questions in writing about any item for decision at the meeting. Questions, stating the relevant agenda item, must be received by the Head of Law and Governance by 9.30am two working days before the meeting (eg for a Tuesday meeting, the deadline would be 9.30am on the Friday before). Questions can be submitted either by letter or by email (to [cabinet@oxford.gov.uk](mailto:cabinet@oxford.gov.uk) ).

Answers to the questions will be provided in writing at the meeting; supplementary questions will not be allowed. If it is not possible to provide an answer at the meeting it will be included in the minutes that are published on the Council's website within 2 working days of the meeting.

The Chair has discretion in exceptional circumstances to agree that a submitted question or related statement (dealing with matters that appear on the agenda) can be asked verbally at the meeting. In these cases, the question and/or address is limited to 3 minutes, and will be answered verbally by the Chair or another Cabinet member or an officer of the Council. The text of any proposed address must be submitted within the same timescale as questions.

For this agenda item the Chair's decision is final.

### **Councillors speaking at meetings**

Oxford City councillors may, when the chair agrees, address the Cabinet on an item for decision on the agenda (other than on the minutes). The member seeking to make an address must notify the Head of Law and Governance by 9.30am at least one working day before the meeting, stating the relevant agenda items. An address may last for no more than three minutes. If an address is made, the Cabinet member who has political responsibility for the item for decision may respond or the Cabinet will have regard to the points raised in reaching its decision.

### **Councillors speaking on Neighbourhood issues (10 minutes in total)**

Any City Councillor can raise local issues on behalf of communities directly with the Cabinet. The member seeking to make an address must notify the Head of Law and Governance by 9.30am at least one working day before the meeting, giving outline details of the issue. Priority will be given to those members who have not already addressed the Cabinet within the year and in the order received. Issues can only be raised once unless otherwise agreed by the Cabinet. The Cabinet's responsibility will be to hear the issue and respond at the meeting, if possible, or arrange a written response within 10 working days.

### **Items raised by Cabinet members**

Such items must be submitted within the same timescale as questions and will be for discussion only and not for a Cabinet decision. Any item which requires a decision of the Cabinet will be the subject of a report to a future meeting of the Cabinet.



**To:** Cabinet – 15 March 2023  
Council – 20 March 2023

**Report of:** Executive Director (Development)

**Title of Report:** Delivery of Affordable Housing

Summary and Recommendations	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	The report seeks further project approvals and delegations to enable the continued delivery of more affordable housing in Oxford
<b>Key decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Linda Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery Councillor Ed Turner, Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	More Affordable Housing and Meeting Housing Needs
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	Council Strategy 2020-24
<b>Recommendations:</b> That Cabinet resolves to:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Give project approval</b> for the acquisition of affordable dwellings developed by Oxford City Homes Ltd (OCHL) for which budgetary provision has been made in the Council's Housing Revenue Account in respect of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oxford North (referenced in paragraphs 9 to 18 of this report), and</li> <li>Goose Green, Wolvercote (referenced in paragraphs 19 to 34 of this report), and</li> <li>Meadow Lane, Iffley (referenced in paragraphs 35 to 49 of this report);</li> </ol> </li> <li><b>Delegate authority</b> to the Executive Director (Development), in consultation with the Executive Director (Communities and People); the Cabinet Member for Housing; the Head of Financial Services/Section 151 Officer; and the Head of Law and Governance/Monitoring Officer, to finalise the scheme design and financial appraisals and enter into agreements and contracts to facilitate the agreed purchase by the Council of the affordable housing (to be held in the HRA) and any associated land, within the identified budget, for the provision of the affordable housing (111 affordable homes) on the Oxford North development, within the project approval;</li> </ol>	

3. **Delegate authority** to the Executive Director (Communities and People) in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery; the Cabinet Member for Housing; the Head of Financial Services/Section 151 Officer and the Head of Law and Governance/Monitoring Officer to finalise the scheme design and financial appraisals and enter into agreements and contracts to facilitate the purchase by the Council of the social rent and shared ownership homes (to be held in the HRA) and any associated land, within the identified budget and within this project approval for Goose Green, Wolvercote (16 affordable homes);
4. **Delegate authority** to the Executive Director (Development), in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management; the Head of Financial Services/Section 151 Officer; and the Head of Law and Governance/Monitoring Officer, to approve the final terms and enter into the transfer in relation to Goose Green from the General Fund to OCHL;
5. **Delegate authority** to the Executive Director (Development), in consultation with the Executive Director (Communities and People); the Cabinet Member for Housing; the Head of Financial Services/Section 151 Officer; and the Head of Law and Governance/Monitoring Officer, to finalise the scheme design and financial appraisals and enter into agreements and contracts to facilitate the agreed purchase by the Council of the affordable housing (to be held in the HRA) and any associated land, from OCHL, for the provision of the affordable housing on the Meadow Lane, Iffley development (32 affordable homes), and within the identified budget and this project approval; and
6. **Recommend to Council** that it approves a revision to the HRA capital budget of an additional £825,000, with the realignment of budgets and schemes within the HRA new build programme, in order for the schemes listed below to be delivered within the capital programme funded predominantly from borrowing. This additional spend to be profiled into 2024/25.
  - a) Increase Northfield Hostel budget by £3.25m (see paragraph 52)
  - b) Increase Lanham Way budget by £361k (see paragraph 53)
  - c) Reduce East Oxford Community Centre budget by £700k (see paragraph 54)
  - d) Close Juniper Close scheme (see paragraph 55).

Appendices	
Appendix 1 (confidential)	Summary of Development Scheme Appraisal (including valuation and cost information – Oxford North
Appendix 2 (confidential)	Summary of Development Scheme Appraisal (including valuation and cost information – Goose Green, Wolvercote
Appendix 3 (confidential)	Summary of Development Scheme Appraisal (including valuation and cost information – Meadow Lane, Iffley
Appendix 4 (confidential)	Summary of Development Scheme Appraisals (including valuation and cost information – Northfield Hostel and Lanham Way sites

## **Introduction and background**

1. The Council continues to develop a supply programme to deliver more affordable housing through multiple work streams, including the delivery of units through the Council's housing company Oxford City Homes Limited (OCHL) – trading as OX Place; direct delivery by the Council; joint ventures; regeneration schemes; acquisitions; and enabling activity with Registered Providers, Community-Led Housing groups, and other partners. The Council seeks to deliver over 1,600 affordable tenure homes across the four year period (April 2022 to March 2026), with at least 850 of those at the most affordable Social Rent level.
2. This is a further report with regard to the arrangements between the Council, using its Housing Revenue Account (HRA), and OCHL, to facilitate development. It seeks to secure Council-side approvals and delegations to enable the development of the next schemes in the direct-delivery programme, and the purchase of the new affordable housing into the HRA.

## **Development programme**

3. OCHL continues to deliver an extensive programme of development schemes in accordance with the OCHL business plan.
4. This report relates to two developments in the OCHL programme (Goose Green and Meadow Lane) which are due to enter into contract shortly. Neither of these schemes currently have planning consent.
5. It is proposed that the Council commits to buy the freehold on Meadow Lane and hold the affordable housing stock for both sites within the HRA on completion. The Council has allocated sufficient budget in the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and the HRA business plan, for this purpose.
6. This report also proposes to bring forward a further development as a directly delivered scheme within the HRA (Oxford North), entering into a Development Services Agreement with OCHL to oversee and manage delivery of the project on behalf of OCC.
7. Furthermore, the report seeks to revise HRA capital budgets to enable the continued delivery of schemes within the direct-delivery programme which have previously secured project approvals from Cabinet (including East Oxford Community Centre sites; Northfield Hostel; and Lanham Way).
8. Each scheme is detailed below, with additional information from each developments financial appraisal provided in the (commercially sensitive) appendices to this report.

### **Oxford North development (affordable housing element)**

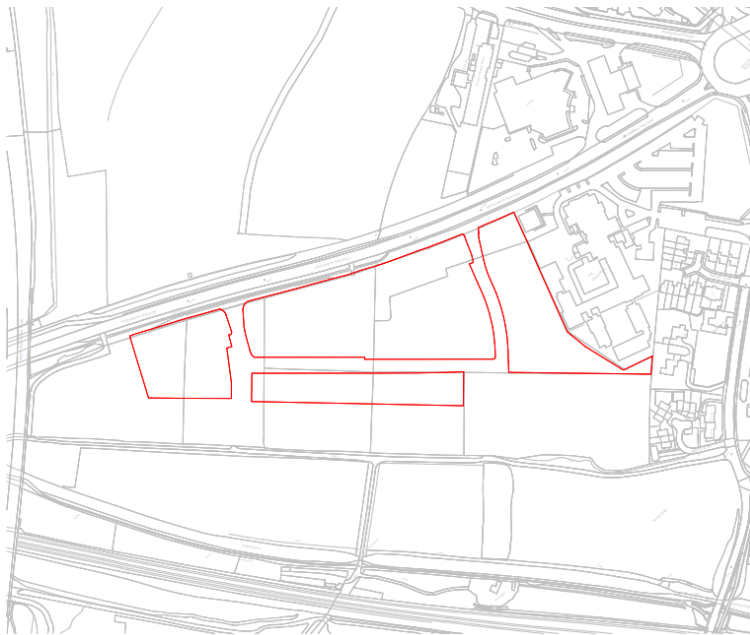
9. The Oxford North development is a mixed (employment and housing) site, forming the substantive part of the area covered by the Northern Gateway Area Action Plan (adopted in 2015). The developer for the entire site is Thomas White Oxford, a company wholly owned by St John's College, Oxford. The 'Canalside' site comprises of 317 new homes, has 65% at private tenure and 35% at affordable

tenures. The scheme secured outline planning consent in March 2021, and the Reserved Matters application was approved in November 2022.

10. The Council /OCHL made a bid for the 111 affordable homes, secured through the s.106 agreement. In December 2022, the contractor confirmed that this bid was successful. The Goose Green development is on Council-owned land adjacent to the Oxford North residential site and with a dependency on the Oxford North development for vehicular access.
11. The 111 affordable homes, on a mainly flatted scheme, would provide 89 homes at Social Rent, and 22 as shared ownership, across a range of one, two, three and four bed property sizes.
12. The proposed scheme mix of the affordable homes (to be purchased freehold and to be held in the HRA) are considered a good balance, securing a diverse range of sizes; best meeting housing need; ensuring effective management and rent/ service charge setting; and ensuring the viability of scheme delivery.

Size	Social Rent	Shared Ownership	Total	Notes	%
1B2PF	25	6	31	1 (SR) & 1 (SO) to M4(3)	28%
2B3PF	2	0	2	2 (SR) to M4(3)	32%
2B4PF	25	9	34		
3B4PF	8	5	13	1 (SR) to M4(3)	32%
3B5PF	7	0	7		
3B6PF	2	0	2		
3B5PH	12	1	13		
4B6PF	7	0	7		8%
4B7PF	1	1	2		
<b>Total</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>111</b>		
	80%	20%	100%	5 homes (4.5%) to M4(3)	100%

13. The homes and tenures have been distributed in clusters, but will offer a mixed, sustainable community, with tenure-blind design principles applied to all the homes. All homes have individual outside private space (balcony or patio). The scheme is designed to a high quality, and provides homes that will deliver in excess of 40% carbon reduction than required by the 2013 building regulations (planning policy compliant at the time of submission). This will be further reviewed, but the scheme is all-electric with air-source heat pumps, and Solar PV to the flats. The current design of the homes targets an EPC 'B' rating, but work continues to improve on this score, and if possible achieve an 'A' rating. All of the homes are at, or above, Nationally Described Space Standards, and have private amenity space. There is less than 1:1 car parking to homes on this site. The site plan/'red line' boundary of the development, and more detailed tenure plan are indicated below:



14. The proposal is for the Council to undertake this development directly in the HRA, contracting with OCHL for all development services through a Development Services Agreement (DSA). This approach is considered the best option for delivery of this scheme. It is low development risk – buying the completed homes on a ‘turn-key’ basis from the developer – and so therefore represents the best value for money for the HRA, whilst also providing an appropriate and risk-adjusted surplus to OCHL to reflect the work undertaken to secure this opportunity and manage the development to completion.
15. The target date for the exchange of contracts is the end of March 2023, with the current programme from Hill showing handover of the first affordable homes from February 2025, and up to December 2026.
16. As a mixed-tenure development, with these affordable homes secured through a s.106 agreement, the scheme is not eligible for grant funding from Homes England.
17. Appendix 1 of this report provides further information on the development scheme financial appraisal (excluded from publication due to the commercial sensitivity of this information). The scheme meets all the financial requirements of the HRA.

18. This report seeks project approval for bringing this scheme into the HRA direct delivery programme, and delegated authority to enter agreements to facilitate the purchase of the site on completion.

#### Goose Green, Wolvercote

19. The Goose Green site is owned by Oxford City Council and is an allocated housing site in the Local Plan, situated within the Oxford North/ Northern Gateway Area Action Plan (AAP). The site lies to the rear of existing Council residential properties at Goose Green Close, off Godstow Road. The site is currently occupied by a tenant for grazing purposes, but this is expected to end soon.
20. Feasibility work was undertaken on the site for housing in 2020 but was halted due to concerns from the Local Planning Authority to using the existing Goose Green Close road to access the scheme. This created the need to access any development from the North via the adjacent Oxford North scheme.
21. The Oxford North scheme has now progressed to the point where realisation of this new access point is now possible. The s.106 for the Oxford North scheme requires that developer (Thomas White Oxford) to provide an access into the Goose Green site, and sets out the terms of payment for such an access.
22. OCHL and the Council are keen to now take the opportunity to realise the potential of the Goose Green site for housing development. The site forms a natural extension of the adjacent Oxford North scheme. A development proposal which offers several advantages over a traditional build procurement process has been submitted. Importantly this opportunity is very much time limited, as the planning consent for the adjacent scheme is already secured and the development is expected to start on site from spring 2023. The benefits of a joint development arrangement flow from developing the sites 'as one', so the Goose Green site needs to be ready to develop during the build out of the larger scheme next door.
23. The site does not currently have planning consent, which means there is some planning risk. The submission of the planning application for this scheme is currently targeted for July 2023. The scheme is due to start the pre-application process shortly. As such, this Cabinet report is being presented much earlier in the development process than previously. This provides OCHL with improved contractual certainty from the Council with regards to the purchase of the homes, and enables contracts with developers to be more quickly progressed, which for the reasons stated above are critical, in particular in order to complete the sale of the land.
24. As such, it should be noted that the scheme details (including layouts; unit numbers; size and tenure mixes; etc) are likely to still change. If changes are made, then the development appraisals will require re-assessing. Officers will continue to ensure that all the HRA financial parameters and tests continue to be met.
25. The proposed scheme is 'house-led' and at relatively low density compared to other developments in the delivery pipeline. The Social Rent and shared ownership homes (to be purchased as freehold and held in the HRA) represent a sustainable and balanced mix of homes for this location, securing a diverse range of sizes; best meeting housing need; ensuring effective management and service charge setting; and ensuring the viability of scheme delivery.

26. The proposal for the development comprises 31 homes, but this needs to be tested and agreed through the planning process. To ensure planning compliance under the latest NPPF, this proposal, as a mixed tenure housing scheme, also includes 4 First Homes. It is proposed that there will be 11 homes at Social Rent and 1 home for shared ownership. 15 homes will be for outright market sale.
27. The scheme is designed to a high quality and provides homes that will deliver in excess of 40% carbon reduction below the 2022 Building Regulations (c. 70% below 2013 regs), with the aim to increase the sustainability performance towards net zero if it is viable to do so. This would seek to deliver homes that maximise PVs and heat pumps, where possible, to ensure they are net zero ready and provide low costs to end users. The site plan and boundary of the development is indicated below (with a blue boundary). The darker shading (with the red boundary) indicates the neighbouring Oxford North Canalside homes



28. The proposal is for the Council to sell the land (from the General Fund) and then buy back the completed Social Rent and shared ownership homes into the HRA (as freehold). The best approach to any land which falls outside the unit demises and adopted land is likely to be that it is included within the remit of the wider Management Company that takes on the Canalside scheme, but this is subject to further work and agreement.
29. The agreement with the developer is expected to be conditional upon them achieving planning consent, with the developer funding that process. If it looks as though less than 31 units can be achieved it would be up to negotiation as to



whether to progress the development or not, and any adjustments to the contract terms.

30. The land would need to be transferred from OCC to OCHL to enable OCHL to enter into a contract with the contractor for development. The land transfer is expected to be for the sum identified in Appendix 2 (pending valuation within a close timeframe to the transaction), assuming vacant possession at the time of transfer; clean title; and that an affordable housing buy back contractual provision is also in place. Furthermore, this sale will be conditional on the developer securing planning consent for the scheme, and at the scale and mix as set out in this report, with 11 homes to be sold to the Council as Social Rent and 1 home at Shared Ownership.
31. The target date for formal contract award is March 2023, with a start on site in March 2024. The scheme is expected to complete by September 2025.
32. As a mixed-tenure development, the scheme is not eligible for grant funding from Homes England.
33. Appendix 2 of this report provides further information on the development scheme financial appraisal (excluded from publication due to the commercial sensitivity of this information). The proposed scheme meets all the financial requirements of the HRA.
34. This report seeks the approval to enter into a buyback agreement with OCHL to purchase the new affordable homes at Goose Green.

#### Meadow Lane, Iffley

35. This site at Meadow Lane, Iffley was acquired by OCHL in October 2020, having already been allocated in the Local Plan 2016-2036. The Council provided a site requirements brief in April 2021, which set out a number of key requirements from the development.
36. Consideration to changing the scheme proposal from a mixed tenure scheme, to instead deliver a 100% affordable scheme (with grant) was given in early summer 2022, and the 100% affordable option has now been developed further, with the planning application submitted in December 2022.
37. As such, this Cabinet report is being presented earlier in the development process than previously. This provides OCHL with improved contractual certainty from the Council with regards to the purchase of the homes and enables contracts with developers to be more quickly progressed.
38. However, as such, it should be noted that the scheme details (including layouts; unit numbers; size and tenure mixes; etc) may still change. The site does not currently have planning consent, which means there is some planning risk. This risk is in part mitigated by extensive pre-application work with the Local Planning Authority, and community consultation. If changes are made, then the development appraisals will require re-assessing, but officers will continue to ensure that all the HRA financial parameter tests continue to be met.
39. The proposal for the development comprise 32 homes, but this needs to be agreed through the planning process. The proposed scheme is 'house-led' and at relatively low density compared to other developments in the delivery pipeline. The homes (to be purchased as freehold and held in the HRA) represent a sustainable and balanced mix of homes for this location, securing a diverse range of sizes; best



meeting housing need; ensuring effective management and service charge setting; and ensuring the viability of scheme delivery.

40. The mix proposed meets a very wide range of housing needs providing 19 homes at Social Rent (over 59% of all the homes) and 13 shared ownership homes. Due to a change in the Homes England rules, an initial share of the property from as low as 10% can now be purchased, if that is all that a household is able to afford. This has allowed some three and four bed homes to be provided under this tenure now also, whereas previously on a minimum 25% share, households may not have passed affordability tests.
41. The proposed development also proposes four x 4-bed houses and three x 5-bed houses at Social Rent levels which in particular will meet a small but very acute housing need for larger family homes – especially 5 bed homes that are often not able to be provided on other sites.
42. Two homes are to be provided at M4 (3) (“Wheelchair Standard”) to be adapted/ adaptable for households with mobility needs.
43. The scheme is designed to a high quality and provides homes that will deliver at least a 40% carbon reduction below 2022 Building Regulations (c. 70% below 2013 regs), with the aim to increase the sustainability performance towards net zero if it is viable to do so. These homes will include Air Source Heat Pumps with U-values that ensure that they are net zero ready and the cost of heating the homes is low. The scheme is ‘low-car’ with an electric car club vehicle also provided on the site.
44. The site plan and ‘red line’ boundary of the development is indicated below. The blue boundary indicates the site ownership, and the red boundary is the development site. The remaining area, known as the ‘Memorial Field’ is not proposed to be developed, and is intended to remain undeveloped and as a natural green infrastructure asset, with improved public access arrangements. Ownership will remain with OCHL and OCHL and the Council seek to explore long-term stewardship options for this space going forward as part of this scheme. Vehicular access to the site is from Meadow Lane, with a pedestrian access also provided to Church Way.



45. OCHL have worked with Hill on the later stages of the design and specification, and propose to contract with Hill to deliver the scheme. The proposal is for the Council to buy this site from OCHL as a package on completion.
46. The target date for formal contract award is June 2023, with a start on site shortly afterwards. The scheme is expected to complete by February 2025.
47. The Council will bid for Homes England grant funding under the Affordable Housing Programme 21-26 to contribute funding to this scheme.
48. Appendix 3 of this report provides further information on the development scheme financial appraisal (excluded from publication due to the commercial sensitivity of this information). The proposed scheme meets all the financial requirements of the HRA.
49. This report seeks project approval for bringing this scheme into the HRA capital programme of purchases from OCHL, and delegated authority to enter agreements with OCHL to facilitate the purchase of the site on completion.

#### Sites in current HRA Capital Budget Programme as Direct Delivery schemes

50. There are currently four schemes in the HRA-direct delivery programme:

- East Oxford Community Centre Sites (Princes Street & Collins Street)
  - 26 affordable homes (12 at Social Rent and 14 at shared ownership tenure)
  - This has had planning consent since early 2021, and contractors are now appointed for the demolition and the build contract for the new affordable homes

- Northfield Hostel, Sandy Lane West, Littlemore
  - 51 affordable homes (27 at Social Rent and 24 at shared ownership tenure)
  - This also secured planning consent in 2021/22, and an award of contract for the pre-construction works expected shortly (Feb 23)
- Lanham Way, Littlemore
  - 10 affordable homes (5 at Social Rent and 5 at shared ownership tenure)
  - The planning decision and resolution of the s.106 agreement is expected shortly
- Juniper Way
  - 2 homes at Social Rent
  - This project stalled due to difficulties in the ground conditions (mains water pipes) and only one home now appears to be feasible on this small in-fill site, as such the scheme is no longer considered viable for development and it is proposed that this project is being closed. It may be possible to be considered at a later date, as a 'small site' – possibly being viable if grouped together with other local small sites

51. Cabinet has previously approved reports on these schemes to give project approvals; budget provision; and officer delegations to bring the schemes forward. For East Oxford, these were in June 2019 and November 2021. For the other sites, the report was in September 2020. Annual Council budget reports have since amended the HRA Capital Budgets also, to reflect amendments to the programme at that time.
52. A second tender process for the Northfield Hostel scheme established that there will be a construction cost increase due to inflation. An increase of £3.25m is proposed in the HRA capital programme to deliver this project. Viability work undertaken demonstrates that the scheme remains viable and meets the HRA financial tests Council has set in this regard. The February Budget cabinet paper has been updated accordingly. Refer to the table below.
53. Following the tender for the Lanham Way project, the budget for this scheme is likely to increase also by approx. £361k due to inflation. Viability work undertaken demonstrates that the scheme remains viable and meets the HRA financial tests Council has set in this regard.
54. The overall budget envelope for the residential schemes linked to East Oxford Community Centre is likely to reduce by £700k, and this can be actioned now that the Council has increased price certainty for this scheme.
55. Furthermore, the project for residential development at Juniper Close currently has a budget of £1.58m. It is recommended that this project is not viable and should not be progressed due to abnormal infrastructure costs, associated with an underground water main.
56. The project adjustments as set out above, in the HRA direct housing delivery budgets could reduce the pressure on the HRA from Northfield and Lanham from

£3.25m to £825k in overall. See below for predicated underspend on NSAP and RSAP projects.

57. These schemes have been financially assessed through the HRA development scheme appraisal tool. The HRA financial parameters have been met, including a development and admin fee payable to OCHL.
58. Appendix 4 of this report provides further information on the development scheme financial appraisal (excluded from publication due to the commercial sensitivity of this information).

### Financial implications

59. This report seeks the required delegations to further develop the programme of affordable housing supply. The Council's Medium Term Finance Plan (MTFP), approved at Council in February 2023, supports the 40 year HRA Business Plan, and makes provision for purchases of affordable housing from OCHL's 10 year development programme of 1,214 properties within an overall budget envelope of £367m (before grant and shared ownership sales), in addition to 89 affordable homes through direct delivery in the HRA.
60. The decision to proceed with any development or buy-back will be supported by a development scheme appraisal/ financial modelling to ensure that financial parameters and requirements are met for OCHL and the HRA. These parameters have been previously agreed and for the HRA are as follows for each scheme:
- a) a payback period of up to 70 years; and
  - b) a positive Net Present Value (NPV) over this period; and
  - c) an Internal Rate of Return (IRR) of at least 3%.
61. Meeting these parameters ensure that the HRA business plan remains financially robust. Conversely, not meeting these parameters will impact this position.

Adjustments to each project, as set out, in the HRA direct housing delivery budgets could reduce the pressure on the HRA from Northfield from £3.25m to £825k in overall. This is as follows:

Scheme	Notes	Original Capital Budget 2023-24 to 2025-26	Amended Capital Budget	Change
EOCC	Savings from 22/23 financial year due to increased price certainty and the Catherine St. site adjustment	£6,954,006	£6,254,006	(£700,000)
Northfield	With the build contract of £16m, the estimated total cost will be between £19.65m - £19.350m* Net of BLR funding. With past adjustments from 22/23 budget (as land purchase),	£18,091,448	£21,341,448	£3,250,000

	additional £3.25m are still required to deliver the scheme			
Lanham	Expected total spend: £5,555k exc interest (Based on latest cost forecasts – actual build contract is out to tender – closes in Jan 23) with a budget 22/23 of: £5,194k, so £361k additional budget required.	£4,684,886	£5,045,886	£361,000
Juniper	Closing of the Scheme. Deemed unviable due to large water main cutting the site.	£1,586,000	£ NIL	(£1,586,000)
<b>Sub-Total</b>		£31,316,340	£32,641,340	£1,325,000
NSAP / RSAP Acqs	Underspend Predicted in 2022/23 of £500,000	-	-	(£500,000)
<b>Total</b>	<b>Total Net Increase to HRA Capital Programme</b>			<b>£825,000</b>

## Legal issues

62. The activities, as set out in this report, relate to activity for the purpose of developing homes as affordable housing. This is within the Council's statutory powers. The Council has power to acquire land by agreement under section 121 of the Local Government Act 1972. The general power of competence under the Localism Act 2011 and the Local Authorities (Land) Act 1963 enable the Council to develop land it already owns. The Council has power to appropriate land from one purpose to another under section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972.

63. The Council has Homes England Investment Partner status and is a Registered Provider.

64. Any procurement of goods and services for the purpose of developing homes must be carried out in accordance with the Council's constitution and procurement procedures, complying with The Public Contracts Regulations 2015, including ensuring that best value is achieved.

## Level of risk

65. Any risks inherent in this programme are already identified elsewhere, with actions to mitigate these detailed in the OCHL and HRA Business Plans and the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.

## Equalities impact

66. There are no adverse impacts in undertaking this activity, with the potential to improve provision for persons in housing need, through the provision of more affordable and accessible housing to better meet client needs.

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<b>Background Papers:</b>	None
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**To:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 15 March 2023  
**Report of:** Executive Director (Communities and People)  
**Title of Report:** Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-28

Summary and recommendations	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To seek approval of the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-28 and associated appendices
<b>Key decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Linda Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	Deliver more, affordable housing and Supporting Thriving Communities
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	Council Strategy 2020-24

<b>Recommendation:</b> That Cabinet resolves to:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Note</b> the progress made to develop the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Action Plan for Oxford following feedback from the statutory public consultation;</li> <li><b>Recommend to Council</b> the adoption of the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-28 and its associated appendices;</li> <li><b>Recommend to Council</b> the adoption of the Strategy's Action Plan for 23-24; and</li> <li><b>Recommend to Council</b> that authority be delegated to the Executive Director (Communities and People), in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, to update the Action Plan when required.</li> </ol>

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-28, with sub-appendix A: Oxford City Council's Homelessness Review and Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Evidence base 2021

Appendix 2	Action Plan
Appendix 3	Equalities Impact Assessment
Appendix 4	Risk Register

## **Introduction and background**

1. The Homelessness Act 2002 requires every housing authority to have a homelessness strategy. As the housing authority for Oxford, Oxford City Council has a statutory obligation to develop and implement a homelessness strategy at least every 5 years, which should be based on the findings of a 'review of homelessness' in the local area.
2. Oxford City Council's current Housing and Homelessness Strategy has now expired and work has been ongoing to develop a new Strategy over the last 18 months and is now complete.
3. A previous report went to Cabinet in October 2022 which included the updated evidence base and draft strategy document, which updated on the development of the Draft Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, following a comprehensive review of homelessness in Oxford and an early visioning public consultation. Cabinet approved this draft, and gave permission to launch a full statutory consultation which subsequently launched in November.
4. This report seeks Cabinet approval for the Strategy and its action plan, ahead of consideration from Council. The report updates on the consultation process, provides a summary on amendments made to the strategy, and introduces the new action plan.

## **Strategy development**

5. Following Cabinet approval a public consultation on the draft Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy was launched in November 2022 for a period of 6 weeks. This was a statutory consultation that is a requirement in order to develop and adopt homelessness and rough sleeping strategies before implementation. The focus of the consultation was to seek views on our draft strategy, and its commitments and plans to achieve the priorities we set out.
6. As part of the consultation we:
  - Launched an online public survey
  - Held 3 in-person stakeholder events, focussing on different priorities within the draft Strategy
  - Held an on-line stakeholder event, covering all 5 priorities
  - Attended community events
  - Held a session with individuals who have lived experience of homelessness
  - Attended a meeting with Tenant Ambassadors
  - Held a Member's briefing
  - The Economic Development Team encouraged attendees of the Economic Growth Board to engage with the consultation



- Details of the consultation were included in newsletters that are circulated to businesses and partners operating in the City Centre.
7. To raise awareness of the consultation, we launched a social media campaign, targeted online advertising, advertised on our Choice Based Lettings website and had a recorded message notifying people about the strategy when calling the Council.
  8. We received a good response to the consultation, receiving 103 online responses along with 4 written responses and 60 individuals attended the stakeholder events representing 27 different organisations.
  9. We had a positive response to our visions and priorities, with between 74% and 85% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with what we want to do. Feedback from stakeholders and communities was also very positive, agreeing with our priorities outlined in the Draft Strategy. Overall the feedback received confirmed that we were on the right track with respondents predominately supporting with what we have set out to do over the next 5 years.
  10. Following the closure of the public consultation in December 2022 we have carefully reviewed all feedback received. Overall the majority of feedback reflected our commitments and plans set out in the draft Strategy but we have further developed the strategy and made amendments, including:
    - Developed the strategy action plan informed by the priorities and insight gained from members of the public and stakeholders through the consultation process.
    - Updating the Strategy and evidence base with the most recent Census data.
    - Incorporated more detailed information in relation to the need for affordable housing.
    - Reaffirmed our commitment to provide a face-to-face offer of services to those who need it.
    - Further developed our approach to governance and monitoring of the Strategy and Action Plan.
    - We have included more context and explanation as to our limitations as a Local Authority in areas where we have limited influence, this includes supporting individuals with no recourse to public funds and implementing rent caps in the private rented sector.

### **Strategy Action Plan**

11. As outlined above, the consultation and subsequent refinement of the strategy has allowed us to draft an action plan for the new strategy that outlines and details how we will implement the ambition and plans contained in the strategy.
12. In order to create an effective action plan that can drive delivery, we have worked closely with colleagues across the Council, Oxford Direct Services and OX Place to develop this Action Plan, and ensured that our actions are aligned with other Council strategies, business plans and work priorities. The Action plan contains 5 year objectives, alongside year 1 actions, to ensure gradual progress towards our stated goals.

13. The Action Plan will be used to monitor and report on our progress against our commitments in the Strategy. It will be updated yearly to ensure it remains relevant and responsive to changing context, and progress will be closely monitored and reported on.

### **Strategy governance**

14. The strategy document outlines the governance arrangements that will be put in place to ensure progress against the strategy, accountability to those who need to deliver actions, and to support and inform the annual updating of the action plan over the 5 year period.
15. Routine monitoring of the strategy will be done internally, with identified Officer Groups responsible for the delivery of the Strategy. As large parts of the strategy sit across other departments and teams in the Council, regular review meetings will be established with relevant colleagues across the organisation to ensure connectivity.
16. Progress against actions will be updated on a quarterly basis with a report made to the Council's Cabinet Member for Housing and the Communities and People Management Team.
17. A full review of the Action Plan and progress made will be completed on an annual basis. This will result in a monitoring and update report, and recommendations for revisions to the action plan, that will be presented annually to Cabinet for approval.
18. In line with normal process this report will also be available to the Council's Scrutiny Committee, and sub committees, to consider and provide recommendations to Cabinet, in line with the Council's constitution.

### **Next Steps**

19. Subject to approval by Cabinet and Council, the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy will be implemented from April 2033. Work on the monitoring framework for the action plan will begin immediately, with the governance and reporting structure being established from the 1<sup>st</sup> April.

### **Environmental Implications**

20. There are considerable environmental implications resulting from the actions contained within the new strategy, if not from adopting the strategy itself. The majority of actions contained within the strategy will either benefit or have no impact on the environment. This is because measures include considerable investment in energy efficiency improvements in our Council housing stock, higher standards for new builds being developed through our investment, and work in the Private Rented Sector to bring up standards. Any development brings benefits and costs to the environment, but the Council is clear in its Council Strategy that the delivery of more affordable housing is a priority to meet housing need, and therefore by developing to higher environment and energy efficiency standards this strategy is helping to lower environmental implications of future development. As significant schemes, projects and funding roll out in coming years that have significant impacts on the environment those that have to go to Cabinet to be approved will have individual environment impact assessments in line with the Councils Constitution, that can provide further detail.

21. The proposal complies with the City Council's policies and commitments relating to carbon and the environment and brings us closer to our commitment to becoming a zero carbon council by 2030.

## Financial implications

22. Throughout its development, the new strategy is informed by the current financial context the Council finds itself in. The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) has been taken into account when developing the Strategy. The current economic climate and the cost of living crisis has had, and will have, major financial impacts on the Council's finances, and this will also have an impact on the levels of funding that the Council will be able to allocate to deliver actions under the new Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy. However preventing and tackling all forms of homelessness is a priority for the Council and despite the financial pressures, we have been able to increase spending on homelessness over the last few years, due to our success in obtaining external grant funding. The delivery of the Strategy over the coming years will be contained within the Medium Term Financial Plan.
23. There are ongoing savings in the revised MTFP for Housing which are on track to be delivered. The MTFP identified estimated savings last year of £350k per year from 2022/23 from current spend on homelessness, which have already been achieved. However, it must be acknowledged that more significant reductions in homelessness funding from either national grants or the Council budget in future years, would make parts of the strategy difficult to deliver, and therefore this pressure will be monitored and reported on.
24. The Council's budgeted spend across both the Housing Revenue Account which is funded largely from council house rents and Housing General fund services such as homelessness which attracts some grant funding from Government with the net amount funded from council tax is shown below:

Spend on Housing Services							
Council House Management & Maintenance				2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
				£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
	Revenue			47,899	50,721	57,980	58,886
	Capital			195,000	139,907	164,716	120,829
				<b>242,899</b>	<b>190,628</b>	<b>222,696</b>	<b>179,715</b>
General Fund Housing Management inc homelessness							
	Revenue Spend			10,548	10,172	10,112	10,115
	Revenue grant funding			-3,845	-3,845	-3,844	-3,845
				<b>6,703</b>	<b>6,327</b>	<b>6,268</b>	<b>6,270</b>
	Capital spend			<b>60,421</b>	<b>30,973</b>	<b>56,260</b>	<b>16,898</b>
<b>Total Housing Spend</b>				<b>310,023</b>	<b>227,928</b>	<b>285,224</b>	<b>202,883</b>

25. We have relied heavily on funding from central government for any increased spending on homelessness, in particular in relation to preventing and tackling single person homelessness and rough sleeping, over the last few years. These funding pots have been short-term, which presents us and service providers with challenges as we cannot plan and commit funding to long term solutions. We now have a longer term Rough Sleeping Initiative settlement to 2025, but this will also come up for renewal/ replacement during the strategy period, and other pots of funding remain short term.
26. Many parts of the new strategy are dependent on significant investment into the Council's housing stock or into new Council homes from the Council's Housing Revenue Account. The current high levels of inflation are putting pressure on the HRA, and with social rent increases capped at 7% for 2023-24, we may need to prioritise commitments within the Strategy. What we can delivery will be strongly influenced by levels of inflation over the next 5 years, and the government's formula to set social housing rent increases, where there is great uncertainty.
27. Our desire to improve energy efficiency standards for our homes are ambitious, and it is important that we make good progress on this to meet the challenges of the climate emergency. However, the work that needs to be carried out to meet the commitments outlined in this strategy requires significant levels of investment. The Council operates in an increasingly challenging financial position, impacting all providers of social housing, and at the same time as we need to invest in our housing stock overall. We are therefore faced with difficult budget choices, and will have to prioritise our investment. Therefore Central Government will have to step up and support providers of social housing with the necessary funding for us to meet our carbon reduction targets.

### **Legal issues**

28. We are required by law to have a Homelessness Strategy in place that is based on a review of all forms of homelessness in the local area, and this strategy should be refreshed at least every 5 years. The current strategy came in to place in 2018, therefore we are required to agree a new strategy by 2023. There is no such legal requirement to have a Housing Strategy, however, it is seen as best practice. Due to the link between the supply of housing and levels of homelessness, the Strategies are interlinked and cannot be easily separated. We have therefore brought these interdependent strands together to create one cohesive Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.
29. We are currently on track to deliver the Strategy by April 2023.

### **Level of risk**

30. A risk assessment for the new strategy and action plan is attached at Appendix 4. Please note this risk assessment is for the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. The strategy itself includes many projects which will each have their own individual risk assessments.

### **Equalities impact**

31. An equality impact assessment for the new strategy and action plan is attached at Appendix 2.

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# Draft Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for Oxford 2023 to 2028

## Contents

Foreword .....	2
Introduction – about this strategy .....	3
Our commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion .....	6
Improving accessibility of our services .....	8
Housing-led solutions to homelessness .....	9
Our priorities and actions.....	10
Priority 1 - Providing more, affordable homes .....	11
Why we need more affordable housing.....	12
Oxford Needs Homes .....	14
How to deliver the homes we need .....	15
Priority 2 - Great homes for all.....	18
The need for a good home.....	19
Challenges in the Private Rented Sector .....	20
The Council as a landlord .....	21
Priority 3 - Housing for a net zero carbon future.....	23
Climate Emergency .....	24
Homes and carbon emissions.....	24
Reducing emissions.....	26
Priority 4 - Preventing homelessness and adopting a rapid rehousing response .....	28
New challenges – Cost of living crisis .....	30
Homelessness in Oxford.....	30
Helping people to get a home quickly .....	33
Priority 5 - Ending rough sleeping .....	35
Rough Sleeping in Oxford.....	36
Preventing rough sleeping .....	38
New commissioning and new services .....	38
Governance and delivery of the strategy .....	40
Glossary .....	42

## Foreword

When we started developing a new Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy for the city and engaging the public on priorities last year, we started by stating the problem as we saw it – that Oxford is facing a housing and homelessness crisis.

The evidence for this is clear - the city's housing is some of the most unaffordable in the country when compared to local incomes – both to rent and to buy. Rough sleeping levels increased over the last decade and have remained stubbornly high. Our statutory homelessness services are under strain, due to many of the city's residents seeking help when faced with high rents. The city's housing stock requires investment to meet the challenges of a net zero carbon future. More good quality, affordable homes are needed, but land is scarce. These are all considerable problems, but problems that the Council is determined to tackle.

Unfortunately, since starting out on developing our new strategy the housing challenges facing the city have only grown – from the cost of living crisis that is seeing rising bills for all, to our desire to provide sanctuary to people fleeing war zones and hardship in other parts of the world, and public services across the board under strain while trying to recover from the pandemic. All of these developments further contribute to the challenges of affordability in the city and the insufficient supply of homes in the city to those who need them.

The challenges the city faces in terms of housing and homelessness can at times seem overwhelming, but the Council is determined to tackle them and make a difference on the issues of unaffordability, insufficient supply, and the need for improved housing conditions to improve the homes and lives of the city's residents.

This strategy, developed by the Council in partnership with key stakeholders, sets out how the Council and its partners will do this. I believe the ambition contained in this document lays out a plan that will make progress against these key challenges in the years ahead, and highlights the steps we will take to meet the priorities we are committed to deliver on. The 5 year period of this strategy will see the Council making unprecedented investment in recent decades towards developing new social housing, investment into our tenants homes, and rollout innovative and sector leading approaches to homelessness and rough sleeping, to name just a few of its commitments.

I look forward to working with the Oxford community and our partners and stakeholders, to deliver our commitments outlined in this strategy.

Councillor Linda Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing



## Introduction – about this strategy

The effects of homelessness and the impact of not having a good quality home where you feel safe have devastating effects on people and families. This strategy – Oxford's Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, sets the direction and priorities - between 2023 and 2028 - for how we, together with partners, are going to address the housing and homelessness crisis in Oxford. It sets out the steps that we will take to meet our vision:

*'By 2028, addressing Oxford's need for more affordable housing, improving the standard of housing in the city while lowering its carbon impact, with services and partnerships that are focussed on preventing people losing their homes, rapidly rehouse those who become homeless, and ending the need to sleep rough.'*

This strategy has been in development since early 2021, with the creation of a homelessness review for the city and wider strategy evidence base. The review and evidence base pulls together the key information we needed to know in order to develop the ideas and direction of travel to address the housing and homelessness crisis in Oxford. The review and evidence base underpins and informs this strategy.

The review and evidence base includes information about levels of homelessness in the city, who is affected by homelessness and why people are made homeless. It includes detailed information about what we as a Council and other organisations do to prevent homelessness. It also incorporates data and information about wider housing issues, such as the Council's role as a social landlord, what is happening in the private rented sector, the plans to build more affordable homes, and the need to tackle the role housing has in carbon emissions. Together, it forms a unified and clear picture of the current state of housing and homelessness in the city, as well as our challenges and opportunities, and informs the priorities for the Council for the next 5 years.

During summer 2021, we consulted on the review and evidence base, as well as a draft vision and emerging priorities for the new strategy. We wanted to make sure that the public, partners and stakeholders could have a say early on in the strategy development process, let us know if we had included all the relevant information we needed to look at, and if we had drawn the right conclusions and developed the right priorities. The feedback largely endorsed our work, which gave us the green light to draft our new strategy, taking the feedback we received through the consultation on-board.

We consulted on our draft strategy during late autumn 2022 and using feedback from this consultation, we updated and amended the strategy where necessary. The end result is the strategy you are reading right now. We also developed an action plan that now forms part of this strategy.

The housing and homelessness crisis in Oxford is not a situation that has developed recently. It has long been one of the most prominent issues for this city. Since the implementation of the last Housing and Homelessness Strategy in 2018, we have come a long way in meeting our strategic housing and homelessness goals.

We have increased **affordable housing** available to those in housing need, invested in the homes we own, successfully implemented new homelessness legislation, increased the number of people we are assisting to prevent them from becoming homeless, and we responded to the Covid-19 pandemic by changing the way people could access our services by moving Council services into our local communities.

Despite the successes and the progress we have made over the last few years, there is still more work to do. To make a significant difference for residents of the city we face big challenges to deliver what we have set out to do under this strategy.

- The Council is facing rising costs due to inflation and will need to make tough financial choices over the coming years. The Council has seen a large reduction in incoming funds after a decade of austerity measures, and the Council's ability to generate income to fund services has been severely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and cost of living crisis.
- Financial pressure on people in Oxford due to the cost of living crisis that has gripped the country in the aftermath of the pandemic, is likely to lead to more households becoming homeless or threatened with homelessness.
- Recent national predictions are that homelessness is going to increase and cause further pressure on local authorities.
- We still need to deliver more affordable homes in the city to meet housing need, and while there are plans in place to do so, supply needs to go further so that it will make a real impact on affordability in the city.
- Rents in the private rented sector remain too expensive and are continuing to rise.
- The expectations from Council tenants are rising, and we need to continue to improve our services.
- **Climate change**, and the impact of this that puts every region of the earth at risk, has led to us declaring a **climate emergency** in Oxford and setting an aim of Oxford as a city being **net zero carbon** by 2040. Domestic buildings in Oxford are one of the main contributors to carbon emissions that causes climate change. We need to make progress now to meet net zero carbon ambitions for domestic buildings in the city in order to help prevent the stark effects of climate change locally and globally – such as wildfire, flooding and droughts – from getting much worse.
- The city welcomes a high number of individuals and families fleeing war and violence to resettle in Oxford through various **resettlement schemes**, including the most recent '**Homes for Ukraine**' scheme. We will continue this work and will work to find long-term, sustainable housing solutions for them.

The challenges we face are significant. Our commitments and plans under this strategy are therefore ambitious.

The bigger picture in Oxford is crucial, as the ambition to address housing and homelessness issues is impossible without taking into account the Council's wider work and overall ambition. Oxford's Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy therefore sits alongside, and is aligned with, a number of other key Council strategies. In particular, this strategy speaks to the Council Strategy 2020-24. The Council Strategy sets out the overall vision for the Council – Building a world-class city for everyone – and the 4 key priorities that will get us there:

- Enable an inclusive economy
- Deliver more affordable housing
- Support thriving communities
- Pursue a zero carbon Oxford

The Council vision and priorities is the driving force of all our work.



Notes to the reader: A glossary is included towards the end of this document. It has been included in order to help readers of this document get a good understanding of some of the terms, concepts and words used throughout this document. The words included in the glossary have been **marked in bold** the first time they appear in the main text of this document.

This strategy has been written drawing information, data and evidence from Oxford City Council's Homelessness Review and Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Evidence Base that was published in June 2021, and updated in October 2022 and January 2023, and published alongside this strategy. The review and evidence base document contain full referencing.

## Our commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

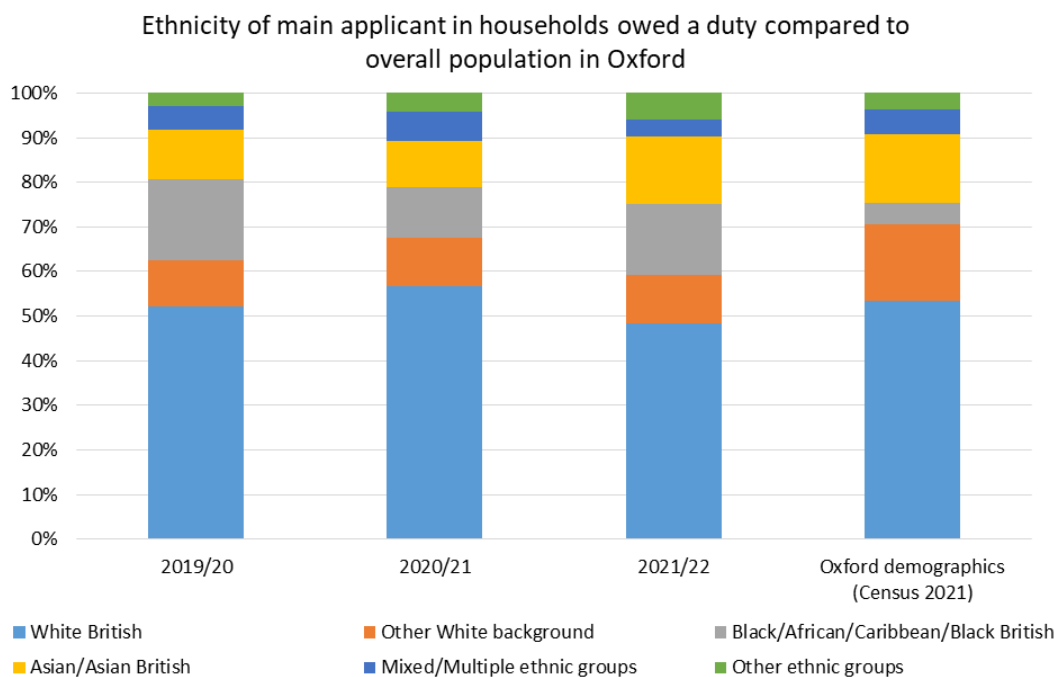
We know that homelessness affects people and communities differently in the city, and we know that certain groups are disproportionately affected by homelessness and poor housing conditions.

A key focus of all the Council's work - as outlined in our [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy](#) - is to ensure that the Council's services, investments and policy-making are designed to address the city's social and economic inequalities.

Oxford's Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy embraces and incorporates this focus throughout, and informs our plans under every priority. We will make sure that our services are accessible, that our policies and practises do not discriminate, not directly and not indirectly, that we understand the needs of communities in Oxford and of those seeking our assistance, and that we can react to changing trends.

This is how we are going to deliver these commitments:

- Work to deliver the Council's housing related commitments set out in the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, including:
  - Ensuring that we understand and respond to issues that disproportionately affect specific groups in our community and that may lead to homelessness. For example, people (main applicant) describing their ethnicity as Black/African/Caribbean/Black British, have been overrepresented in homelessness cases for many years compared to the overall share of the population in Oxford. We will seek to understand the reasons behind this better, and engage with service users in order to improve our services to combat this trend.



Source: [DLUHC Statistical data set: Live tables on homelessness for relevant](#) periods (main applicant of the household owed a duty describing their ethnicity) and Census 2021

- Work with communities to address any issues that disproportionately affects specific groups in order to better prevent homelessness.
- Review and improve how we engage with our tenants and leaseholders and ensure that inclusion is at the heart of this.

- Routinely report and use data to understand shifts in the profiles of people that we support in relation to homelessness, such as a recent decrease in the proportion of women presenting, in order to make sure that any changes is not due to inaccessibility.
- Improve our data collection so that we can better understand how our services work for the community, with the aim to ensure that services are accessible to all, and meeting the needs of all such as the LGBTQIA+ community.
- Continue to consider the needs of the travelling community, and seek to work in partnership with our neighbouring authorities to commission a new study of need for the period up to 2040.
- Conduct comprehensive Equality Impact Assessments in line with best practice for key policies and working practises, such as the **Tenancy Strategy** and the **Allocations Policy**, to ensure that there is truly fair access to our services for those with protected characteristics.
- Ensure information and communication is accessible, through using a range of mediums and accessible language.
- Provide training for all of our staff to ensure they are all skilled and confident in delivering services and work with Human Resources partners to have a workforce that as a whole reflects Oxford's diverse population.

## Improving accessibility of our services

As a Council, we know that we need to change the way we communicate and work with residents, as well as change and adapt the way residents can communicate and get in touch with us. This came to the forefront during the pandemic, when our offices closed and we moved to digital and phone contact with Oxford residents.

Our housing services historically have been too reliant on residents seeing us face-to-face and that documentation and information is provided in hard-copy, either by posting this to us or handing it in at one of our offices. Providing more facilities and opportunities for people we assist to provide information and an ability to access our services online, to have digital 'help-yourself' facilities, and moving to IT solutions where our officers can do more 'on the go', will make our services both more customer friendly, by fitting around people's lives, and more efficient.

Our need to improve our IT systems and expand our digital offer to include more ways for the community to access our services and communicate with us, are key considerations for our commitments under this strategy and includes:

- Complete a rollout of our new IT system that will enable new innovative approaches to the delivery of services for tenants, including greater ability for our tenants to access self-service options online.
- Achieve greater efficiency in how we deliver services by moving to provide more services and assistance 24hours on-line and via self-serve options, including submitting applications to join the **Housing Register** and provide supporting information.
- Deliver improved communications and engagement activities to our tenants using digital means.
- Develop facilities that allows us to get feedback digitally as soon as residents have received a service, so that we can use this to get feedback and make changes in real time.

However, accessing our range of services online or via the phone is not the best option at all times, and for many people, this will never be the best option. While embracing new technologies, we will therefore also reaffirm our commitment to continue to offer a face-to-face service for people who need our assistance, including our tenants, those who are worried about their housing situation and those who are facing homelessness.

## Housing-led solutions to homelessness

The number of individuals and families who are homeless or threatened with homelessness in Oxford has been too high for too long. We are therefore adapting and changing the approach we take to resolving homelessness, by implementing a **housing-led** approach to the services we deliver.

A housing-led approach means that homelessness is resolved by offering people their own, secure home as quickly as possible. A housing-led approach is key to successful homelessness prevention as support and advice is provided so that people can stay in, and maintain, their own home for the long term.

The fundamental aspects of a housing-led approach have informed key strands of this strategy and cuts across our priorities and include:

- **Rapid rehousing** of homeless households. If households become homeless and need to access **temporary accommodation**, we will aim for their stay in such accommodation to be as short as possible. We will work with households to find and move to a permanent home as quickly as possible – they will be rapidly re-housed.
- Whenever possible, we will make sure that households that are in need of extra support receive this, either through our own services, or by working with other organisations to put a good support package in place. This will ensure that homelessness can be prevented in the future.
- Provide more **Housing First** style accommodation. We are moving away from using **congregate style accommodation** for those experiencing rough sleeping. Congregate style accommodation can often be detrimental, lead to abandonment of accommodation and thus repeat homelessness. Instead, evidence has shown that we are more likely to help break the cycle of homelessness by providing a permanent home and support to stay in that home for those with the most **complex needs**. Housing First accommodation is provided without putting up any barriers or conditions, for example that people need to have a good tenancy history, that they are engaging with services or abstaining from substances.
- Increase the number of 1-bedroom properties available for private and social rent in the city. This will enable more single persons and couples that are homeless, to move into their own home that they can afford.

Effectively implementing and delivering this housing-led approach is key to Oxford seeing a reduction in homelessness across the board in the longer term.

## Our priorities and actions

This strategy sets out 5 priority areas that will drive and focus the Council's work to realise our vision for housing, homelessness and rough sleeping.

These priorities, and the commitments and plans we have set out to achieve these priorities, come from carefully reviewing all of the information and learning gained from the review and evidence base, the responses and feedback we received to our consultation on the draft strategy, together with the strategic direction and aims of the council set out in the [Council Strategy](#). They are focussed on meeting the key challenges we identified, such as the acute affordability issues in the Oxford housing market, the need to tackle carbon emissions from housing, and the need to go further to prevent homelessness and end rough sleeping.

We cannot deliver this work alone, we will work closely with the community and partner organisations to ensure that our commitments are delivered.

Our 5 priorities are:

- **Providing more, affordable homes**
  - Why? There are not enough affordable homes in the city and this means that people pay a large proportion of their income towards housing costs, putting financial pressure on families which may cause homelessness.
- **Great homes for all**
  - Why? Everyone should have a safe and good quality home, whether living in social or private rented housing.
- **Housing for a net zero carbon future**
  - Why? Domestic buildings are one of the largest contributors to carbon emissions in Oxford, and therefore one of the main contributors to climate change. We need to reduce these emissions now to be able to reach the aim of Oxford as a city being net zero carbon by 2040.
- **Preventing homelessness and adopting a rapid rehousing approach**
  - Why? No one should lose the place they call home – it is traumatising and impacts wider life chances. If this does happen, people need to be assisted to find a new home as quickly as possible.
- **Ending rough sleeping**
  - Why? No one should need to sleep rough on the streets of Oxford.

This strategy is accompanied by an action plan that sets out how we will deliver our commitments over the life of the strategy. The action plan will be updated regularly so that it stays relevant to the ever changing context we are operating within. You can find more details about this in the 'Governance and delivery of the strategy chapter' chapter below.



## Priority 1 - Providing more, affordable homes

### By the end of this strategy period, we are seeking to:

- Significantly increase the number of affordable homes delivered in the city. Building, enabling and supporting the development of enough homes in the city and surrounding districts to meet the overall housing need in Oxford, through the development of the right mix of property sizes and **tenure types**.
- Deliver the biggest affordable house building programme in Oxford since the 1970s, work with OX Place and our **housing association** partners to collectively deliver a forecast of over 1,600 affordable homes in the city over the next four years.
- Let the majority of the Council's new affordable homes at a social rent level, approximately 40% of the market rent.
- Work closely with housing associations to ensure Oxford is seen as a good place to build homes, and use planning policy and influence to ensure greatest housing needs are met.
- Ensure a range of tenure types are developed for affordable homes, such as **shared ownership**, to meet the needs of those struggling to afford private rents in Oxford.
- Continue to work with our neighbouring authorities to progress housing developments across the county that help meet housing need in Oxfordshire and create strong communities with good local amenities and sustainable transport links into the city, delivering over 7,000 as affordable tenures by 2031.
- Support an increase in the supply of homes through new and innovative approaches, such as **Community-led Housing**, and by bringing empty homes back into use.
- Continue to take steps to meet the unmet need of people who require more specialist forms of accommodation, such as disability adapted properties and homes for people with complex needs, in line with **Local Plan** policies.
- Develop an approach that will support the Council to utilise the land it owns for housing development, and encourage strategic partners in the city to do likewise.
- Influence central government policy on short term lets, making the case for local government to gain new powers to regulate the market to prevent the displacement of local residents and take local action as appropriate.

### How the Council and partners are going to do this

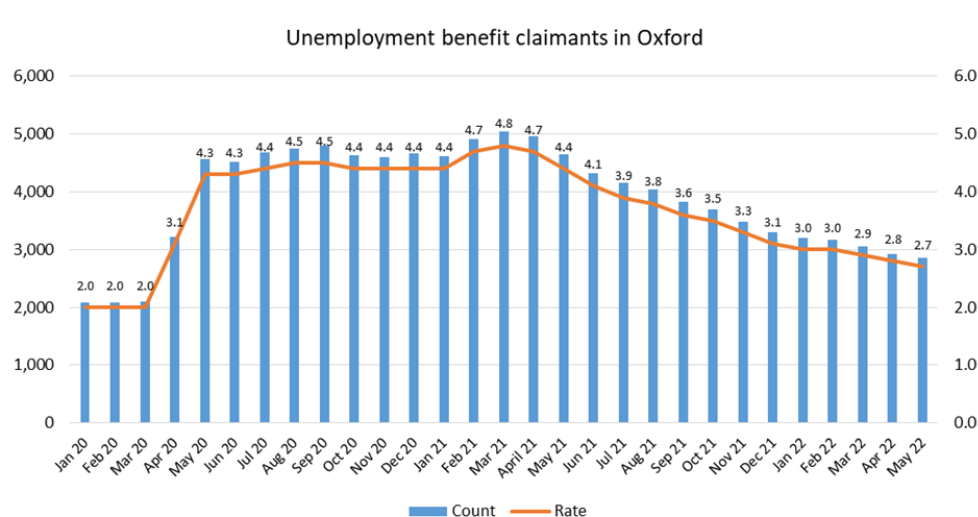
#### Increase the rate of affordable housing development, including Council homes through the affordable housing supply programme

- Build over 1,600 affordable, high quality and energy efficient homes through OX Place, the Council and housing association partners.
- Deliver over 850 affordable homes available at a social rent, delivered by OX Place, the Council and housing association partners.
- Ensure significant investment from the Council's **Housing Revenue Account** goes into the development of new affordable homes during the strategy period.
- Explore options and feasibility of developing small and adjoining sites.
- Offer support and partnership to developers, **Registered Providers**, landowners, social landlords and community-led housing groups to encourage delivery of new affordable homes.
- Take available steps to secure and deploy public investment where this is available to make further affordable housing development viable in Oxford and Oxfordshire, including **Homes England** funding and wider infrastructure funds.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work to ensure that new affordable homes delivered meet established and projected need for affordable housing, including increasing the number of units available for Housing First; larger homes to meet acute need to house larger families, sufficient housing that is disability adapted (for example for wheelchair users).</li> <li>• Support and encourage the use of factory-built housing and modular construction.</li> </ul>
<b>Provide homes for those struggling in the Oxford housing market</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver an ambitious shared ownership development programme.</li> <li>• Engage with the delivery of <b>First Homes</b> where this helps meet local need and where it does not negatively impact on the viability and deliverability of affordable housing in Oxford.</li> <li>• Review and implement a new Tenancy Strategy to recognise the new tenure types the council is developing, and to ensure households in different income groups can access different housing models.</li> <li>• Continue our work to bring empty homes back into occupancy, ensuring that the number of empty properties in Oxford reduce.</li> <li>• Purchase properties using funds from retained receipts from Right to Buy sales and borrowing in the Housing Revenue Account and let these properties to people on the Housing Register.</li> <li>• Continue to lobby central government to introduce controls around the short let market in the city to prevent the loss of residential homes to this sector.</li> <li>• Take appropriate action where a house has changed into short term let/holiday accommodation without the correct planning permission.</li> </ul>
<b>Work better with our housing delivery partners and neighbouring Councils</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with neighbouring councils to support the delivery of a number of developments in Oxfordshire that will help meet housing need for the whole County, and make effective agreements with the District Councils so that Oxford residents in need of affordable housing can access homes across Oxfordshire.</li> <li>• Support and identify opportunities for community-led housing developments.</li> <li>• Work with our partner Peabody with the aim of delivering the regeneration scheme in Blackbird Leys.</li> </ul>

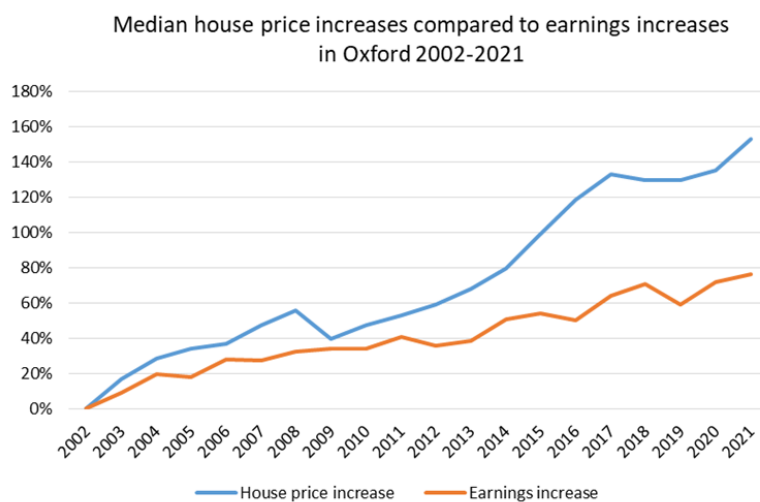
## Why we need more affordable housing

Oxford is densely populated, surrounded by green belt and rural countryside. Land for new development of housing is significantly constrained. Oxford has a strong economy, with more jobs than people of working age. Unemployment increased through the pandemic, but has now returned to near pre-pandemic levels.



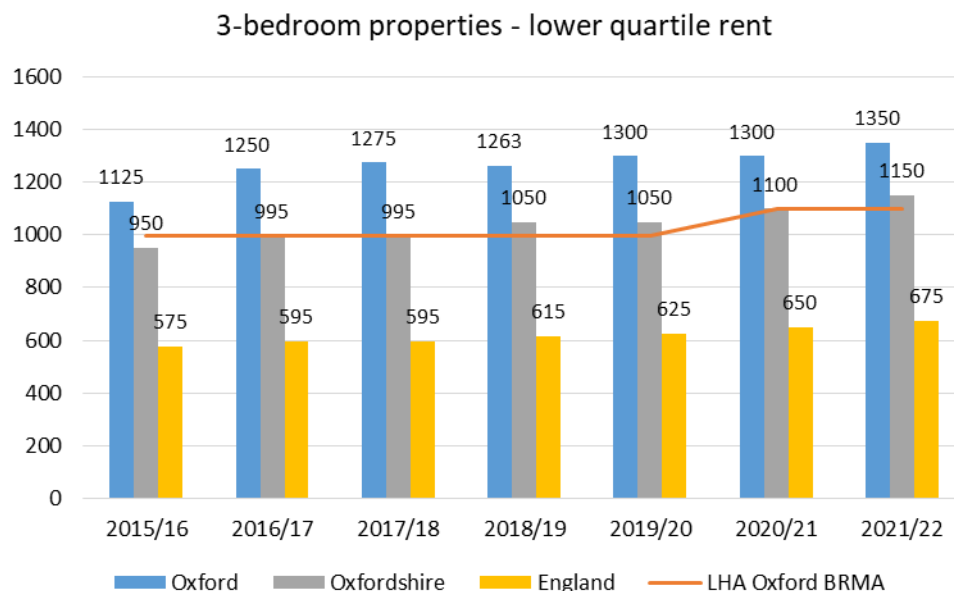
Source: ONS Claimant count, May 2022 (Nomis)

A strong economy with many opportunities attract people to come to Oxford. This is positive, but puts significant pressure on the housing market. The latest Census shows that the population grew 6.7% between 2011 and 2021. Oxford has become one of the least affordable places to live in the UK as house prices have increased much more than earnings for a number of years. According to the Office for National Statistics, in 2021 the **median** house price in Oxford was 12.32 times the median gross earnings in the city, compared to a national **average** of 8.96 times the median earnings.



Source: House price and earnings data taken from [ONS data report](#)

Renting a home in the private rented sector is also expensive. Homes at the lower price end of the market are especially expensive in Oxford compared to England as a whole. This means that people on low incomes cannot afford to rent even the cheapest homes in the city. With high and increasing rents in this sector, a large proportion of people's income go towards housing costs. The Council has limited power to influence private rents as local authorities have no controls over rent setting in the private rented sector.



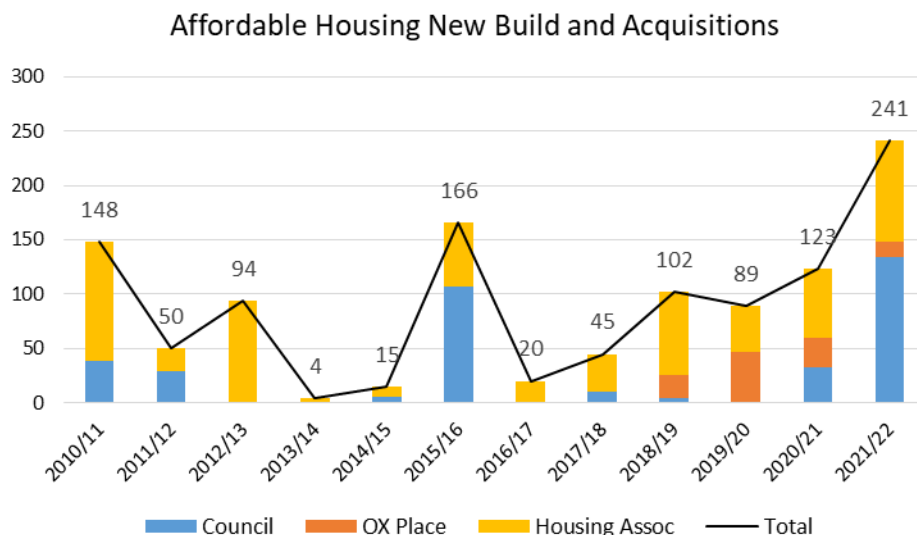
Source: ONS Private rental market summary statistics in England

The private rented sector has grown in Oxford over the last 20 years, and compared to the England average, a significantly higher proportion of homes are let through private landlords. The 2021 Census shows that 32% of households in Oxford rent their home in the private rented sector, compared to 20% in the rest of England.

Despite Oxford's economic success, Oxford is a city with inequalities and poverty. Whilst most neighbourhoods in the city are in the 'least deprived' half of the **Index of Multiple Deprivation** rankings, a significant number of areas in Oxford (17 out of 83) are in the most deprived 30% in the country. The high costs of housing is a contributing factor, and after housing costs, 1 in 4 children live below the poverty line in Oxford. The Covid-19 pandemic, followed by the cost of living crisis, has further exposed the extent of inequalities in Oxford, with those already experiencing inequality being impacted disproportionately.

## Oxford Needs Homes

The Housing and Economic Needs Assessment 2022 (Cherwell District and Oxford City councils) estimates that 740 social rent/affordable homes need to be delivered every year in Oxford if all households who are not able to meet their housing needs in the housing market were to be allocated a home they can afford. However, in the last decade, much less affordable housing has been delivered than there is need for. And there is now an acute need for affordable housing in the city.



Over the last few years, we have made good progress to address this. Between April 2018 and until end of March 2022, over 555 affordable homes have been delivered in Oxford. The **Future Oxfordshire Partnership**, a joint committee of the six councils of Oxfordshire together with key strategic partners, has helped secure over £500 million of investment in housing and infrastructure across the county. The Council owned company OX Place has started housing developments on sites across the city, the Council and partners have built social housing at Barton Park, and we have worked with our neighbouring Districts to develop agreements on how they can help meet Oxford's unmet housing needs, including agreeing nominations agreements for social housing in the Districts for households who are on the City Council's housing register.

## How to deliver the homes we need

Our new strategy will see us step up our activity in the next 5 years, building on the major progress of recent years, to deliver the biggest increase in social housing since the 1970s. We need to work with partners to significantly increase the number of affordable homes delivered in the city, alongside delivery of new council homes through the Council's wholly owned housing company OX Place. There needs to be development of enough homes, both in the city and in the surrounding areas to meet the overall housing need in Oxford, including different property sizes and different tenures types.

Our housing association partners also play a key role here. Together with OX Place and housing associations, there are plans in place to build over 1,600 affordable homes in the city over the next four years, with a large proportion of these homes available at social rent. These homes will be of high quality, they will be energy efficient, with the majority let to people on our Housing Register at a genuinely affordable rent, and with some sold as shared ownership. Regeneration schemes such as Blackbird Leys, will also see more homes in Oxford and we are aiming to develop this scheme in partnership with Peabody.

Oxfordshire as a whole have a shortage of affordable homes, and we will continue to work with our neighbouring local authorities to create strong communities with good local amenities and sustainable transport links. The aim to meet housing need for Oxfordshire by 2031 will see over 7,000 affordable homes built in neighbouring council areas that Oxford residents will be able to move into.

### Breakdown of affordable home developments, which includes social rent, affordable rent, shared ownership housing units

<b>Housing Associations, OX Place and the Council</b>	over next 4 years	In Oxford	around 1,600
<b>Oxfordshire unmet housing need in Districts</b>	by 2031	In neighbouring districts	around 7,000

We will work to ensure that the homes built in the city will be determined by what is needed, both in terms of size and tenure. The housing need assessment carried out as part of the evidence base of the Local Plan 2040 will be central here, as it considers the wide range of need for affordable housing. Demand for affordable 1 bedroom properties has increased over the last few years and our development plans seeks to address this. We also know that we currently have a good supply of housing for elderly persons. Over the next few years, we will however review some of the existing provision to ensure that it is the right kind of accommodation as well as sufficient to meet future demand. Through the use of the City Council's planning policies we will continue to have set requirements for accessible and adaptable homes, including wheelchair user standard. As a Council, we are now for the first time managing shared-ownership properties, and this is something we will continue to develop as we recognise that this helps many households buy a stake in a home, that they would otherwise not be able to afford.

Making the best use of the residential properties that exist in Oxford is also important in order to increase the provision of much needed housing in the city. The number of domestic buildings that are empty for long periods of time has unfortunately increased over the last few years, despite our efforts to tackle this trend. Over the last few years, we have worked with owners of empty homes to bring them back into use, and we will continue to do so. We will do this by supporting owners, and if necessary, we will use enforcement powers to do so. We are looking to increase the use of formal action to bring empty homes back into use, including, where appropriate, the implementation of **Empty Dwelling Management Orders**, both where this is being made with the support of property owners and where owners are not engaging or willing to take part in the process.

Homes that are only used part of the year as second homes, are a further issue that contributes to there being fewer homes available for those in need and putting pressure on the general housing market in Oxford. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill that is currently making its way through Parliament makes provisions to allow local authorities to introduce a new discretionary council tax premium on second homes of up to 100% and; apply a council tax premium of up to 100% on homes which have been empty for longer than one year (rather than two years at present). Should the bill, including these provisions be enacted, we are determined to introduce these changes to council tax charges, in an effort to make more homes available for those in need.

There has also been an increase in the number of short terms lets in Oxford over the last few years. Properties rented out as short term lets results in fewer properties being available for longer-term lets for households in housing need in Oxford. As a Council, we have limited power to tackle this trend. There is no requirement for short term lets to be licenced, or for landlords to notify the council when a property has been converted into a short term let. The change to short term let may require planning permission. However, this has to be determined on a case by case basis and we have taken successful planning enforcement action where the use of a house has changed into holiday accommodation without such permission. Since 2018, we have repeatedly called for the government to introduce effective regulation on short term lets and we will continue to do so.

We will work to enable housing supply from different sources, including supporting groups and organisations that want to develop community-led housing, and continuing to work collaboratively with the city's universities and colleges to drive the delivery of more affordable housing units, both which are measures that contributes to more people being able to find a home that they can afford to live in.



## Priority 2 - Great homes for all

### By the end of this strategy period, we are seeking to:

- Work to drive up standards in Oxford's private rented housing sector, through use of our regulatory powers and the operation of property licensing, covering the whole private rented sector.
- Improve the quality of council homes and surrounding neighbourhoods through continued investment into homes, communal areas and estates, ensuring high standards, compliance, good maintenance, higher levels of energy efficiency, and guided by tenant voices and views.
- Transform the services we deliver to our tenants, to improve tenant satisfaction about their homes, their neighbourhood and the services we deliver to them.
- Continue to develop a new, integrated and locality-based way of working to deliver services to our communities, where Council teams work better together across departments to assist our tenants when they are in need.
- Deliver an improved approach to tenant engagement and involvement, with clear strategies and adequate resourcing to make sure that we have systems in place to receive feedback on the services we provide and the condition of tenants' accommodation, and that we can use such feedback effectively to develop and improve our services as well as make decisions as a landlord.
- Deliver our Thriving Communities Strategy, which will take a wider holistic look to ensure homes are part of a wider thriving community, and work closely with our communities as part of our healthy place shaping agenda.
- Continue to effectively manage the Council's Housing Revenue Account, ensuring overall spending priorities are delivered, and that we deliver investment into affordable housing development, **decarbonisation**, and improvement of Council homes.
- Become fully compliant with the Government's Social Housing **White Paper**, meeting the new customer regulatory standards, new **decent homes standard**, and being fully compliant with building safety changes, with tenants able to judge and benchmark our performance through new national landlord tenant satisfaction measures.

### How the Council and partners are going to do this

<p><b>Improve the quality of accommodation in the private rented sector</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver our citywide <b>selective licencing scheme</b> and continue to deliver the citywide additional <b>Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)</b> licensing scheme to help ensure that accommodation in the private rented sector is of good quality; and to maintain and improve compliance in HMOs in the city.</li> <li>• Through property licensing, work proactively to reduce the percentage of privately rented homes that contain serious home hazards through increased number of property visits and increase the number of HMOs that are compliant with the HMO licensing scheme.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Continue to deliver investment into our council homes</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a programme of rolling annual <b>stock condition surveys</b>, which will see all our domestic buildings having condition surveys every 5 years, in order to keep information about our properties accurate and up to date.</li> <li>• Use stock condition surveys to ensure a consistent and updated <b>asset management strategy</b> is in place, which will include and</li> </ul>



	<p>provide a coordinated work plan for maintenance, investment, regeneration and carbon reduction works.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invest a committed £51m into our council homes in line with our asset management strategy, to ensure homes are fully compliant and of good quality, taking into account all priorities, including energy efficiency, decarbonisation, decency and safety.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Provide quality, timely and responsive services to council tenants, with high levels of tenant satisfaction</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a comprehensive transformation programme of our Landlord Services leading to improved services for our tenants, ensuring all our tenants and leaseholder related activities are resourced sufficiently and comply with the Social Housing White Paper.</li> <li>Deliver a new, integrated and locality-based way of working to deliver services to our communities. This approach brings together different council functions and local networks to deliver enhanced and joined up services in the community, with better customer journeys and outcomes.</li> <li>Work collaboratively with <b>Oxford Direct Services</b> (ODS) to ensure that repairs services delivered for our tenants are excellent and at our tenants' convenience, make the fix the first time whenever possible, and having it stayed fixed.</li> <li>Use a combination of annual tenant surveys and <b>transactional surveys</b> to gain an accurate and clear picture of tenant satisfaction with the repairs process, which is then able to respond to feedback and to drive service development and improvement.</li> <li>Complete the rollout of our new housing IT system that will enable new innovative approaches to how we deliver services for and communicate with tenants, including greater ability for our tenants to self-serve online.</li> <li>Continue to support tenants impacted by antisocial behaviour, and responding to their feedback on developing any improvements.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Improve tenant engagement and tenant involvement to enhance accountability and put tenants' views at the heart of decision making and service development</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish refreshed aims and purpose for our tenant engagement and involvement activities. Aligning aims and purposes with the priorities tenants have expressed through feedback, following best practice in our approach and ensuring that activities are resourced effectively so that we meet the Charter for Social Housing Residents introduced in the Social Housing White Paper.</li> <li>Establish a scrutiny function that allows tenants to better hold the Council and Oxford Direct Services to account and to influence outcomes.</li> <li>Take steps to ensure we meet our statutory obligations to release our results against the new national tenant consumer standards as set out in the Social Housing White Paper, so that tenants can judge our performance, and once all social landlords are in compliance can benchmark us as a landlord.</li> <li>Ensure that tenants and leaseholders involved in engagement and involvement activity including the tenant ambassadors, reflect the geographic and demographic diversity of Council tenants.</li> </ul>

## The need for a good home

Everyone deserves to live in a good quality, secure and safe home, whether they rent their accommodation from a private or social landlord. Housing conditions have a great impact on people's physical and mental health. Living in poor housing, homes that are damp and cold, in an

insecure tenancy, in time-limited or non-permanent tenancy, or living in overcrowded conditions, can all cause significant stress and have a negative impact on both physical and mental health, as well as education and work. Housing conditions therefore, have great effects on ultimate life chances. The introduction of the Decent Homes Standard for social housing in the early 2000s, has improved conditions for many. However, there is still a long way to go in addressing issues of poor quality homes across all sectors, as well as insecurity of tenures and affordability, so that these issues will not impact people and our communities negatively.

Addressing serious housing safety issues can be a cost effective way to reduce some of the financial burdens on our health and social care services and provides early support for anyone who is vulnerable due to their health, wellbeing or personal circumstances. In Oxford, Oxford City's Home Improvement Agency (HIA) offers grants and support to vulnerable people who live in homes that are in poor condition or who need adaptations to properties that are unsuitable for their needs. They aim to prevent situations from worsening and result in homelessness, as well as enabling residents to work towards independence in all its forms. As such, this work is an important contributor to the prevention of homelessness in the city.

In addition to improving the actual homes of people, we can also introduce other, preventative measures linked to the place someone lives that will help reduce the inequalities in our city, help people increase their general prospects, wellbeing and life chances. Through the Council's new Thriving Communities Strategy, the Council has a strong focus on this work through encouraging well-designed neighbourhoods and parks where healthy lifestyles are the norm, developing skills, ensuring growth in the city is inclusive, strengthening communities and improving access to leisure, sports and the arts. We have already introduced measures and activities which have had great success over the last few years.

Through our **Youth Ambition** programme we have made more activities available for young people, including youth clubs, holiday schemes and multi-sports sessions. Such activities play an important role in reducing adverse childhood experiences, which can lead to a range of negative outcomes in later life, such as homelessness. As such, the work carried out through colleagues in our community outreach teams, serves as important homelessness prevention measures. In addition to this, we have also offered free access to our leisure centres for people experiencing rough sleeping.

## Challenges in the Private Rented Sector

According to the 2021 Census, the number of households in Oxford that rent their accommodation in the private rented sector is very large - 32% - compared to the average of 20% across England as a whole. Renting in the private sector is expensive, and unfortunately, there is also evidence that the housing conditions in parts of this sector can too often be poor. A review carried by METASTREET on behalf of the Council in 2020, estimated that over 6,000 homes in the private rented sector contained a serious home hazard, with the most common hazards relating to fire safety and excess cold. We know that the quality of housing can greatly affect people's physical and mental health, and we are therefore committed to working with private landlords to improve conditions.

We have operated an 'additional licensing scheme' in Oxford for houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) since 2011. The scheme was brought in to address problems associated with poor management of HMOs. The scheme has been very successful in bringing up standards and protecting tenants.

Building on the past success of measures to improve the private sector, the Council made a successful bid to the government for a citywide selective licensing scheme that will be applicable

for all properties rented out in the private sector. The scheme offers a massive opportunity to improve the sector, ensuring landlords are fit and proper and that properties meet a minimum standard and are safe places to live. It is estimated that over 12,000 homes in the city will require a selective licence.

Oxford is currently the only local authority in the UK to operate property licensing across the whole of the private rented sector.

## **The Council as a landlord**

According to the 2021 Census, 21% of all households in Oxford live in **social rented housing**. The City Council is the largest social landlord in the city, with around 7,800 homes that we own and let to those in housing need. The vast majority of Council properties are charged at a social rent level, which is typically around 40% of market rent charged for similar properties. We manage all aspects of these properties, including the allocation process, arranging lettings agreements, providing assistance and support to our residents, and repairing and maintaining the properties and their surroundings.

As a landlord, we have a great responsibility to ensure that our properties are of good quality, that our tenant's homes receive the maintenance and repairs that are needed, and that neighbourhoods are well maintained and safe. Over the last few years, we have delivered all the schemes that were identified under the Great Estates programme, which means that there have been improvements to neighbourhoods and the way our residents use them. We have also completed the refurbishment of the tower blocks owned by the council, and delivered considerable investment into council homes in general.

Our strategy lays out our ambition to improve the homes we own and the services we offer to our tenants over the next few years. It commits us to continued investment into the homes we own, communal areas and estates to ensure high standards of compliance, good levels of maintenance and better energy efficiency.

One of the main priorities going forward will be to develop a programme of transformation for our landlord services that will see significant change in how we deliver our services, making them more responsive, accessible and joined up across different council teams. This is in response to feedback we have received from tenants, the recommendations of an external review of our Landlord Services, the review of tenant engagement and tenant involvement by the Scrutiny Committee, and the changes to legislation we are governed by.

A major aspect of how we need to change has been informed by how the pandemic challenged us to rethink how we deliver our services in our neighbourhoods. In response to the pandemic, the Council delivered more services in the communities – a locality-based model - through the lockdowns. This offered an improved way of delivering services closer to our communities that we want to continue in the future. Therefore, the Council has introduced an integration of services that will focus on strengthening connections between existing teams in the Council, local communities, residents and partner organisations.

We also want to modernise and use new technologies in the way services are delivered. This will include giving our tenants greater ability to self-service through the internet, more information will be available at the 'touch of a button', and the use of new technologies to make us more efficient and effective in how we maintain our housing stock.

Change doesn't just apply to the Council's core landlord services. Many of the repairs and maintenance services for our homes are carried out by the Council owned company Oxford Direct

Services (ODS) and we will work closely with them to deliver a change to tenant repairs services, increasing convenience and tenant satisfaction.

We welcome the increase in government regulation into the social housing sector, and through this strategy, we will deliver the required changes for our tenants. One of the biggest changes is the introduction of the Social Housing White Paper that will strengthen the tenant voice to influence decisions about their homes and neighbourhoods and increase consumer standards. The Building Safety Act brings about increased regulation for building safety, including a requirement for there to be an Accountable Person who is legally responsible for assessing and managing fire and structural risks for high risk buildings, along with other measures.

We will also take major steps to empower our tenants through enhanced engagement and involvement work, with a clear approach and increased resourcing. This will enable routine feedback on our services and investment, as well as the condition of accommodation. We will use this feedback to help develop and improve the services we offer, as well as inform the decisions we make as a landlord. We carried out a tenant survey in 2021 that helped inform this direction, and we are committed to continue to collect this form of feedback through regular tenant and transactional surveys.

## Priority 3 - Housing for a net zero carbon future

### By the end of this strategy period, we are seeking to:

- Deliver commitments set out in the Council's Net Zero Carbon Action Plan to realise a significant reduction in carbon emissions from residential buildings in the City.
- Ensure all new homes are built to high standards, using contractors that are experienced in low energy development, accessible design and high levels of energy efficiency to support Oxford's journey towards net zero carbon by 2040.
- Homes built through the Council's housing company OX Place are built to high standards, gradually improving performance in order to meet the target that Oxford as a city is net zero carbon by 2040.
- Improve the energy efficiency of Council owned domestic buildings through a significant investment programme.
- Bring improvements to energy efficiency standards in the private rented sector in Oxford.

### How the Council and partners are going to do this

<p><b>Improve standards for new developments of council housing in the city</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New homes built by OX Place are net zero carbon for energy use in the properties (<b>regulated operational energy</b>) by 2030.</li> <li>• Homes built by OX Place use electric only and heated through low carbon means such as air source <b>heat pumps</b></li> <li>• Homes built by OX Place have carbon emission levels for new homes that are 40% below the <b>national standards (Building Regulations 2021)</b>.</li> <li>• Deliver new homes using a new procurement framework aimed at <b>off site manufacture (OSM)</b> of new homes.</li> <li>• Build as far as possible using a '<b>fabric-first</b>' approach (air-tight and well insulated) and where not already in place, enabling on-site renewable energy such as <b>solar PV panels</b> to be easily added at a later date.</li> <li>• Tackling the <b>performance gap</b> and preventing any performance issues with new technologies by using an innovative <b>energy quality assurance service</b>. This provides checking, training and testing throughout the full design and construction phases of development.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Invest to decarbonise our council homes</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure a consistent and updated asset management strategy is in place and provides a coordinated plan for maintenance, investment, regeneration and carbon reduction work for Council properties.</li> <li>• Tie energy efficiency works into other planned maintenance programmes to ensure a co-ordinated and less disruptive approach to delivery, improving tenant experience.</li> <li>• Work with tenants to agree and implement a programme of energy efficiency measures that will see tenants' energy use reduced, with the aim of reducing the number of tenants refusing energy efficiency improvements.</li> <li>• Continue to bid for central government funding to fund our work to increase energy efficiency for our housing stock.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Work with other landlords, such as property developers, Registered</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to set high standards for energy efficiency/carbon reduction for new built homes through local plan policies including the new Local Plan 2040.</li> <li>• Work with partners to apply for funding, and through signposting, assist home owners, tenants and landlords in the private rented</li> </ul>

<b>Providers and Private Rented Sector landlords to increase energy efficiency, both for existing buildings and new developments</b>	<p>sector to access funding for energy efficiency and decarbonisation measures to increase efficiency standards for properties.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring improvements to energy efficiency to the private rented sector by other means, including the promotion of the <b>Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES)</b>.</li> <li>• Ensure residents in the city can access consistent and quality energy advice in relation to both property improvements and energy usage through various means including the <b>Home Improvement Agency</b>.</li> <li>• Work with the <b>Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership</b> to trial innovative approaches to different retrofit approaches, scale delivery, and share best practise.</li> </ul>
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## Climate Emergency

Climate change is arguably the most significant threat to humankind at this time. Caused by the build-up of greenhouse gases in the earth's atmosphere, released by burning fuels that we use daily to heat our homes, travel and transport goods, climate change is caused by human influence, harming the planet and putting billions of people at risk. In January 2019, Oxford City Council declared a climate emergency in Oxford and agreed to set up a Citizens' Assembly to consider new carbon targets and additional measures to reduce emissions, and thus do what we can to slow climate change. In response to the clear message coming from the Assembly, we, as a Council, have taken on a leading role in reducing emissions and increasing biodiversity in the city.

In February 2021, we held a Zero Carbon Oxford Summit, attended by leaders from all major organisations in Oxford to map the city's journey towards net zero carbon. Those attending the summit signed a Charter, setting the ambition to help Oxford as a city become net zero carbon by 2040. The Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership was established at the summit, and this partnership has since established and is delivering a new science-based roadmap and action plan outlining how the city can reach net zero carbon emissions by 2040.

## Homes and carbon emissions

The roadmap divides the city's emissions into five sectors that have the most significant impact on the climate - one of these being emissions from domestic buildings. 25% of emissions in Oxford come from residential buildings and the Zero Carbon Oxford Road map sets out that if Oxford city is to reach net zero carbon by 2040, domestic emissions must be reduced by 87%.

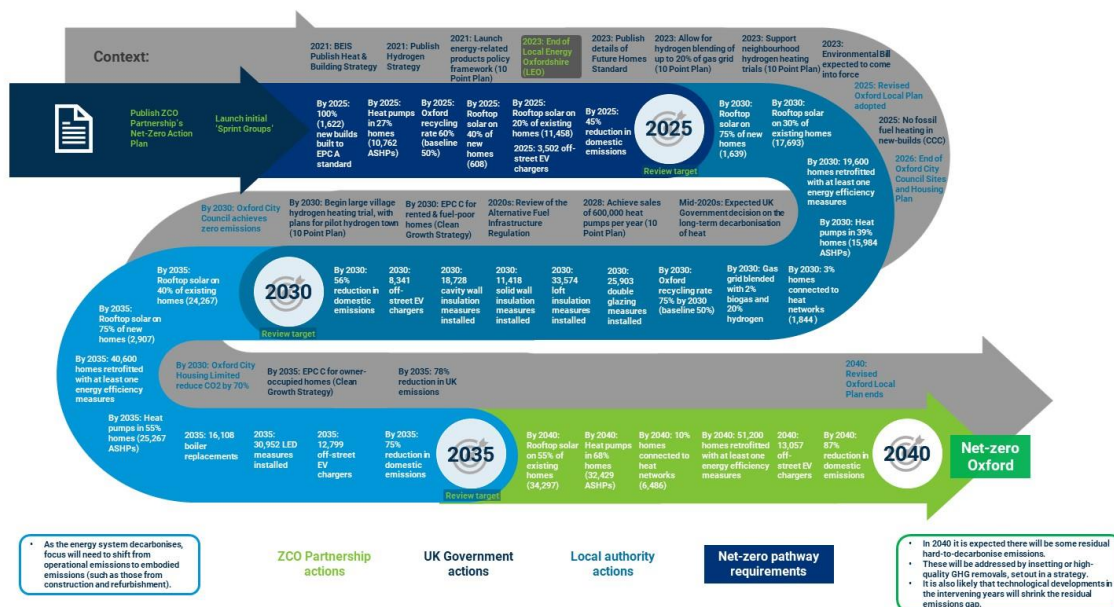


2018 Baseline emissions in Oxford by sector (excluding land use). Source: [ZCOP Roadmap](#)



Improving residential housing is therefore crucial in order for the city to see a net zero carbon future, and detailed actions are set out in the roadmap and action plan. It includes raising the standards to ensure new built homes are significantly more energy efficient, and that the energy efficiency standards for existing homes are improved across all tenures.

### ZCOP Domestic Sector Net-Zero Roadmap



Source: [ZCOP Roadmap](#)

## Reducing emissions

As the strategic housing authority, the City's biggest landlord, and owning a housing development company, we, as a Council, have a key role to play here. The Council's housing company OX Place has committed to deliver a significant number of new homes over the years to come, and built to high energy efficiency standards which means these new homes will have significantly lower carbon emissions. This includes all homes meeting 40% carbon reduction from 2021 building regulation standards, alongside delivering ambitious pioneering sites and schemes with even higher standards. We have an aspiration that all new homes built through OX Place will use electricity only and be heated through low carbon means. The technology advances quickly in this area and we will continue to learn 'as we go', adapt and learn from our industry partners. OX Place will engage with **Off-site Manufacture (OSM) Procurement Framework** partners, industry and consultants as an important tool to continue to learn and improve, as well as seeking feedback from people who already live in homes built by OX Place.

Significant investment is needed into the homes we own and rent out in order for these to be more energy efficient and reduce carbon emissions. We are developing an investment and delivery programme, in line with our overall maintenance plans for our domestic buildings, to retrofit and introduce energy efficiency measures. We will also bid for any further central government funding to support this work.

Improving the energy efficiency standards of our homes will not only help move the City towards net zero carbon. It will also bring benefits to our tenants, as energy usage will reduce as a result of these measures being introduced. With the current cost of living crisis, where cost of fuel is seeing major price increases, this will help overall household finances. Working with our tenants to agree and implement the programme of improvements and energy efficiency measures to their homes, will be a key feature of our plans.

Our desire to improve energy efficiency standards for our homes are ambitious, and it is important that we make good progress on this to meet the challenges of the climate emergency. However, the work that needs to be carried out to meet the commitments outlined in this strategy requires significant levels of investment. The Council operates in an increasingly challenging financial position, impacting all providers of social housing, at the same time as we need to invest in our housing stock overall. We are therefore faced with difficult budget choices, and will have to prioritise our investment. Therefore Central Government will have to step up and support providers of social housing with the necessary funding for us to be able to meet our carbon reduction targets.

Many of the homes in the private rented sector, as well as homes owned, also need work to improve energy efficiency if the city is to be net zero by 2040. Introducing such measures can be expensive, and we will therefore actively help landlords and home owners to access funding that can help pay for these, as well as continue to call for more powers from central government to support our work in raising standards in the private sector.

The Home Improvement Agency can also provide help to people who are elderly, vulnerable or have long-term illnesses and are finding it hard to heat and insulate their homes, as well as providing funding for owner occupiers to help pay for free boiler servicing, the replacement of boilers and repairing heating systems for owner occupiers. Funding is available to older, disabled and vulnerable residents from all tenures from the agency for energy efficiency advice and free measures such as insulation, draught proofing, radiator panels, and letterbox/keyhole covers. This helps improve energy efficiency standards for existing homes in the city across all tenures.



Planning proposals for new homes in the city, including our own, will need to demonstrate compliance with planning policies, including those of the Local Plan. The policies of the Local Plan require high environmental standards, including in relation to carbon efficiency.

A key aspect of seeing a reduction in emissions from residential homes in the city is the work we are doing with the Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership to trial and test new and innovative retrofit approaches, so that we can share best practice and use methods that work.

## Priority 4 - Preventing homelessness and adopting a rapid rehousing response

### By the end of this strategy period, we are seeking to:

- Put the prevention of homelessness at the heart of council services and partners the Council works with. Work better with partner organisations, such as the County Council, Health and Probation, to improve customer journeys, reduce health inequality, and share information and data, in order to prevent people losing their homes.
- Reduce the number of households being evicted from the Private Rented Sector, by working better with private landlords to help support households to stay in their tenancies, and make it easier for people in need of housing to find a home in the private sector.
- Go beyond our statutory obligations and do more, at an earlier stage, to prevent homelessness and help households stay in their homes.
- Deliver more responsive and dynamic services, able to react quickly to changes in patterns of homelessness, where people needing our help and assistance get quality advice and support when they need it.
- Use data to see, predict and respond to developing trends so that we can have effective and targeted interventions in place.
- Develop a rapid rehousing response, which means that when homelessness cannot be prevented, we rehouse households quickly into an appropriate and permanent home, with support as required.
- Significantly reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation, and the length of time someone has to live in temporary accommodation. Ensure the temporary accommodation we provide is always safe and of a high standard.
- Simplify our **Allocations Scheme** to make sure those in greatest need, for example those who are homeless or living in temporary accommodation, can get access to social housing,

### How the Council and partners are going to do this

<b>Transform council services to better prevent and relieve homelessness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embed a Corporate approach to the prevention of homelessness in Oxford City Council, so every staff member at the council understands their role to support people to stay in their home, including incorporating homeless prevention work into key strategies such as the Thriving Community Strategy.</li> <li>• Create a '<b>One Gateway</b>' to Council Homelessness services to ensure people seeking our assistance find it easier to navigate Council services and get the assistance they need.</li> <li>• Complete a transformation of our Housing Needs team (covering homelessness service and the housing register) to focus more on prevention and rapid rehousing.</li> <li>• Ensure a continuous culture of change and service improvement is embedded into Housing Needs, supported through regular evidence based reviews.</li> <li>• Develop the Council's online homelessness advice services so more people can access quality, tailored advice when they need it, as well as being able to complete homeless applications and apply to be included in the housing register online.</li> <li>• Make better use of council data to inform the prevention and relief of homelessness.</li> </ul>
<b>Focus on tackling homelessness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a dedicated provision to provide <b>upstream homelessness prevention</b> for the private rented sector, which will</li> </ul>

<p><b>from the Private Rented Sector</b></p>	<p>work with both tenants and landlords, providing mediation and working in close partnership with statutory and support services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete a review of the Council's Private Rented Sector access schemes, developing and implementing changes needed to ensure that the schemes remain effective and attractive to landlords. We will develop and implement changes to ensure our Private Rented Sector schemes remain effective in the context of rising rents and a frozen <b>local housing allowance</b>; and create a bespoke service for single adults to help them move in to the private rented sector.</li> <li>• Continue to express our support for the abolition of <b>section 21</b> notices, and when and if the Government Bill is implemented, we will ensure that the Council supports the new rules, landlord obligations and tenants' rights.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Work in partnership to prevent homelessness</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress further joint work with health, in order to help prevent delayed discharges from hospitals.</li> <li>• Establish better joint working with mental health, drugs and alcohol services, enabling better housing outcomes for those with health conditions, and reduce health, housing and care inequalities for people with multiple and complex needs.</li> <li>• Improve the Council's joint working arrangements with prisons and probation services, to prevent homelessness for those being released from prison and probation services.</li> <li>• Work to improve support of survivors of domestic abuse and deliver good housing outcomes, by fully conforming to the requirements of the new Domestic Abuse Act, and seeking to gain <b>Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance</b> accreditation through a programme of service development.</li> <li>• Work with County Council and providers to help those leaving the Young Persons Supported Accommodation Service secure appropriate accommodation and make necessary changes to policy and processes to support <b>care leavers</b>.</li> <li>• Build on the joint work carried out by our partners such as the <b>Oxfordshire Homelessness Alliance</b>, Crisis Skylight and Advice Centres, creating better customer journeys between council services and other organisations who support homeless people. Promote a more strategic and coordinated approach across the sector to combat homelessness.</li> <li>• Continue to support and deliver refugee resettlement schemes and rehousing refugees in Oxford ensuring the city is welcoming and a safe place to make a home, reviewing the current schemes function, and being ready to engage with any future government schemes.</li> <li>• Reduce evictions from supported housing and Housing Association accommodation by working in partnership with housing associations and supported accommodation providers to have functioning <b>pre-eviction protocols</b> in place, ensuring households in need get help earlier to sustain tenancies.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Adopt a rapid rehousing response to homelessness</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring together within Council structure, move-on from temporary and supported accommodation with placements into social and private rented accommodation to ensure a coordinated approach to rehousing homeless households.</li> <li>• Make changes to current policy and process to support more rapid move-on from temporary and supported accommodation, and</li> </ul>

	<p>provide move-on support in the new permanent accommodation when possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review our use of temporary accommodation stock to make sure it is of good quality, and that the stock we have is the right amount and matches the need of households; and consider adopting a new temporary accommodation standard.</li> <li>• Complete a review of our allocations scheme and update our allocations policy to ensure that there is more opportunity to prevent homelessness and move people on from temporary and supported accommodation, with particular attention to ensure certain groups of people such as care leavers, former rough sleepers and those leaving the mental health supported accommodation, are supported to access permanent housing.</li> <li>• Work in partnership with other commissioning bodies and Registered Providers to ensure there is sufficient suitable accommodation options available to meet the need for people moving on from supported accommodation.</li> </ul>
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## New challenges – Cost of living crisis

This strategy's evidence base was put together at a time when the country and the city dealt with the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic. This presented some difficulties in trying to analyse and predict how the landscape would change following the pandemic and the end of government support to local authorities and individuals, as well as ending of measures such as a ban on evictions. As we emerge from the pandemic however, the country has moved straight into a cost of living crisis, driven by high levels of inflation, increasing living costs and in particular a spike in the cost of fuel. This is severely impacting household finance.

We are concerned and predict that the immediate and longer term effects of the cost of living crisis will result in increased pressure on Council services and an increase in levels of homelessness in the city. Our approach in this strategy is therefore one that allows for continued transformation of our services that will allow us to be flexible and responsive to changes in demand, whilst providing excellent services with successful outcomes.

The Council is under significant financial pressure, and whilst demand for our services are likely to increase, there is no further funds available to increase our resources. This makes the transformation outlined in this strategy even more important as we will only meet these significant challenges through prevention, working in partnership and moving those who are homeless quickly into new housing.

## Homelessness in Oxford

Homelessness levels have been high in Oxford for many years, intrinsically linked to structural factors such as high housing costs, significant unaffordability, high levels of deprivation and changes to the welfare system, which all are major contributors to homelessness in Oxford. Other factors, linked to the individual circumstances of persons, such as personal crisis, mental health, or physical health come together to make some households more likely to be affected by homelessness.

In April 2018, the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 was introduced. This legislation brought about the biggest changes to homelessness legislation for over 40 years. It imposed new duties on local authorities and refocuses **statutory homelessness** services on prevention of homelessness, with a more person centred and collaborative approach.

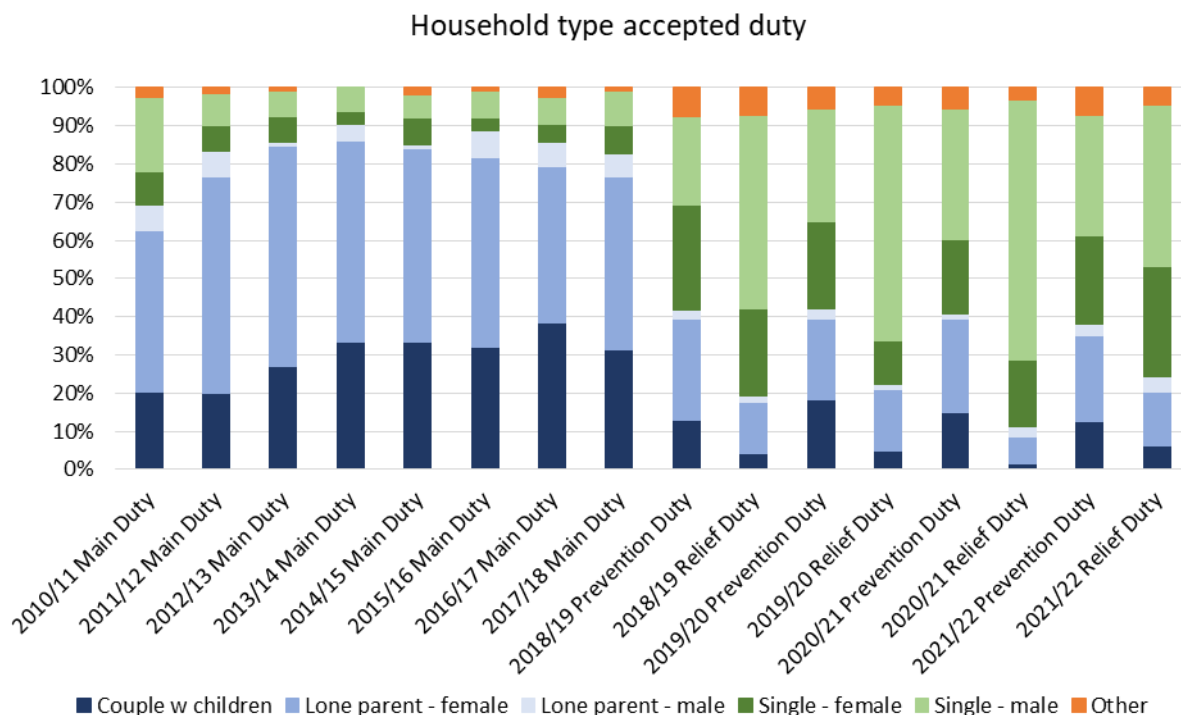
We have successfully implemented the new requirements of the act, and have worked hard to prevent homelessness. Since its introduction, we are now working with more households than ever before to prevent and relieve homelessness, with good outcomes.

This enhanced approach, together with significant investment from central government and the Council into homelessness prevention services and services for those experiencing rough sleeping, means that the overall picture of homelessness has generally improved since the last strategy in 2018. However, homelessness levels in the city remain stubbornly high. Therefore, a key focus of this strategy will be to go further to tackle homelessness. There will be more focus on preventative services that kick in earlier, are more 'upstream', to help people stay in their homes wherever possible. We will also target our services better on the main causes of homelessness in the city. These changes will require continued progress with the significant transformation of the Council's homelessness services.

The ending of a tenancy in the private rented sector is the main reason why people are homeless or threatened with homelessness in Oxford. Yet, our services have historically been less focused on the private sector, and there is insufficient support offered to private tenants when they first run into difficulty, with statutory support kicking in too close to an eviction when it is often too late to save a tenancy. Therefore, this strategy commits the Council, through our services and partnerships, to have an increased focus on homelessness prevention in the private rented sector, and to transform its services to increase support for private tenants, with support services to both help people move within the sector to avoid homelessness, and to stay in their home where possible.

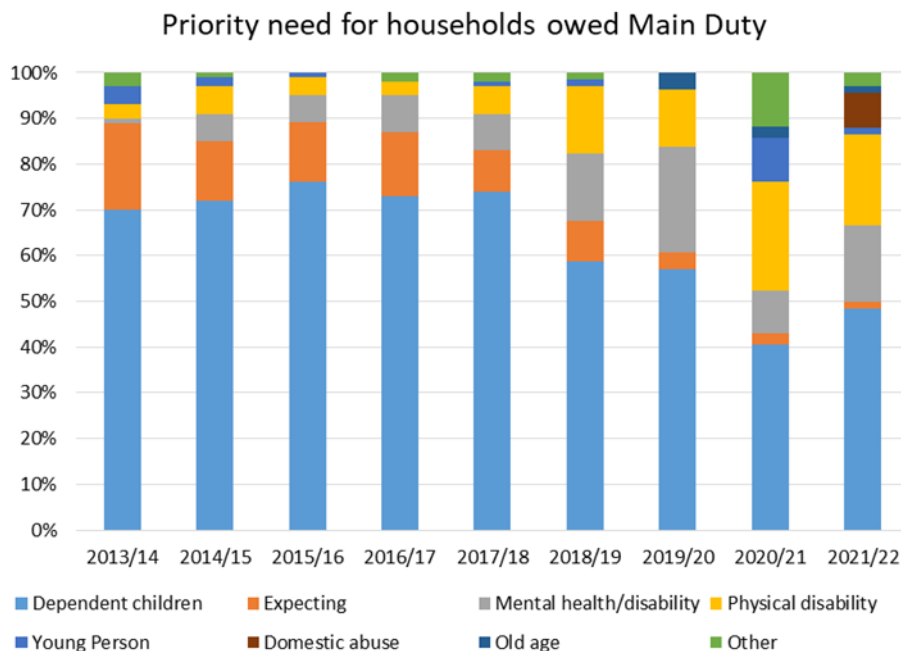
We welcome reform to the private rented sector, such as what is being introduced in the Renters' Reform Bill that will make the sector a more secure housing option for households, in particular by the replacing of 'no fault' evictions (or section 21 evictions) with defined grounds, that has the potential to create a more secure sector. This will mean that landlords will only be able to ask households to leave the accommodation under a limited number of circumstances, such as non-payment of rent, or if the landlord wants to move back into the home, or wishing to sell it. Households will therefore be able to stay in their homes for as long as they want and need, and contribute to the communities they live in. Other measures outlined in the bill include limits on how and when rents can be increased and introducing legally binding standards for private rented accommodation. When introduced, we will work closely with landlords, agents and tenants in the city to support them to introduce the changes that are needed.

One of the biggest changes we have seen since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act is that we are now assisting more single people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. This was one of the intentions with the new legislation. We will therefore work with partners to ensure that there is a coordinated approach to homeless prevention for single people seeking to keep people in their homes or suitable supported accommodation, and to ensure there is a range of accommodation options that single people can move to if homelessness cannot be prevented.



Source: [DLUHC Statistical data set: Live tables on homelessness for relevant periods](#)

A significant proportion of those we owe a **statutory duty** towards have support needs. For those households who are in priority need and where we owe a main homelessness duty, there has been a marked increase in people who have a physical or mental health disability in the last few years. We are committed to working with partner agencies to find the right support for households so that their support needs do not contribute to homelessness.



Source: MHCLG P1E Homelessness returns (2010/11 to 2017/18) and [DLUHC Statistical data set: Live tables on homelessness for relevant periods](#)

As homelessness is caused by so many different factors, and because people are affected by homelessness in so many different ways, our future services will take a holistic view on prevention, including working with partner agencies such as health, probation and social care to ensure those with support needs can get relevant assistance. An important part of this will be to

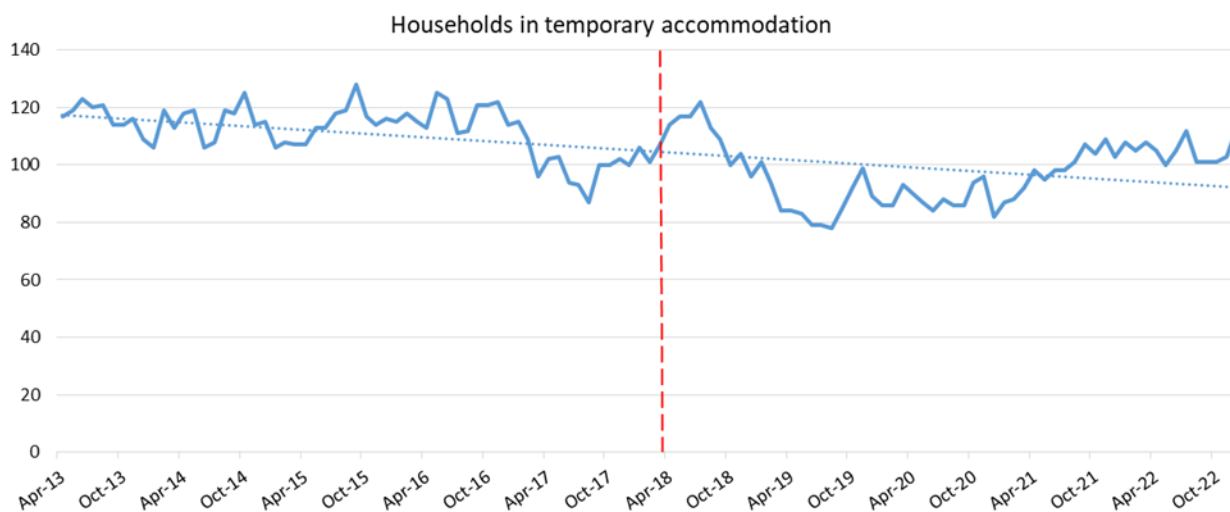
work with partners to ensure that, in line with our priority ‘Great homes for all’, the quality and standard of someone’s home, does not contribute to homelessness in the city.

Financial difficulties, including debt, often driven by high housing costs, are already one of the main issues faced by households we work with. A high level of households we owe a duty towards are in full-time or part-time work. This changed during the pandemic as a direct effect of a sharp increase in unemployment, but we are now starting to see more people in work seeking help again. This is yet another sign of housing unaffordability in Oxford, as people in work are struggling to afford their rent. The cost of living crisis is likely to make the financial situation of many households worse, and we will therefore incorporate support for this in our holistic view on homeless prevention and when working with households to relieve homelessness and when finding alternative homes.

We will improve our services for those who have experienced domestic abuse, through gaining accreditation with the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance. We will also continue to work closely with partners across local charities, County and District Councils to support and deliver refugee resettlement schemes. Responding to increased demand in this area we will review current schemes, developing an enhanced and coordinated response across current and future provision.

## Helping people to get a home quickly

We have seen a gradual reduction in the number of households we accommodate in temporary accommodation over the last few years, which is partially due to the focus we have had on homeless prevention. As we continue to develop and enhance our work on prevention, this will in turn mean less demand on our statutory services such as temporary accommodation.



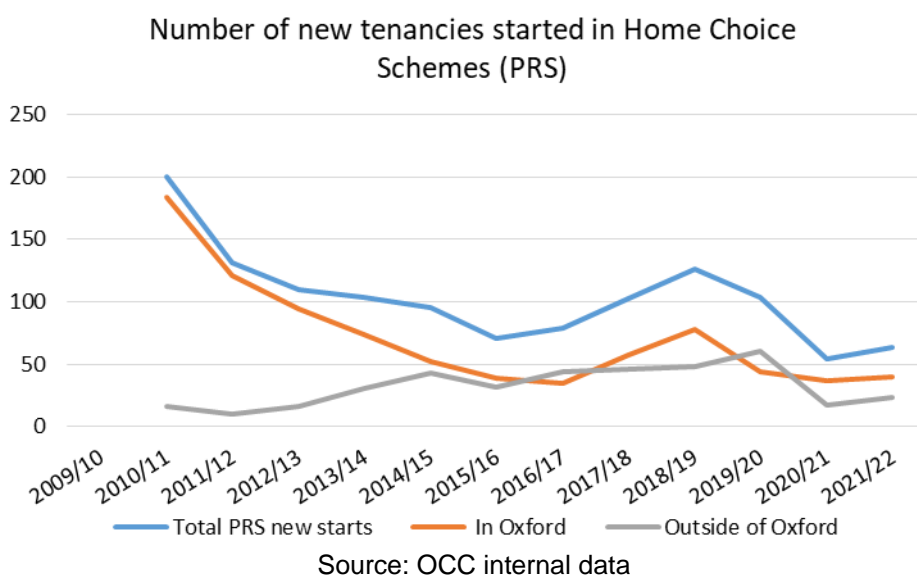
Source and notes: P1E data and OCC internal data collection. Data for the period April 2013 to March 2021 is calculated as per the P1E definition. From April 2021, the number of households in temporary accommodation shows the actual number of households occupying temporary accommodation. The numbers up until March 2021 and the number from April 2021 are therefore not directly comparable. Data from April 2021 does include those who have had a negative decision and where duty has been discharged for example, whilst the P1E definition does not include such households

Although we want to try to prevent people from becoming homeless and having to stay in temporary accommodation wherever possible, this is not always avoidable. Whilst we have seen the number of households in temporary accommodation reduce, people stay in in this

accommodation much longer than they and we want them to. This is linked to the challenges in finding and securing affordable homes that people can move to.

Therefore, a key objective under this strategy is to develop and implement a rapid rehousing model for the council's homelessness services. This will aim to keep temporary accommodation stays as short as possible, reducing the impact of homelessness on people and families. New emphasis within our temporary accommodation will be put on how we prepare and work with tenants to become ready to move into permanent housing and make it a success. This will see us putting less emphasise on people being considered "ready" for a tenancy, and more focus on what support a household would need to make a future tenancy a success.

To enable this rapid rehousing approach we will renew our approach to access to the Private Rented Sector for homeless households. We already rely heavily on this sector when assisting those we owe a duty towards to find alternative accommodation to move to. We have developed different schemes over the years to be able to help people find accommodation in the private rented sector. Our offer includes financing rent in advance and deposits by providing interest free loans, or paying rent directly to the landlord. Over the last 10 years, it has been getting more difficult for us to assist people into the private rented sector as rents are increasing rapidly.



Taking this into account, we recognise that we need to do even more, and develop better prevention tools for those in the sector, as well as to work with landlords in the city to reinvigorate schemes that will be more competitive and continue to allow people to access affordable private rented sector accommodation in the city.

Alongside better access for homeless households into the private sector, we also need to support good access into social housing. We will seek to update our social housing allocations policy and lettings targets, learning from best practice in other authorities in order to make it easier for people to join the housing register, make sure the scheme supports people who are moving on from interim accommodation, and helps the most vulnerable in our society to access accommodation, including former rough sleepers, care leavers, and those moving on from supported accommodation.



## Priority 5 - Ending rough sleeping

### By the end of this strategy period, we are seeking to:

- Have ended the need for anyone to sleep rough in Oxford.
- Ensure that where rough sleeping cannot be prevented, it is brief, rare and non-recurring.
- Establish and embed a new countywide approach to preventing and relieving rough sleeping, with new jointly commissioned arrangements across local government, voluntary sector partners and health and social care in Oxfordshire.
- Work with partners to deliver the right range of preventative services so that the vast majority of people who are facing the need to sleep rough can access support prior to being made homeless.
- Enable a housing-led approach to rough sleeping, rapidly moving people off the street and into a settled home, with more use of flexible support and less use of interim, supported accommodation.
- Improve access to social housing for single households experiencing or at risk of homelessness by changing our approach to how we allocate social housing and by working with housing associations to provide more accommodation.
- Improve access to private rented housing for single adults experiencing or at risk of homelessness.
- Make less use of large, supported, congregate/hostel style and shared accommodation.

### How the Council and partners are going to do this

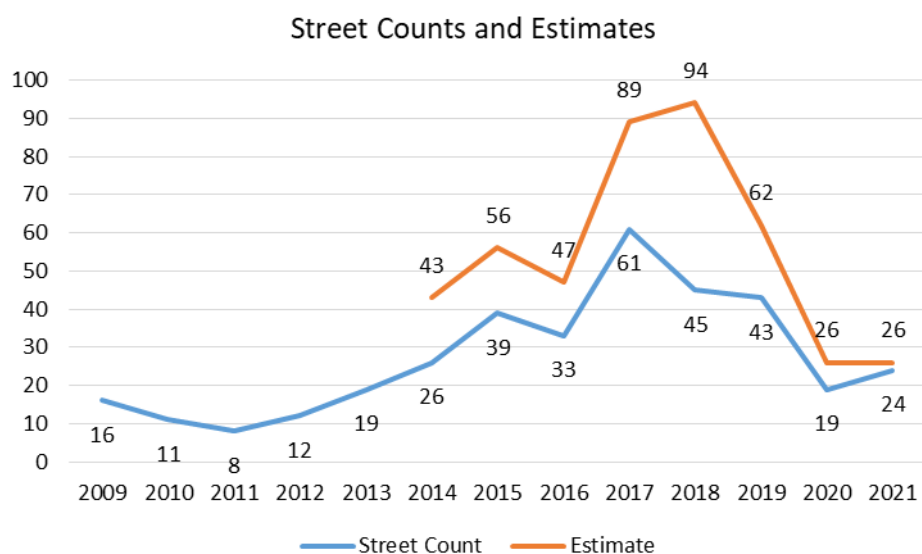
<b>Implement the Countywide Oxfordshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with and support the Oxfordshire Homelessness Alliance and commissioning partners to ensure that service provision and access to accommodation is transformed in line with the countywide strategy, including moving to a housing-led and more person centered approach.</li> <li>• Aligned to the Countywide Strategy, together with partners, review commissioning and contract management of supported services ensuring choice and variety is maximised, both in terms of accommodation and support provision.</li> <li>• Work with our District Council colleagues and Registered Providers to ensure that commitments to the provision of 1 bed-room accommodation is met across the County.</li> </ul>
<b>Maximise funding resourcing and profile</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to work closely with relevant government departments such as <b>Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities</b> to ensure that we have access to future funding opportunities, and have good working relationships so that we can lobby for change if necessary.</li> <li>• Work with commissioners of supported accommodation operating in the city to ensure that as much as possible is provided through registered providers, who are subject to more regulation and impose less costs on the Council through reduced housing benefit subsidy.</li> </ul>
<b>Provide the right service at the right time</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that statutory and non-statutory services in Oxford develop a joint approach to support those experiencing rough sleeping, so people get access to statutory homelessness assistance, <b>Care Act assessments</b> and mental health support.</li> <li>• Continue to deliver services based on the principles of <b>Somewhere Safe to Stay</b> in the City to ensure that people do not have to sleep rough before they are offered assistance.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate access to appropriate health and care services for those who are in need.</li> </ul>
<b>Improve access to social housing and range of accommodation options available to single people and couples</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regularly monitor the number of single homeless people offered social housing as well as the number of single persons who have been excluded from the housing register, to ensure good access and inform service development.</li> <li>Carry out a full review of the Council's Allocations Policy, including the exclusion criteria based on learnings from case reviews and data in order to ensure that single homeless people are not being discriminated against by being excluded from social housing.</li> <li>Work with our District Council partners and Registered Providers to pursue options and solutions for 'hard to let' properties across the County with the view to increasing available stock for single people.</li> <li>Enhance our private rented sector offer to singles and couples, with no or low support needs, who are looking to move on from supported accommodation or rough sleeping.</li> </ul>
<b>Ensure there is sufficient provision of suitable supported accommodation to meet a range of needs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Together with our County and District partners and working towards the goals of the County wide strategy, commission a range of flexible accommodation for singles and couples.</li> <li>Work with commissioning partners and providers to commission supported accommodation that is distributed and dispersed appropriately throughout the city, to ensure that persons living in supported accommodation feel supported and safe where they live.</li> <li>Work with services we commission to move to a strength-based approach to delivering housing support services where a person's individual needs are at the centre of the service provision.</li> <li>Support people experiencing rough sleeping in Oxford who do not have recourse to public funds to find appropriate solutions.</li> </ul>
<b>Introduce a housing-led approach to offer of accommodation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase our offer of Housing First accommodation and provide the support individuals may need in order to sustain the accommodation.</li> <li>Work with the Alliance to continue to transform our approach to the provision of accommodation to single homeless persons, including reviewing our current accommodation offers as we move to a housing-led model and helping facilitate changes agreed as part of this review.</li> </ul>

## Rough Sleeping in Oxford

Oxford City Council and our partners have been working to tackle high levels of rough sleeping and support people off the street into a suitable accommodation. In 2018, the **Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government** (now Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities) published a Rough Sleeping Strategy and delivery plan, which set out plans to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and end it by 2027. This followed a period of almost 10 years, when rough sleeping numbers across the country increased sharply. The government launched a new Rough Sleeping Strategy in early September 2022 – '[Ending Rough Sleeping for Good](#)'. The new strategy builds on the achievements under the previous one and is backed by further funding and investment for the next three years. The strategy recognises that rough sleeping is a complex issue, and driven by many different factors, and the approach that has been developed under the new strategy is therefore a whole system approach.

The level of rough sleeping in Oxford increased from 8 in 2011 to 61 in 2017 and was a result of a range of austerity measures put in place by government that affected local authorities from 2010 onwards. In Oxford and Oxfordshire, this meant funding cuts for non-statutory services historically funded by the County Council, such as supported accommodation for rough sleepers and single homeless persons.



Source: [Rough Sleeping snapshot in England as published by DLUHC](#)

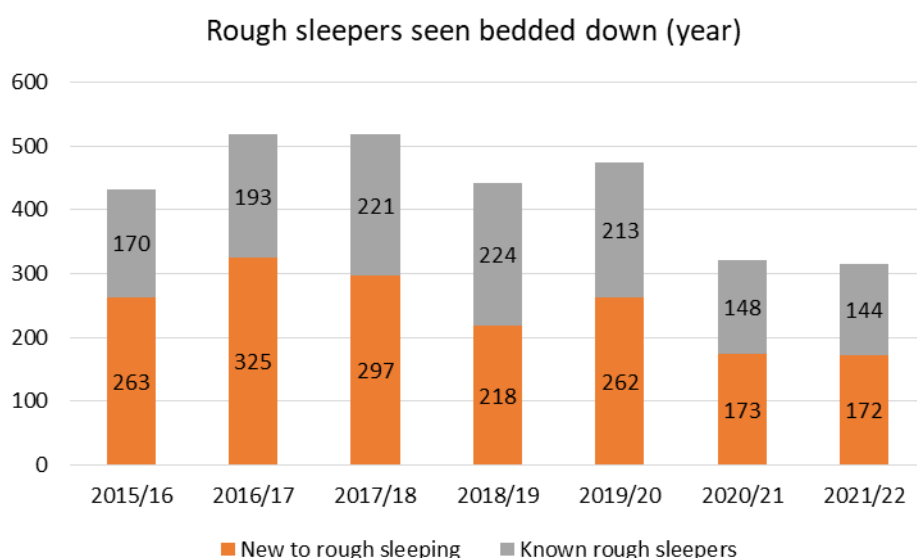
Along with the national rough sleeping strategy in 2018, the government also started a large funding programme which marked a change and new opportunity to bring people off the street. Since 2018, we as a Council have successfully bid for over £5m in grant funding for services, which has funded additional service for single persons and those who are rough sleeping. As a result, we have seen the number of rough sleepers reduce. At the start of the pandemic, the government launched the 'Everyone In' mandate, where all local authorities were asked to provide accommodation for all rough sleepers and those accommodated in communal areas to allow people to live in self-contained accommodation during the pandemic. Funding for this was provided to local authorities. Since the end of the 'Everyone In' mandate, rough sleeping numbers have started to increase again across the country, including in Oxford.

The majority of those rough sleeping in Oxford are male. Around 33% are aged between 35 and 44. A large proportion of rough sleepers have support needs, often multiple support needs, which makes them more vulnerable and this can create barriers to securing accommodation that is suitable, both in terms of the accommodation itself, and also the kind and level of support people may need. As a result of this, we see people who continuously fall out of, or leave the accommodation they have been assisted to move to and instead return to the street. We are also continuing to see people ending up on the street for the very first time, with about half of those seen rough sleeping every year, being new rough sleepers.

There are regularly people experiencing rough sleeping in Oxford who do not have recourse to public funds. This means that due to their immigration status, they cannot receive benefits such as **Universal Credit** or Housing Benefit, and in most cases they cannot access social housing or supported accommodation. We as a local authority are therefore highly restricted in what we can do to support people who do not have recourse to public funds – for example, we cannot commission accommodation services for persons with no recourse to public funds - and this means that the options for moving off the streets and into accommodation are very limited. However, our commissioned services work with specialist immigration support agencies to support

people to regularise their immigration status, in order for them to be able to access public funds. Support is also available to return to a home country if individuals wish to do so. At present, there are also 15 units of accommodation, funded by the **Oxfordshire Homeless Movement**, that people who are rough sleeping and have no recourse to public funds can access.

Despite the restrictions on what we can do to support people who do not have recourse to public funds, as a council, we are highly committed to the city being a welcoming place to refugees, asylum seekers and migrants. As such, the Council have voted for, and have renewed our pledge to become an authority of sanctuary, seeking accreditation from 'City of Sanctuary' to become a welcoming organisation across all service areas for people seeking sanctuary in our city.



Source: Ox THINK

## Preventing rough sleeping

To end the need for people to sleep rough in Oxford, we need to prevent people from ending up on the street in the first place. We need to have enough accommodation available to assist people off the streets, it needs to be the right accommodation, and there needs to be services in place to help people stay in their accommodation. Developing a range of different provision is a central focus going forward, and a central theme of Oxfordshire's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy that was implemented in 2021. This strategy will drive and inform much of the City Council's work.

The Countywide strategy is the result of the County, City and Districts Councils, as well as health partners, working together to prevent and tackle rough sleeping. It focusses on collaboration and working across geographical and professional borders to end rough sleeping in the County and to target resources collectively to meet the needs and aspirations of people affected by homelessness and rough sleeping. The strategy will underpin a transformation in the way housing, social care and health services work together and with people in need of housing and support.

## New commissioning and new services

One of the biggest shifts in service provision for rough sleepers and single homeless people brought about by the countywide strategy, is the commissioning of a group of different organisations that have come together to form the Oxfordshire Homelessness Alliance. The Alliance of organisations are operating as one service that has shared responsibility. This will include an assessment and triage centre in the city that will function as a multi-disciplinary hub and 'Somewhere Safe to Stay' provision.

The Alliance will implement a significant transformation of services during the life of this strategy, with more personalised services linked to what individuals need in order to move from the street, and adopting a model that supports greater amounts of Housing First accommodation, a model where people move to a permanent home but with the right flexible support to make it a success.

Whilst a large proportion of accommodation and other services for single homeless people and rough sleepers are commissioned together with partners, we also have a large commissioning programme that funds additional services that are needed in Oxford to meet the needs in the city. The City has a large commissioning programme for such services, and funds for this have increased over the last three years, largely due to successfully securing funds from government schemes. Continuous funding from the government and other sources is key for us to be able to continue to deliver and develop the range of services that are needed to end rough sleeping in the city.

In addition to working with others to commission and develop more supported accommodation options, we also need to work together to ensure that single persons can move into private rented or social rented accommodation. The Crisis commissioned housing-led feasibility study for Oxfordshire considered the allocations schemes in place for Districts and the City council. One example the report references, is the number of allocations that are made to those who are either currently rough sleeping or leaving supported accommodation (such as hostel accommodation). Only 4.5% of allocations go to this group in Oxford, while other local authorities that promote access for this group achieve much higher numbers, such as Hull who allocates 21.4%, or Coventry at 18.3%. We have carefully considered these findings which will inform our future approach to allocations for social housing under this strategy.

## Governance and delivery of the strategy

Our strategy covers a period of 5 years. It is hard to predict what is going to happen in this time, and undoubtedly, there will be changes to legislation, regulation and wider societal and economic shifts that will impact on our communities and what we can and need to do as a Council.

Whilst there will undoubtedly be changes to the context within which we operate and need to deliver this strategy, the vision and priorities set out in this document we do not anticipate will have to change significantly as they are long term and sufficiently flexible so we can adjust them to ever changing circumstance. We will remain committed to these throughout the strategy period.

To take into account a change in context, challenges and opportunities, and our need to respond and adapt to these, the strategy action plan will be reviewed and updated annually. This will ensure the strategy and its delivery is able to adapt and change depending on the circumstances the city finds itself in, remains relevant and plays a key role in driving work around housing, homelessness and rough sleeping across the organisation.

Data and evidence underpins our strategy and action plan, and it will continue to do so. To help inform the annual review of the strategy, we will monitor key sets of data throughout the strategy period.

To make sure that the delivery of our strategy is monitored and scrutinised, and that work is progressing as it should, the following processes are being put in place for regular governance and monitoring:

- The Senior Management Team of Housing Services is the accountable body for the delivery of the strategy.
- With much of the strategy sitting wider than Housing Services, the monitoring of progress from the Senior Management Team in Housing Services will also be alongside 6 monthly meetings with other key parts of the Council and Oxford Direct Services delivering aspects of the strategy, such as Regulatory Services and Planning Services, to ensure progress is made.
- Due to the overlap and alignment of commitments and actions in this strategy in relation to the delivery of affordable homes, the Housing Supply Board, as the already main established accountable body for supply, will continue to own the monitoring and governance of actions in relation to the delivery of affordable homes.
- Quarterly reporting will also be made to the Council's Cabinet Member for Housing, as well as the Communities and People Management Team. As such, these bodies will hold the Senior Management Team of Housing Services to account for the delivery of the strategy.
- Progress against all actions in the strategy action plan will be updated on a quarterly basis and cover progress against year 1 (2023/24) actions and include wider qualitative commentary.

As mentioned above, an important part in allowing the strategy adapt to changing circumstances is annual review and refresh of the strategy action plan. The review will be carried out using a range of relevant information including:

- Quarterly progress updates prepared as part of the general governance and monitoring structure (detailed above).
- Analysis of key data sets such as homelessness data, the housing market, housing supply figures and more
- Analysis of Corporate and Service KPIs that are directly related to this strategy.

A full monitoring and update report, and recommendations for revisions to the action plan, will be presented annually to the Council's Cabinet for approval. The annual report presented to Cabinet,

will also be available to the Council's Scrutiny Committee, and sub committees, to consider and provide feedback, in line with the Council's constitution.

Following guidance and approval of the changes made to the action plan, it will be implemented and published at the start of each financial year throughout the duration of this strategy.



## Glossary

This glossary is intended to help readers of this strategy get a good understanding of some of the terms used. It is not intended to give the precise legal definition of terms or words used.

**Affordable housing** – housing that is available to households who would otherwise not house themselves, for example because they would struggle to afford the cost of housing in the open market (to buy or to rent). Affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. There are different types of affordable housing:

- **Social rented housing** is owned by local authorities and private registered providers, for which guideline target rents are determined through a national rent regime. Rent levels are generally set much lower than those charged on the open market.
- **Affordable rented housing** is owned by local authorities and private registered providers of social housing and let to households who are eligible for social rented housing. **Affordable Rent** is subject to rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80% of the local market rent (including service charges, where applicable).
- **Shared Ownership** is where a share of a dwelling is sold (between 25% and 75%) and the buyer pays rent on the remaining share.

**Allocations Policy and Allocations Scheme** – the Allocation Scheme is the policy the Council uses to assess housing need and prioritise customers on the Housing Register for offers of social housing in Oxford. Every local housing authority must have an allocation scheme in place that determines housing priorities, as well as a procedure to be followed when allocating social housing.

**Asset Management Strategy** – for a local authority, an asset management strategy sets out how the authority will manage and invest in its property portfolio.

**Average (also 'Mean' in mathematical terms)** - the result you get by adding two or more amounts together and then dividing the total by the number of amounts i.e. the average of three numbers 9, 12 and 21 is 14 ( $9+12+21 = 42$ , divide by 3 = 14).

**Carbon impact** – the effect on the environment that carbon emissions have.

**Care Act Assessment** – an assessment carried out by a local authority that determines what kind of care needs a person has. The outcome of the assessment may then help determine what support can and should be put in place for the person in question.

**Care Leaver** - a person aged 25 or under, who has been looked after by a local authority for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14; and who was looked after by the local authority at school-leaving age or after that date.

**City of Sanctuary** – A nationwide movement that seeks to make the UK welcoming for people forced to flee their homes in other parts of the world. [City of Sanctuary UK](#) coordinate, supports and grows the network, and work across the country and across every sector to encourage inclusivity, solidarity and compassion for people from a forced displacement background.

**Climate change** – refers to long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns across our planet. Human activities has been a main driver of climate change over the last 200 years, primarily due to the burning of fossil fuels such as coal, oil and gas. This has caused



temperatures to increase – which is also referred to as global warming – which in turn has resulted in effects such as wildfire, flooding and droughts.

**Climate emergency** – A climate emergency is defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as ‘a situation in which urgent action is required to reduce or halt climate change and avoid potentially irreversible environmental damage resulting from it’.

**Community-led housing** – housing that is designed and managed by local people and built to meet the needs of the community – not for private profit. Community-led housing is a way for local communities to provide their own decent and affordable homes. It is often designed to help certain groups – for example young people, older people, or those in need of affordable family homes.

**Complex needs** – when someone has multiple support needs, and in the context of this strategy, when these needs each presents a challenge in accessing mainstream accommodation.

**Congregate style accommodation** – a type of housing, like hostel style accommodation, in which individuals have a private bedroom, but shares a dining room, recreational room or other facilities such as a kitchen, with other residents.

**Decarbonisation** – refers to all measures which reduces the amount of carbon that an organisation/business/sector/entity uses. For example, it is normally applied to the electricity grid’s move to more renewable energy which reduces the amount of carbon each unit of electricity contains.

**Decent Homes Standard** – A national standard set by government that determines a minimum standard that social homes (such as council and housing association homes) need to meet. It ensures housing is of a certain quality.

**Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC)** – from winter 2018, this is the name of the government department that is responsible for housing, communities, local government in England and the levelling up policy. DLUHC was formerly the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

**Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA)** – a national partnership between three agencies with the mission to improve the housing sector’s response to domestic abuse, through the introduction and adoption of an established set of standards. The agencies (Standing Together, Peabody and Gentoo) have established forty standards across eight priority areas, which are underpinned by a set of values and principles supported by an accreditation framework.

**Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMO)** – a legal device that aims to assist local authorities to bring unoccupied properties back into use. It means that if the local authority is granted an EDMO, the local authority would take over the management of the property. This tool is seen as one of a last resort to bring a property back into residential use.

**Energy Quality Assurance service** - specialist independent checking, training and testing throughout the full design and construction phases of development.

**Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)** – a tool that gives a property an energy efficiency rating. The rating goes from A (which is the most energy efficient) to G (which is the least energy efficient).

**Fabric first** - creating an airtight, insulated building that reduces the amount of energy required to heat the home.

**First Homes** – a specific kind of discounted market sale housing that meets the definition of affordable housing for planning purposes.

**Future Oxfordshire Partnership** – Previously known as the Oxfordshire Growth Board, the Future Oxfordshire Partnership is a joint committee of the six councils of Oxfordshire together with strategic partners working together to deliver a better future for the county. The partnership deliver the aims of the Strategic Vision, which includes: coordinating local efforts to manage economic, housing and infrastructure development; supports the development of local planning policy that meets the government's aim of net zero carbon by 2050. The cooperation has helped Oxfordshire secure over £500 of additional investment, such as through the City Deal, Housing and Growth Deal, Housing Infrastructure Fund and the Oxfordshire Rail Connectivity Study.

**Heat pumps** - A heat pump captures heat from outside and moves it into your home. It uses electricity to do this, but the heat energy delivered to your home is much more than the electrical energy used to power the system.

**Home Improvement Agency (HIA)** - provides a dedicated service to help older, disabled and vulnerable residents within Oxford City to live safely and independently in their own home by undertaking repairs, maintenance and adaptations.

**Homes England** – this is the Government's housing, land and regeneration agency for England. Up until 2018, Homes England was known as the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA).

**Homes for Ukraine** - Government approved grant funded scheme to allow Ukrainian refugees with no family links to the UK to be sponsored by individuals or organisations who can offer them a home.

**Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)** - A house in multiple occupation is a property rented by three or more unrelated people in two or more separate households who share facilities like the bathroom and kitchen (November 2017).

**Housing-led** - A housing-led approach means that homelessness is resolved by offering people their own, secure home as quickly as possible. A housing-led approach is key to successful homelessness prevention as support and advice is provided so that people can stay in, and maintain, their own home for the long term.

**Housing Association (HA)** – a private, non-profit organisation that provides low cost housing. Housing Associates offer similar types of accommodation as local authorities, and in Oxford for example, many of the housing association properties are allocated to households via the Housing Register.

**Housing First** - Housing First is an approach that offers permanent, affordable housing as quickly as possible for individuals and families experiencing homelessness, and then provides the supportive services and connections to the community-based support people need to keep their housing and avoid returning to homelessness.

**Housing Revenue Account (HRA)** - a ring-fenced account for budgets relating to council landlord services. The remainder of council budgets are referred to as the General Fund.

**Housing Register** – also known as the Oxford Register for Affordable Housing (ORAH). This consists of three separate housing lists; the General Register List, the Transfer List and the Homeless List. Instead of the Council and Registered Providers of social housing keeping their own different housing registers, applicants can join a single housing list within Oxford City (ORAH). Social housing in the city owned by the Council and its partner Registered Providers, is let through the Oxford Register for Affordable Housing. It is administered by Oxford City Council and managed by Oxford City Council and its partners.

**Index of Multiple Deprivation** – A measure that is used within the UK to measure relative deprivation of a small area. It measures seven different components –income, employment, education, skills and training, health and disability, crime, barriers to housing and services, and the living environment. The measure is often used to describe the relative deprivation of an area by stating if that area falls within the most deprived 10, 20 or 30 per cent in the country.

**Lived Experience Advisory Forum (LEAF)** - A group comprising people who have experienced homelessness and/or related issues or have experience of accessing homeless services. In Oxfordshire, this forum plays an important role in ensuring the voice of people with lived experience is included in commissioning, policy change and decision making.

**Local Housing Allowance (LHA)** - Local housing allowance is a way of working out how much housing benefit a person can get to help pay their rent to a private landlord. It is based on the lower end of market rent. The rates are set for Broad Rental Market areas – the Oxford Broad Rental market area includes Charlbury down to Didcot and Witney to Wallingford. The LHA rate will depend on how many bedrooms are needed to accommodate the household, not the amount of the rent.

**Local Plan** - Local plans set out the vision and framework for future development of the local area and all local authorities have one. They address needs and opportunities in relation to the economy, housing, community facilities and infrastructure as well as provide a basis for safeguarding the environment, adapting to climate change and securing good design.

**Median** - The middle number within a range of numbers set out in numerical order i.e. 11, 21, 39, 40, 59 the median would be 39. Using a 'median' figure helps to reduce the impact of extremely high or low numbers when representing a value. It is the middle value.

**Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES)** – this national standard was introduced in 2015 and sets a minimum energy efficiency level for domestic private rented accommodation.

**Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)** – up until winter 2018, this was the name of the department responsible for housing, communities and local government. It was replaced by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) in winter 2018.

**National Standards** – the national standards that are referred to on page 24 and with respect of what OX Place have here are the Building Regulations Part L which lay out the minimum standard for all new homes to meet for energy, carbon and power. New standards came into being in June 2022 which is why OX Place has to work to two different standards.

**Net zero carbon** – also referred to as ‘carbon neutrality’, when the amount of greenhouse gases produced/emitted is no more than the amount of greenhouse gases produced/emitted that are eliminated. For example, a building would reach net zero carbon when the amount of greenhouse gas it produces is no more than the amount taken away by various means, such as using renewable energy sources (e.g. wind, sun) to generate electricity.

**Off-site manufacture (OSM)** – type of build where some or all of the work takes place off site – e.g. parts of a house are constructed in a factory and then transported to the site where the house is to be located, rather than the house being built fully at the location.

**Off-site Manufacture (OSM) Procurement Framework** – A framework that sets out the procurement conditions for building/construction companies that work with OX Place to develop homes. OX Place set this up as a sustainable framework that requires suppliers to be able to meet low carbon build standards including Passive House and Net Zero Carbon. (Procurement = buying of goods or services)

**One Gateway** – a simplified or common entry point to homelessness prevention services, allowing triage to be completed and tailored support provided for anyone ahead of the 56 days statutory duty including the provision of advice.

**Oxford Direct Services (ODS)** – a company owned by Oxford City Council that provides services on behalf of the council (such as property repairs and refuse collection).

**Oxfordshire Homelessness Alliance** - A group of six organisations who have been commissioned to deliver homelessness services across Oxfordshire (A2 Dominion, Aspire, Connections Support, Elmore, Homeless Oxfordshire, St Mungo's).

**Oxfordshire Homelessness Movement** – Partnership of organisations across Oxfordshire working together to ensure that nobody has to sleep rough on the streets of Oxfordshire and to help those experiencing homelessness.

**Passive house** - a highly energy efficient building that require little energy to heat in order to have comfortable indoor temperatures. Passive House standards set out the requirements that a building needs to meet for a certain quality, comfort and energy efficiency.

**Performance gap** - a disparity between the energy consumption predicted in the design stage of a building and the energy use in actual operation.

**Pre-eviction protocol** – A process for managing situations which may lead to an eviction. This would involve a number of different organisations trying to resolve the situation and prevent a person or a household from being evicted from their accommodation and therefore become homeless.

**Rapid rehousing** – assist someone to move to more secure and permanent accommodation as soon as possible if they are facing homelessness or live in temporary accommodation, and the provision of support for those who may need it in order to sustain the accommodation longer term.

**Registered Provider (RP)** – A registered provider is an organisation/company/entity that owns social housing and that is included on a statutory register held by the **Regulator of Social Housing** (see below). Registered providers include local authority landlords and private registered providers such as housing associations. Also see Housing Association.

**Regulated operational energy** – Regulated energy is building energy consumption resulting from the specification of controlled, fixed building services and fittings, including space heating and cooling, hot water, ventilation, fans, pumps and lighting. Such energy uses are inherent in the design of a building.

**Regulator of Social Housing (RSH)** - a non-departmental public body that regulates registered providers of social housing. This includes economic regulation focusing on governance, financial viability and value for money. The regulator also set consumer standards and may take action if these standards are breached.

**Resettlement scheme** - Government approved grant funded scheme to assist refugee families to resettle within a district across England.

**Section 21 notice** – a section of the Housing Act 1988 which means that a landlord has to give notice to start the process to regain possession of the property. Under this section, a notice can be given to repossess properties without landlords having to establish fault on part of the tenant. Section 21 notices are therefore sometimes also called no-fault evictions. In 2019, the government carried out a national consultation proposing the abolition of section 21 of the Housing Act 1988, in order to provide more security for people renting their home in the private rented sector.

**Selective licensing scheme** - The term comes from the Housing Act 2004, which allows the council to require any private rented homes within a specified area to have a licence (unless it falls under mandatory or additional HMO licensing). The Housing Act 2004 allows the council to select all, or parts, of their area subject to these licensing controls. It refers to the “selection” of the area as opposed to the people who have to apply or properties covered.

**Solar photovoltaic (PV) panels** – solar panels use sunlight as a source of energy to generate electricity. They can be used to create electricity for use in the home or communal areas of flats, and can be placed on roofs of houses and other buildings for example.

**Somewhere Safe to Stay** –Short term accommodation for people who have recently started rough sleeping, or provided in order to prevent the need to rough sleep. Support is provided intensively to find a solution to the individual's homelessness.

**Statutory (homelessness) duty** – When a local authority has a statutory duty, this means that they have an obligation under legislation to do something. Since the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 was introduced in England in April 2018, local housing authorities (councils) have a statutory duty to work with a household to prevent homelessness where the household is threatened with homelessness within 56 days (this is called Prevention Duty), and to work with households to find suitable accommodation where the household is already homeless (this is called Relief Duty). If a household is still homeless when the relief duty comes to an end, the council must decide if a ‘main homelessness duty’ is owed, that is if they fall within a specified priority need group and is not intentionally homeless. When a household is assessed as being owed a main duty, the council must provide accommodation. These duties only apply if a household is eligible. This depends on their immigration status. Under the Homelessness Reduction Act, local authorities also have a duty to provide advice and assistance to anyone approaching the local authority for help and where a prevention or relief duty is not owed.

**Stock condition survey** – a detailed internal and external inspection of a house that helps the council plan maintenance and improvement work that may need to be carried out.



**Temporary accommodation** - Under certain circumstances the Council has a legal obligation to provide temporary accommodation to homeless applicants, if required.

**Tenancy Strategy** - a plan that sets out how the social housing in an area is let and how long tenancies should be granted for.

**Tenure type** – refers to the way in which someone is occupying a property, for example as an owner of the property, renting a property, or owning part of a property (e.g. shared ownership)

**Transactional survey** – a tool that collects feedback from people that interact and receive a service from an organisation. A transactional survey captures feedback shortly after a specific interaction. Such surveys can give a very good insight into how satisfied people are with the services, guidance and advice they receive.

**Universal Credit (UC)** - A benefit which brings together a range of benefits into one payment. It was first introduced in 2013 and has since then been gradually introduced. Universal Credit replaces a range of benefits such as Jobseekers Allowance, Housing Benefit, Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, Employment and Support Allowance, and Income Support

**Upstream homelessness prevention**– refers to preventing a household from becoming threatened with homelessness before a local authority has to accept a Prevention Duty (where a household is threatened with homelessness within 56 days).

**White paper** – a policy document produced by the Government that sets out their proposals for future legislation.

**Youth Ambition** – an incentive run by Oxford City Council that engages with young people in positive youth work activities to help them to broaden their knowledge, skills and capabilities.

**Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership** - A partnership that brings together universities, hospitals, councils, large businesses, and communities to support the city in its journey to net zero carbon emissions. Those who have signed the Zero Carbon Oxford charter have committed to working together to create a net zero Oxford by 2040 and to collaborate to build a prosperous, sustainable city in which we all can share.

## Appendix A

# Oxford City Council's Homelessness Review and Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Evidence Base 2021

(Updated January 2023)

# Contents

<b>1.0 - Introduction</b>	5
<b>2.0 - About Oxford and its housing market</b>	7
2.1 - Population	7
2.2 - The economy and its impacts on housing demand	9
2.3 - Deprivation	12
2.4 - The Oxford Housing Market	14
2.5 - Supply of affordable housing	15
2.6 - Affordability of housing	16
2.7 - Empty dwellings	18
2.8 - HMOs, the condition of the Private Rented Sector, and licensing	19
2.9 - The housing market for students	20
<b>3.0 - What have we achieved so far? The current Housing &amp; Homelessness Strategy</b>	21
3.1 - Summary of achievements	21
3.2 - Challenges for the current strategy	25
3.3 - Strategy delivery and monitoring	25
<b>4.0 - Local and National Policy Context</b>	26
4.1 - The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017	26
4.2 - National Rough Sleeping Strategy	27
4.3 - Oxfordshire's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2021-26	28
4.4 - Crisis Housing-led Feasibility Study for Oxfordshire	29
4.5 - Private Rented Sector White Paper	29
4.6 - Housing Revenue Account Changes	30
4.7 - Use of receipts from Right to Buy sales	30
4.8 - Social Housing White Paper	31
4.9 - Planning Policy changes	31
4.10 - The Covid-19 Pandemic and the cost of living crisis	32
4.11 - Domestic Abuse Act 2021	34
4.12 Health and Housing	34
<b>5.0 - What is the extent of the homelessness problem in Oxford?</b>	36
5.1 - Households at risk of becoming homeless and homeless households that we owe a duty to support	37
5.2 - Prevention and Relief Duties	39
5.3 - Main Homelessness Duty	41
5.4 - Temporary Accommodation	44



5.5 - Households included on the register for social housing.....	46
5.6 - Rough Sleeping .....	47
5.7 - Hidden Homelessness .....	51
5.8 - Covid-19 impact on the extent of homelessness in the City .....	52
5.9 - In summary – The overall picture of homelessness levels in Oxford .....	54
<b>6.0 - Who are becoming homeless in Oxford? .....</b>	<b>56</b>
6.1 - Household Type and Gender .....	56
6.2 - Ethnicity .....	59
6.3 - Age .....	60
6.4 - Economic status .....	62
6.5 - Support Needs .....	63
<b>7.0 – What is causing homelessness in Oxford?.....</b>	<b>68</b>
7.1 - What is causing statutory homelessness? .....	69
7.2 - What is causing rough sleeping? .....	75
7.3 - What is driving demand for Discretionary Housing Payments? .....	76
7.4 - Summary of the causes of homelessness .....	78
<b>8.0 - What are the Council and other organisations doing to tackle homelessness? .....</b>	<b>79</b>
8.1 - Statutory support and assistance to prevent and relieve homelessness available in Oxford .....	80
8.2 - Homelessness prevention in Oxford .....	84
8.3 - The provision of Temporary Accommodation .....	88
8.4 - Support to access accommodation in the Private Rented Sector .....	90
8.5 - The allocation of social housing .....	93
8.6 - Supported accommodation for homeless people and those vulnerably housed.....	97
8.7 - Supported Accommodation Services .....	97
8.8 - Mental Health Pathway .....	99
8.9 - Young people's supported accommodation service (YPSAS) .....	100
8.10 - Other supported accommodation .....	101
8.11 - Other support available in the City.....	102
<b>9.0 - What are we doing to build more new homes? .....</b>	<b>103</b>
9.1 - New builds and acquisitions .....	104
9.2 – OX Place .....	105
9.3 - Oxford City Council's Housing Revenue Account.....	106
9.4 - Registered Providers .....	106
9.5 - Oxfordshire Growth Board .....	107
9.6 - Oxford Local Plan 2036.....	107

9.7 - Oxford's unmet housing need .....	108
9.8 - Community-led housing.....	108
9.9 - Employer-linked affordable housing.....	109
9.10 - Regeneration.....	110
9.11 - Housing for the elderly .....	110
9.12 - Accessible and adaptable homes.....	111
9.13 - Property sizes.....	111
<b>10.0 - Oxford City Council as a social landlord .....</b>	<b>113</b>
10.1 - What the Social Housing White paper means for Oxford City Council.....	117
10.2 - The Council as a social landlord through the pandemic.....	117
<b>11.0 - Reducing carbon emissions and improving energy efficiency in the housing stock.....</b>	<b>119</b>
11.1 - Decarbonisation of the Council housing stock .....	120
11.2 - Decarbonisation of the Council's housing development.....	122
11.3 - Decarbonisation of the wider Oxford housing market .....	123
<b>12.0 - How are housing and homelessness services funded? .....</b>	<b>124</b>
12.1 - Overview of resources for housing, homelessness and rough sleeping in the city .....	124
12.2 - Funding for homelessness and rough sleeping.....	124
12.3 - Funding for housing and affordable development .....	126
<b>13.0 – Conclusion, our vision and priorities .....</b>	<b>128</b>

## 1.0 - Introduction

Oxford City Council has long prioritised the challenge of delivering good quality, affordable housing for its residents, and combating homelessness, and over recent years has delivered significant progress. As we enter a new period of recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic and its economic consequences we need to update and refresh our strategic approach, refocusing what needs to happen to tackle the housing and homelessness issues in the city, which is crucial to delivering the City Council's wider ambition for the city.

Local authorities are required under the Homelessness Act 2002 to carry out a review of homelessness in their area every 5 years, to develop and publish a homelessness strategy based on the review, and to consult with other local statutory and voluntary organisations.

The National Rough Sleeping Strategy launched in August 2018 also requires all local authorities to rename and incorporate the prevention and tackling of rough sleeping into their homelessness strategies.

This document marks the first steps in our development of a new strategy for Oxford which will cover the 5 year period of 2023-2028. It encompasses the homelessness review for Oxford City Council, and an evidence base for the wider housing and homelessness strategy. The review has been carried out in accordance with the relevant Act, accompanying Code of Guidance and Rough Sleeping Strategy. Whilst there is no legal obligation on local authorities to have a Housing Strategy or to carry out a review of housing, we have incorporated key elements of data and other information in relation to housing in this document. This is because our strategy incorporates housing, as well as homelessness and rough sleeping and the relationship between 'housing' and homelessness and rough sleeping is inseparable.

Together, this combined document provides the full findings that will underpin and inform the development of the Council's strategic response to prevent all forms of homelessness and tackle the housing challenges the city faces. The next step after publication of this document will be to conduct a consultation, covering the document, and the vision and priorities we have for the new strategy.

This strategic development process and the strategy it will produce, sits alongside a number of interconnected strategies and policies. This wider picture is crucial as our ambition for housing and homelessness will be impossible to meet without this wider work, and only together can the united vision the City Council has for Oxford be met.



## 2.0 - About Oxford and its housing market

### Key Findings – Oxford and its housing market.

- Oxford's population profile differs significantly from the English average, both being younger and more diverse. Its population is difficult to project for future years, but a further increase seems likely, with core modelling forecasts suggesting anything from - 3.5% to +10.4% over the coming years.
- Oxford has a large private rented sector, 28% at the 2011 census, and as much as 49.3% on current modelling, making it proportionally one of the biggest in the country.
- The median house price in Oxford increased by 153% from 2002 to 2021. Median earnings for full-time employees in Oxford increased by 76% in the same period.
- The combination of wealth disparity, a strong labour market, and an undersupply of housing (in particular affordable housing) has resulted in a decade of increasing unaffordability in the housing market.
- Until the Census 2021 complete data sets are released, we are in some instances relying on Census 2011 data. However, as part of the ongoing monitoring of the strategy when implemented, key data sets will also be monitored, and this process will take into account any updates to data sources including Census 2021.

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The Oxford context is key to understanding what drives the key features of housing and homelessness in the city. Only by understanding what is happening with the city's population, economy, labour market, housing market, etc. can we really understand the challenges we face, and possible solutions we have.

## 2.1 - Population

According to the Census 2021 Oxford's population was 162,040 on Census Day 21 March 2021 and the number of households was 55,238. ([2021 Census Profile for areas in England and Wales - Nomis \(nomisweb.co.uk\)](https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2021/2021-census-profile-for-areas-in-england-and-wales)) This is an increase to of 6.7% to the population size of Oxford between 2011 and 2021. The coronavirus pandemic may have affected some people's choice of usual residence on Census Day, for example, students and in some urban areas. Population, and forward projections of population change, provide useful context and indication of patterns of likely housing demand in future years. However there is far from a clear consensus on population projections for Oxford in the next 10 years.

### Office of National Statistics (ONS)

The latest [ONS mid-year population estimate is for 2021](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/articles/2021-mid-year-population-estimate-is-for-2021) and estimates Oxford's population as 160,021 as at 30 June 2021, a decrease of over 2,000 from Census Day. Population estimates from the latest census are updated each year to produce mid-year population estimates, taking into account births, deaths, and internal and international migration.

ONS uses past trends to estimate future population, though the latest population projections are based on the 2018 mid-year estimate. The 2018 mid-year population estimate for Oxford was 154,300. Oxford's population was expected to decline by 3.4% during the period 2018 to 2030, with the population in 2030 expected to be 149,000. ([ONS 2018-based subnational principal population projections for local authorities and higher administrative areas in England](#)). In 2018 the ONS published revised population estimates for the period 2012-2016, where the population for Oxford in 2016 was revised from 161,300 to 155,300. It should be noted that the quality of population estimates declines as we move further away from the census year. In view of the latest Census 2021 data these ONS estimates now seem too low.

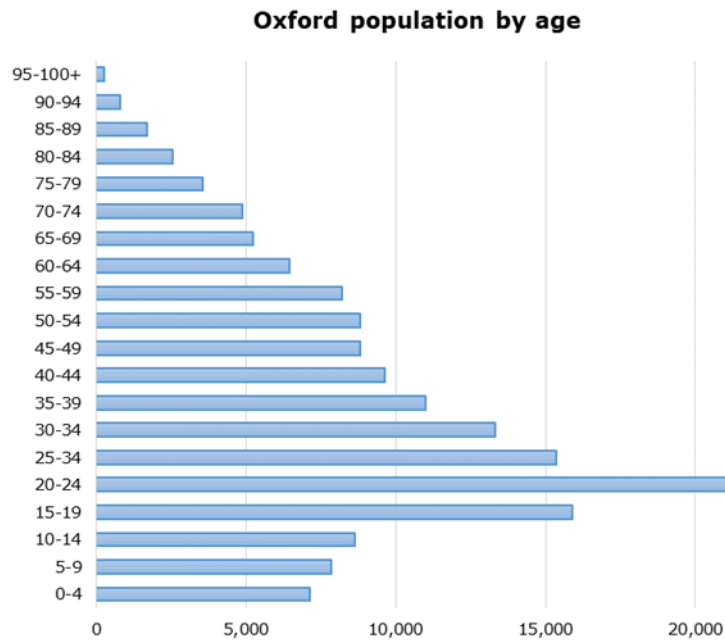
**Oxfordshire housing-led population forecasts 2020 to 2030 (Feb 2022)** Oxfordshire County Council carries out an annual update to population forecasts to support planning for school places, social care and other services. These differ significantly from the population projections provided by ONS in that they take into account the predicted increase in housing across Oxfordshire, alongside data from wider sources. The forecast includes assumptions about future growth in housing within Oxfordshire, provided by planning officers in Oxfordshire's district councils as of December 2021. The housing-led forecast show the population of Oxford increasing from 164,700 in 2020 to 177,300 by 2030. (+12,600, +7.6%). ([Oxfordshire housing-led population forecasts February 2022 update \(2020-2030\) | Oxfordshire Insight](#))

### **SHMA Update to 2036**

[The Strategic Housing Market Assessment \(SHMA\) Update to 2036](#) uses the 2014-based ONS Sub-national Population Projection as a starting point for the core scenario, with adjustments for the 2016 mid-year estimate, migration age structure, national fertility/mortality projections and removing the ONS consolidation factor. This gives a projected population change from 161,291 in 2016 to 178,025 in 2036 (10.4%). It goes on to examine different scenarios adjusting for some of the underlying assumptions for population growth. These scenarios show estimated population growth varying from 1% up to 20% between 2016 and 2036.

This wide range of forecasts demonstrate how difficult it is to project population change in Oxford, and provides a challenge for strategic planning and policy making. However we anticipate an increase in population in the city over the next decade, supported by the County Council and SHMA forecasting, due to these models taking in more local factors.

Moving beyond the headline population figures, we can consider the breakdown in Oxford population. Oxford has a very young population compared to national figures, with the number of 15-34 year olds significantly higher than the national average, linked to it being a major university city. According to the [Census figures from 2021](#), the biggest change by age group, is the increase of people aged 65 years or over in Oxford, which increased by 14.8%. At the same time, there was a decrease of 1.1% in children aged under 15 years. 36% of the population belong to ethnic groups other than White British, compared to the average for England of 20%. (Census 2011).

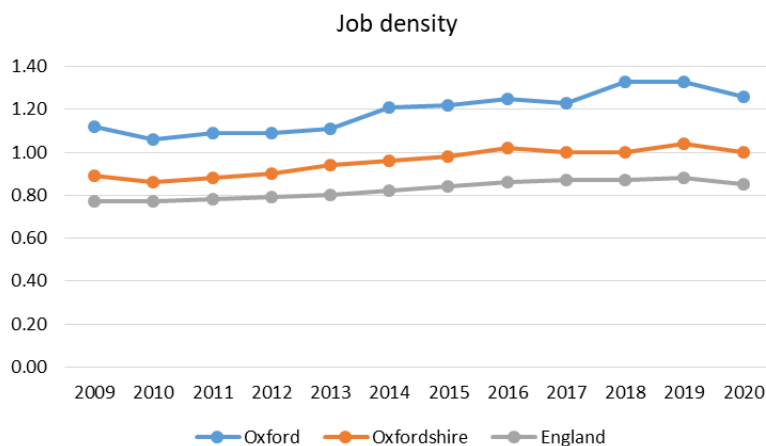


Source: 2021 Census, Office for National Statistics

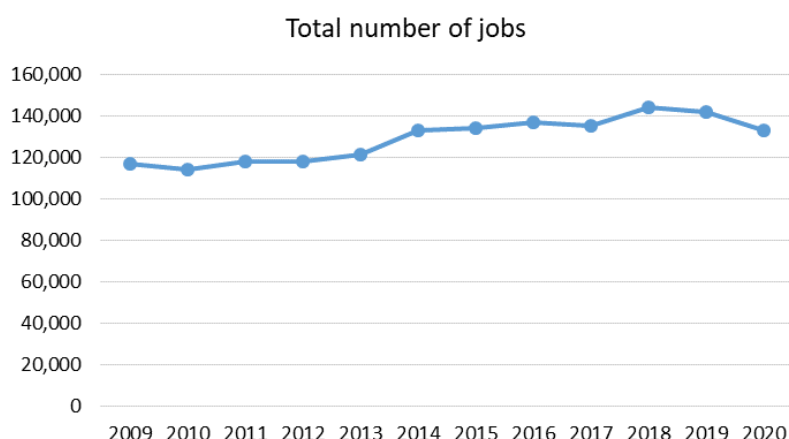
## 2.2 - The economy and its impacts on housing demand

Oxford has enjoyed a long period of good economic growth and high demand for labour over the last decade, putting pressure on the housing market across the county to house workers.

Oxford has a very high job density level of 1.26 (ONS jobs density 2020) with more than one job for every resident of working age. This demonstrates the importance of Oxford as a centre for employment, its role in serving the wider area economically, and reflects high levels of commuting into the city.



Source: [Nomisweb](https://nomisweb.co.uk/)



Source: [Nomisweb](#)

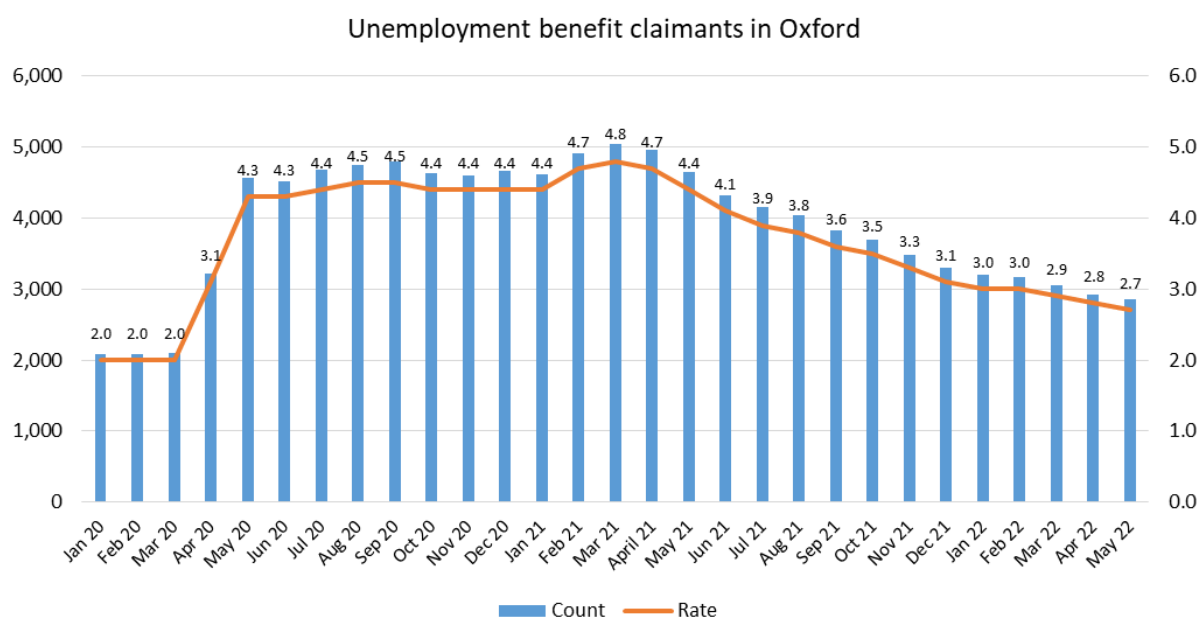
The strength of the city's economy has attracted significant inward migration into the county over the last decade, from both the wider UK and the world, and has been a major success story. It has however also contributed to an increasingly competitive housing market, with strong rental and house price inflation observed over the last decade.

The population in Oxfordshire increased by 7.6% in the ten-year period 2009 to 2019 according to ONS. In the same period the population of Oxford increased only by 4.8%, with growth likely constrained in the city by limited new housing supply and prices. There is a net outflow of people moving from Oxford to the surrounding districts in Oxfordshire, doubling from around 1,300 in 2012 to around 2,600 in 2019. It is very likely that people are having difficulty finding affordable housing in Oxford and are therefore making the decision to look outside of Oxford for accommodation. A consequence of this has been a large number of people commuting into Oxford from neighbouring districts. According to the Census 2011, 46% of Oxford's workforce commuted into the area in 2011.

The housing challenge in Oxford has impacted upon local employers who need to retain staff to provide essential local services such as care and health workers on lower incomes who cannot afford to live in Oxford. Increasingly this issue is affecting a wider group of employees beyond the traditional definition of "key workers" and includes academic, teaching and professional roles essential to Oxford's knowledge economy, as well as health and social care professionals contributing to the wider health agenda. Local employers have highlighted the lack of suitable and affordable housing to meet the needs of employees, as a major barrier to recruitment and retention of staff. ([Adopted Oxford Local Plan 2016-2036](#), paragraphs 3.18-3.19)

While the economy and jobs market has been very strong over the last decade, unemployment in Oxford increased considerably at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, after a long period of historically low unemployment. The rate of people claiming unemployment benefits increased from 2.0 in March 2020 to 4.8 in March 2021, though this was lower than the England figure of 6.6. The unemployment rate has since decreased and was 2.7 in May 2022, though this is still slightly higher than before the pandemic.

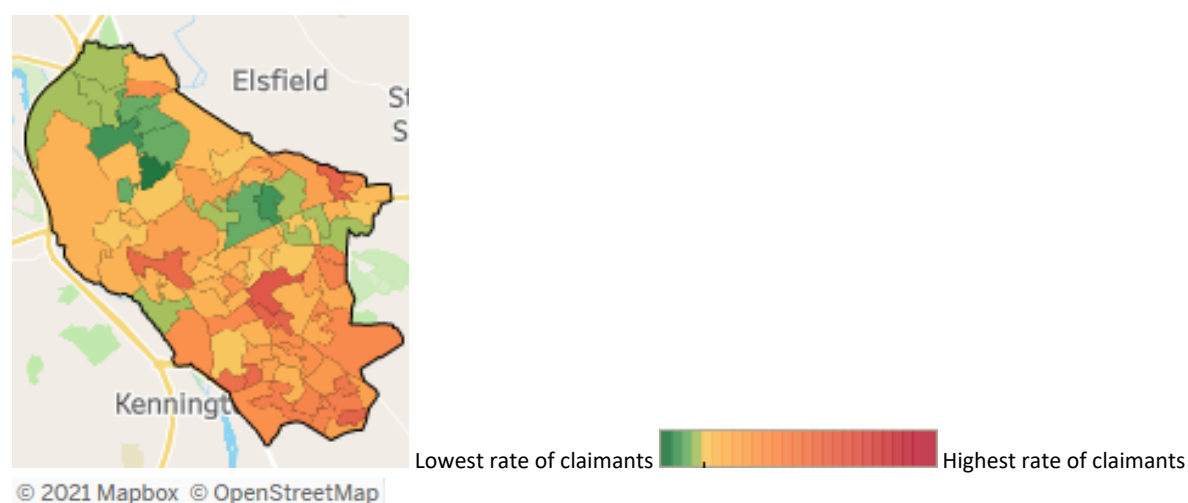




Source: ONS Claimant count, May 2022 (Nomis)

The number of young people (16-24 years old) claiming unemployment-related benefits in Oxford increased by almost 200% between March 2020 and March 2021 from 305 claimants to 895, whereas the increase for those aged 25 and over was 131%. (ONS Claimant count by sex and age, March 2021, Nomis) Young people have been particularly hard hit by unemployment during the pandemic as they are more likely to work in industries most affected by the coronavirus such as hospitality ([Source: ONS September 2020 Coronavirus and young people in the labour market](#)), and fill jobs with fewer employee protections. The unemployment rate for young people have decreased in the last year in line with the decrease for older age groups, as the labour market across the country has rebounded following the effects of the pandemic, and the number of claimants in May 2022 was 425.

### Claimants per lower super output area (LSOA) in Oxford January 2021



Source: Oxfordshire Insight

It is unclear what long term impact the pandemic will have on the unemployment rate and wider labour market, and whether unemployment will continue at a higher level than pre-pandemic and reverse the trend of the last decade, or if the city will return to pre-pandemic unemployment levels

with strong inward migration. Either scenario poses significant challenges for affordability in the local housing market.

As we emerge from the pandemic the country has moved straight into a cost of living crisis, driven by high levels of inflation, increasing living costs and in particular a spike in the cost of fuel. This is likely to lead to more households becoming homeless or threatened with homelessness.

## 2.3 - Deprivation

The economic success of the city has not reached all communities in Oxford. According to the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019, Oxford is the 136th least deprived of the 317 local authorities in England, making it the most deprived of the five Oxfordshire districts. However this masks the fact that the city has some extremes of wealth and deprivation. One area in Oxford is within the 10 per cent most deprived areas nationally (Northfield Brook) and 9 areas in total among the 20 per cent most deprived nationally, which are located in The Leys, Barton, Littlemore, Rose Hill and Carfax. At the other end of the socio-economic scale, 12 areas in total in North Oxford, Marston, Headington, Quarry and Risinghurst, Jericho and Wolvercote are among the 10 per cent least deprived areas in the country.

Despite having most of its neighbourhood areas in the least deprived half of the Index of Multiple Deprivation ranking, Oxford has a significant proportion (17 out of 83) of its areas in the most deprived 30% in England. Key aspects of relative deprivation in Oxford are low income (especially child poverty), poor educational attainment and higher levels of health deprivation.

DWP statistics show that the percentage of children (aged under 16) in Oxford living in relative low income families (before housing costs) is 14%, lower than the UK average of 19%, but higher than the other Oxfordshire districts. According to *End Child Poverty* estimates (2018-19) after removing housing costs, 1 in 4 children in Oxford are estimated to be living in poverty.

According to the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) 2019, 11 of Oxford's Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) fall in the 20 per cent most deprived nationally and 3 LSOAs in the 10 per cent most deprived nationally. These numbers have improved since 2015 when they were 16 and 6 respectively. The most deprived areas on the IDACI 2019 were in parts of Blackbird Leys, Littlemore and Rose Hill & Iffley wards. These 3 LSOAs have between 34-39% of children living below the poverty line. Amongst the LSOAs in the top 20 per cent most deprived areas it's more than a quarter of children. In contrast, less than 4% of children are living in poverty in each of the 9 least deprived LSOAs in North Oxford, Wolvercote, Marston and Headington.

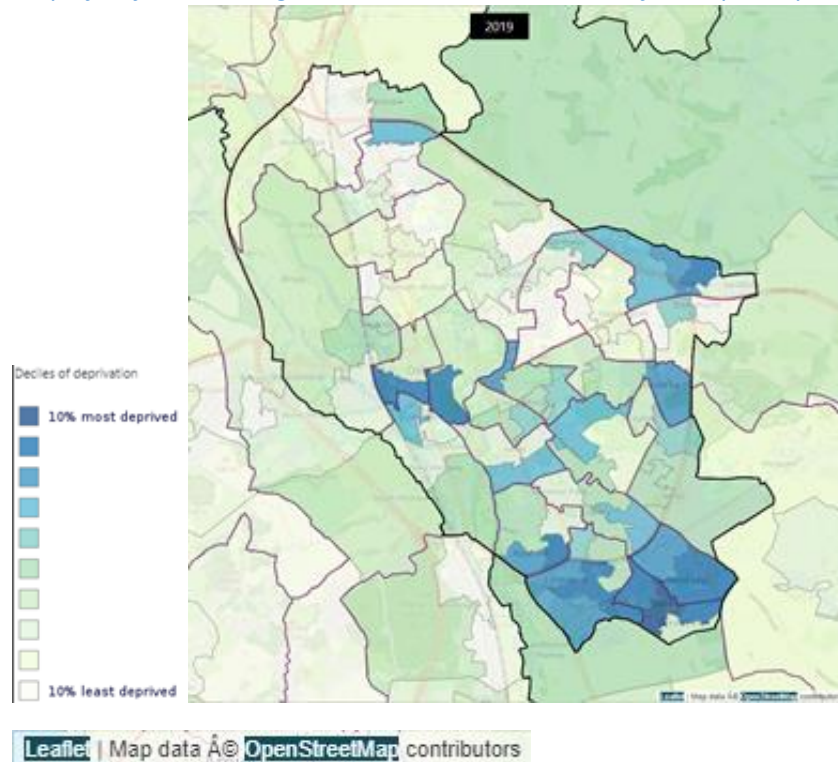
As of December 2020, 3.7% of young people aged 16-18 (school year 12-13) in Oxford were classified as Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET). This is higher than all the other districts in Oxfordshire and the highest it has been since December 2013.

48.6% of pupils in Oxford achieved grades 5 or above in English and Mathematics GCSE in 2019/20, lower than both the national average (50.2%) and Oxfordshire average (52%). ([Oxfordshire JSNA 2021](#). Note: due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic all summer 2020 exams were cancelled.) Education is one of the main routes out of poverty and deprivation, so improving educational attainment is an important part of reducing homelessness.

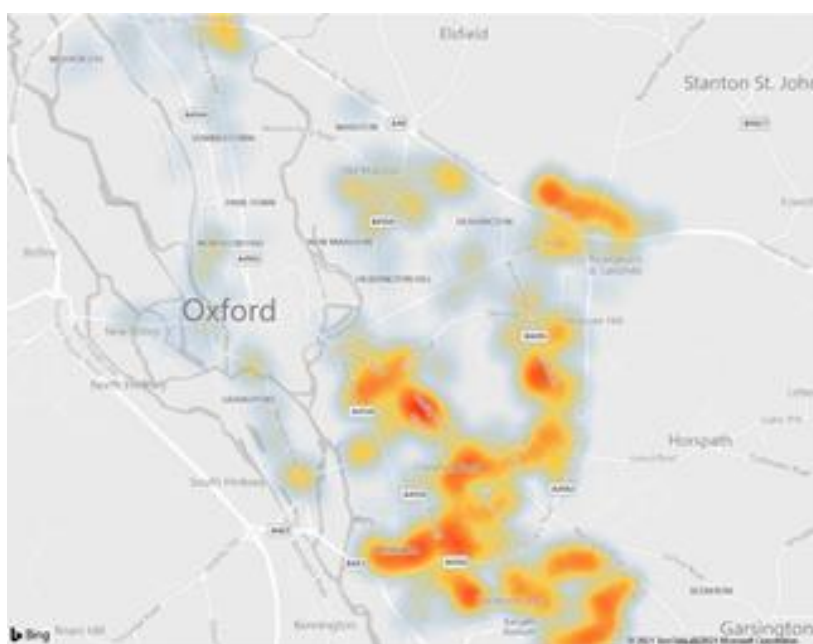
The gap in life expectancy at birth for females in Oxford between the areas with lowest and highest life expectancies is 12.4 years. For males it is 10.9 years.

The two maps below shows where the concentrations of deprivation in the city are, and how housing need in the city predominantly comes from these most deprived areas (in this case the demand for social housing). It can also be observed that the areas with highest deprivation are also the areas of highest concentration of social housing, such as Barton, Wood Farm, Blackbird Leys, Rose Hill and Littlemore.

[Map of Oxford showing LSOA boundaries and Index of Multiple Deprivation](#)



*Distribution of general register applications by postcode*



Housing need and homelessness are inextricably linked with poverty and deprivation. Households on lower incomes, people who are unemployed, or economically inactive, are all more likely to face homelessness or be forced to live in poor standard housing; but also those living in poor quality housing or who become homeless are more likely to suffer poverty and deprivation due to the destabilising nature of these events and circumstances, which make sustaining employment or undertaking training and education much more difficult. Therefore, deprivation, homelessness and poor standards of housing are a self-reinforcing cycle, creating a poverty trap; so to tackle deprivation we must combat homelessness and increase the standard of accommodation.

## 2.4 - The Oxford Housing Market

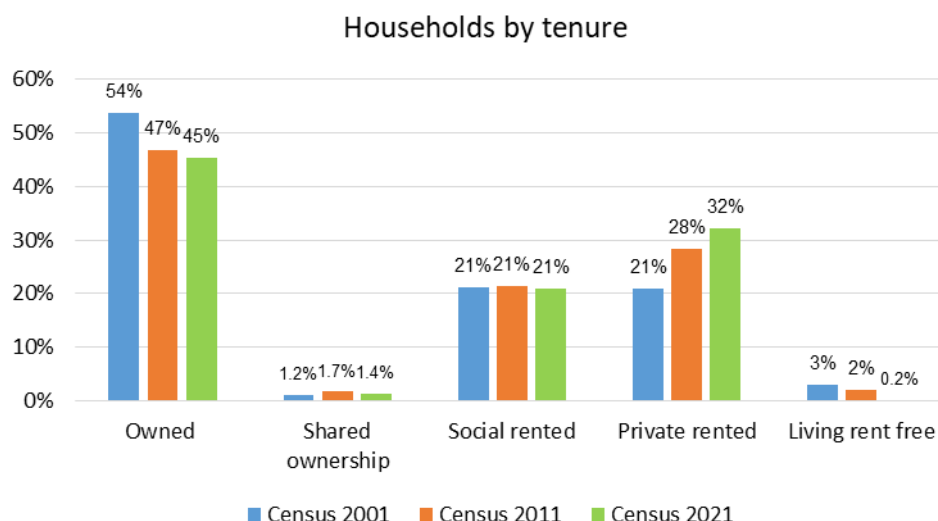
Oxford is a dense urban area, surrounded by green belt and rural countryside. The housing stock varies in age, with some of the oldest homes concentrated around the centre and other historic sites, with Victorian housing in areas such as Jericho, Headington and the Cowley Road, through to post war development in areas such as Blackbird Leys and Barton. Land for new development is significantly constrained by the tight and dense profile of the city, with recent new development in areas around the train station and on the edge at Barton Park. The constraint on the height of buildings is a significant feature of development in the city due to the historic and cultural assets, but does provide additional constraint to new supply.

The 2021 census found the percentage of households who own their home in Oxford was relatively low in Oxford – 45% compared to 61% in England. While the percentage of households who rent their home in the private sector is high – 32% in Oxford compared with 20% in England.

	<b>Oxford</b>	<b>Oxfordshire</b>	<b>South East</b>	<b>England</b>
Owned	45%	63%	66%	61%
Shared ownership	1%	2%	1%	1%
Social rented	21%	15%	14%	17%
Private rented	32%	20%	19%	20%

Census 2021

Between 2001 and 2021 the percentage of households in Oxford who own their home decreased from 54% to 45% and the percentage renting in the private rented sector increased from 21% to 32%.



The city also has a sizable social rented sector, where homes are rented to tenants at below market rents. Oxford City Council owns 7,791 dwellings (including 206 in neighbouring districts), making it the biggest social landlord in the city. In addition, housing associations in Oxford have around 4,000 dwellings. There are around 62,400 dwellings in total in the city.

The Census 2021 also showed that 6.3% of households in Oxford are overcrowded compared to 4.4% nationally (lacking 1 or more bedrooms). The percentage of overcrowded households in Oxford has increased since the 2011 census when it was 6.0%, whereas in England as a whole it has decreased from 4.6%. The level of overcrowding is most likely an effect of the unaffordability of housing in Oxford.

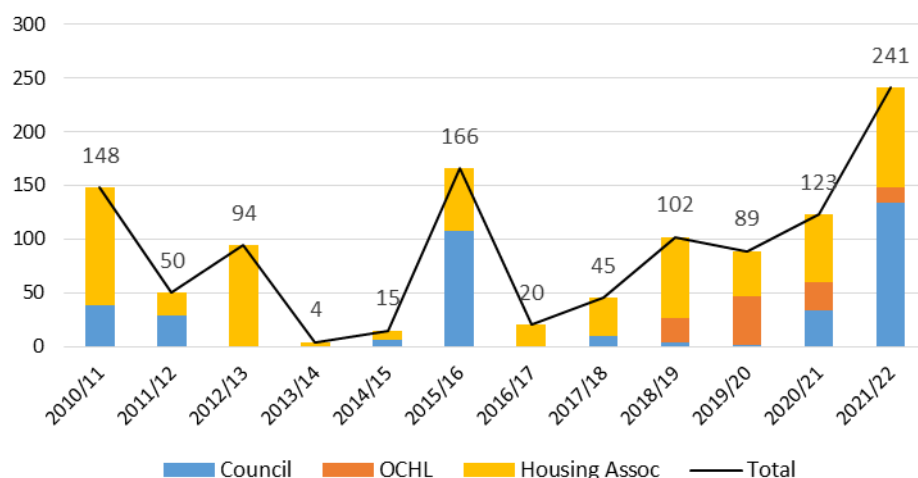
## 2.5 - Supply of affordable housing

Housing Associations, the Council and the Council's housing company OX Place (formerly Oxford City Housing Ltd, or OCHL) have built on average 91 affordable homes per year in the last twelve years. This is not enough to meet demand, especially when taking into account that the Council has lost a total of 295 properties through the Right to Buy over the same period.

The [Housing and Economic Needs Assessment 2022 \(Cherwell District and Oxford City Councils\)](#) provides an assessment of the need for affordable housing in Oxfordshire and the five constituent local authorities following the methodology set out in Planning Practice Guidance. It indicates a net need of 740 social rent/affordable rent homes per year in Oxford if all households who are not able to meet their needs in the housing market were to be allocated an affordable home (i.e. households needing to spend more than 30% of income on housing).

The affordable housing need is to an extent an issue of a tenure imbalance – not least of households living in the private rented sector who might otherwise have lived in social housing if there had been

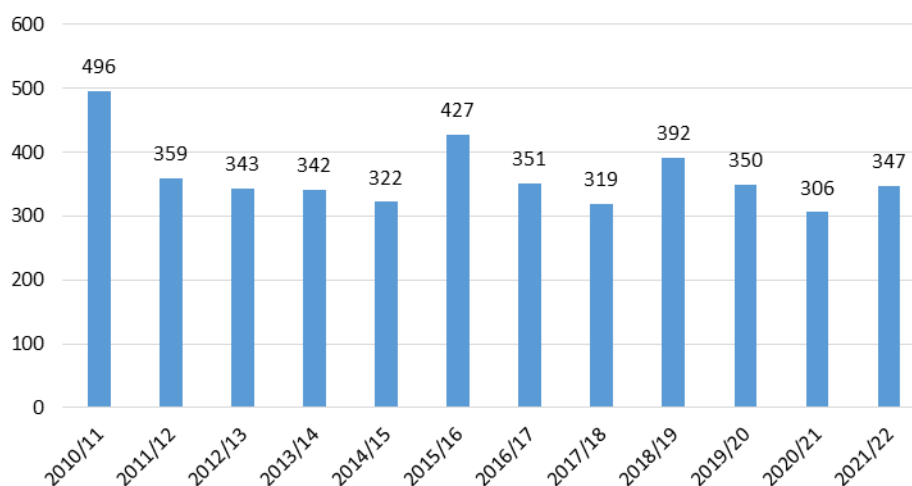
Affordable Housing New Build and Acquisitions



sufficient stock.

We let on average 362 council and housing association properties per year in the last twelve years to general register applicants (including homeless applicants, but excluding social housing transfer applicants), which is far short of the need.

Lettings to general register applicants (incl homeless)



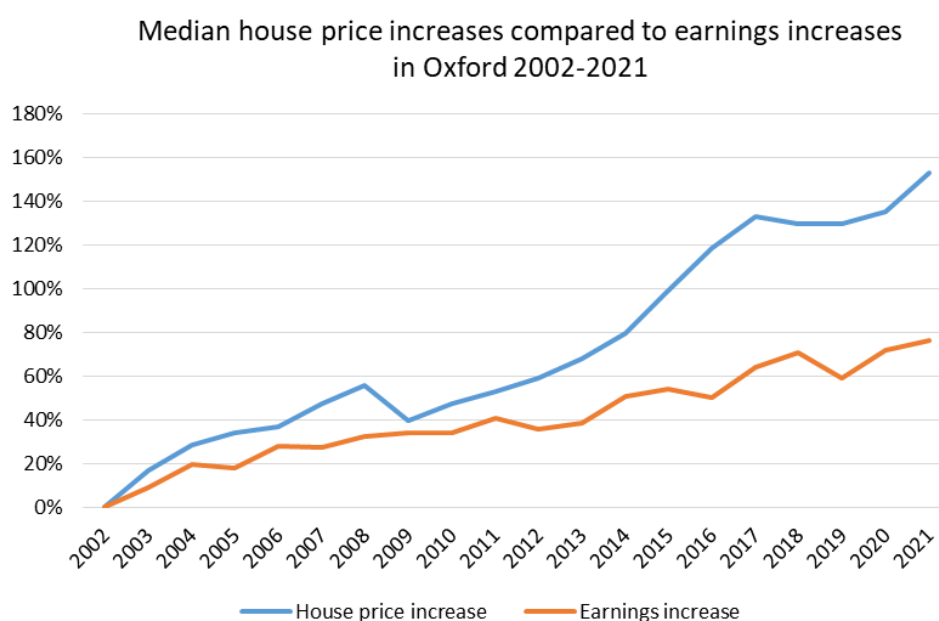
We explore the development of affordable housing in greater detail in chapter 9

## 2.6 - Affordability of housing

The extremes of wealth and poverty in Oxford, the strong labour market over the past decade, and the long term under supply of housing (in particular affordable housing), have combined to significantly impact on housing affordability in the city.

Many Oxford residents are unable to afford to buy or rent a home at market prices, driving poverty and displacement of established communities, alongside homelessness. According to the Office for National Statistics ([ONS data on ratio of house price to residence based earnings](#)), in 2021 the median house price in Oxford was £430,000 – 12.32 times median gross earnings (£34,896) in the city. For England as a whole, the median house price is 8.96 times median earnings. According to Centre for Cities, Oxford is the least affordable city (of 62 cities) in the UK. ([Centre for Cities publication](#))

House prices have been increasing at a much higher rate than earnings. The median house price in Oxford increased by 153% from 2002 to 2021. Median earnings for full-time employees in Oxford increased by 76% in the same period.



House price and earnings data taken from [ONS data report](#)

ONS reports a median private rent of £1,500 per month for a three-bedroom home in Oxford. The equivalent amount for England as a whole is £850. A household would need an income of £60,000 if they were to spend 30% of their income on rent for an average three-bed property in Oxford, however median full-time pay for people living in Oxford is £34,896. Looking at the less expensive end of the market, the lower quartile rent for a three-bed is £1,350 per month and household would need an income of £54,000 if they were to spend 30% of their income renting a lower quartile rent three-bed property, however lower quartile full-time pay for people living in Oxford is £25,742. Market rents therefore are unaffordable for a wide sway of the city's population, from median earners to the lower quartiles.

Area	Median rent for 3 bedrooms (Per Month)
England	£850
South East	£1,200
Oxfordshire	£1,325

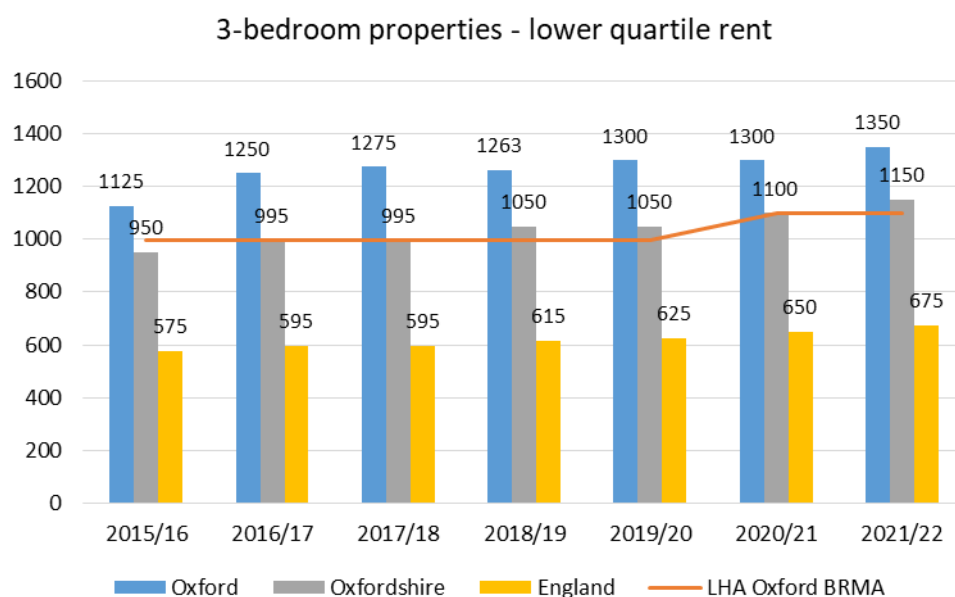


Oxford	£1,500
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[ONS Private rental market summary statistics in England, Apr 2021Mar 2022](#)

The Local Housing Allowance (LHA) in the Oxford broad rental market area is £1,100 per month for a three-bedroom property as from April 2020. The LHA is used to set the amount of housing support a household can claim in Housing Benefit, or Universal Credit, so is important for access to the private rented sector for lower income households. The Broad Rental Market Area (BRMA) for Oxford covers most of Oxfordshire. However, the rents in Oxford are higher than in most other parts of Oxfordshire, so by including parts of the wider county this has the effect of lowering the average rents considered in the calculation of the LHA, so even those in the lower quartile of rents in Oxford are not covered by the LHA – the lower quartile private rent in Oxford for a three-bedroom home is £1,350 (2021/22 data). This has led to many lower income households who require support with housing costs increasingly unable to find and stay in a private rented home in the city.

The LHA was frozen for four years between April 2016 and March 2020, during which time the gap between the LHA rate and rents increased considerably. The LHA rate did increase in April 2020 providing some much needed support for private renters through the pandemic, but was frozen again from April 2021, adding further pressure in the future.



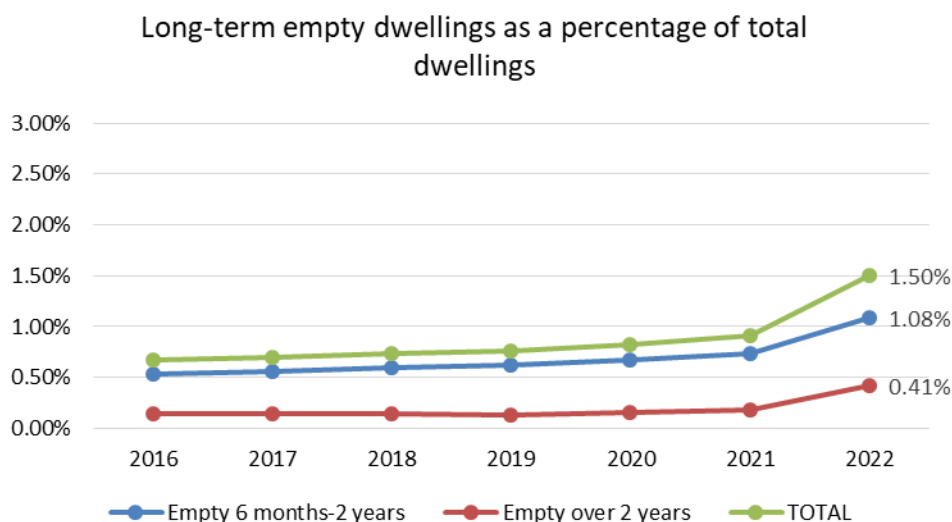
ONS Private rental market summary statistics in England

## 2.7 - Empty dwellings

At the end of September 2022 there were 947 long-term empty dwellings in Oxford (1.50% of total dwelling stock), of which 685 had been empty between 6 months and 2 years and 262 for over 2 years. There were also 682 dwellings classed as second homes.

The number of long-term empty dwellings in Oxford have been increasing over the past 6 years.





## 2.8 - HMOs, the condition of the Private Rented Sector, and licensing

The Council estimates that there are 5,240 Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in Oxford. There are estimated to be 2,125 mandatory licensable HMOs, of which 1,804 have a licence issued (as at 1 April 2022). In 2021/22 68 private rented sector dwellings were found to have one or more category 1 hazards (HHSRS).

In Oxford, the Council has operated “additional licensing” since 2011, i.e. all HMOs in Oxford are subject to licensing. The additional licensing was brought in to address problems associated with poor management of HMOs. The scheme expired on 24 January 2021. However, the Council undertook a consultation exercise, the results of which went to the Cabinet in March 2021, who decided to renew the scheme in order to improve housing conditions and the management of HMOs. The additional HMO licensing scheme resumed for five years on the 10<sup>th</sup> of June 2021 after a statutory three month notice period.

In March 2021, the Cabinet also approved a city wide selective licensing scheme going beyond the existing licencing structure, to ensure all Oxford landlords are fit and proper and that properties let to residents meet minimum standards and are a safe place to live. The objective of selective licensing is to improve living conditions within the private rented sector and, through ensuring an improvement in management practices of the poorer performing landlords, an improvement in the surrounding community. The scheme was confirmed by central government in April 2022 and launched in autumn 2022.

[There is evidence of poor housing conditions](#) across the city in the private rented sector, with a review undertaken in 2020, which estimated there were 6,242 privately rented homes containing a serious home hazard, the most common hazards found relate to fire safety and excess cold in privately rented homes. Currently the Council operates a reactive service to tackle issues of poor conditions, however if the decision to introduce city wide selective licensing is confirmed by Government, a planned programme of inspections and improvements will be implemented. At this stage it is estimated that 12,000 homes will require a selective licence.

Over the recent years, short-term lettings in England has increased significantly and this growth is causing concern that it may have a negative impact on the housing market in some areas of the country. A [House of Commons briefing paper](#) on the issue from May 2020, states that the short-term

let market may result in a reduction of accommodation available for long-term lets, and that if this is the case, it can exacerbates the shortage of housing and increase rents in some areas. In September 2019, an internet search showed that more than 300 homes in Oxford were rented on a short-term basis. ([Oxford City Council press release, October 2019](#)) This indicates that there is a potential loss of properties to the short-term let market in Oxford that would otherwise have been available to households that need access to longer term accommodation.

[As of September 2022, 104 properties in Oxford](#) had stopped paying council tax and registered as self-catering holiday businesses. This is an increase from 7 in 2018. There is no requirement for short-lets to be licensed, or for landlords to automatically notify the council when they convert a property into a short-term let. There are limits to what the council can do to prevent much needed family homes from being used for the short-term let market. However, the change to short term let may require planning permission (but this has to be determined on a case by case basis) and the council can take planning enforcement action where the use of a house has changed into holiday accommodation without planning permission.

We will continue to monitor the growth of short-term lettings and the potential impact this may have on the loss of domestic dwellings available for households, and in particular families, in Oxford.

## 2.9 - The housing market for students

Oxford hosts two leading Universities, and students make up a significant proportion of the city's population. In 2018/19 there were a total of 32,930 full-time students and 9,125 part-time students at the University of Oxford and Oxford Brookes University. At the 2011 Census, 24% of the city's adult population was a full-time student (30,000 people) – the highest proportion in England and Wales. As there is not enough purpose built student accommodation a significant proportion of students live in the private rented sector. At December 2019 the two universities in Oxford had in total 22,213 accommodation places for students. That left 8,028 students with accommodation requirements living outside of university provided accommodation in Oxford. This puts a significant pressure on the private rented market in Oxford and contributes to higher rents and difficulty finding accommodation for the whole population. Recent years have seen the Universities increasing the supply of purpose built student accommodation, with one of its aims being that this accommodation will help release other residential housing in the city for other groups, and the City Council through the Oxford local plan now requires the Universities to meet certain conditions on numbers of students outside of student accommodation in order to get planning permissions on any university buildings, but the need to house large numbers of students in the PRS continues.

## 3.0 - What have we achieved so far? The current Housing & Homelessness Strategy

### Key Findings – The current Housing and Homelessness Strategy

- The Council has made considerable progress over recent years in meeting its strategic housing and homelessness goals, such as establishing its own housing company to deliver new affordable homes (OX Place), increased the rate of affordable housing supply, opened the accommodation and assessment hub at Floyds Row, successfully implemented the Homelessness Reduction Act, and delivered considerable investment into the Council's housing stock and estates.
- However, there is still a way to go in solving many of the problems the city faces. The supply of new affordable housing being delivered is still not sufficient to meet need, households are still struggling to find and keep tenancies in the city due to cost, and we still have a significant number of people experiencing rough sleeping.
- A lot has been learnt regarding our approach to strategy development and implementation, and this learning should inform the new strategy.

When developing the new strategy it is crucial to first consider and evaluate the successes and failures of the current one, and consider any learning to inform our new approach.

The purpose of this evaluation, is to determine what we have achieved over the strategy period that we set out to do, and if there are certain aspects that we set out to do, but have been unable to achieve. We have also looked at the strategy itself, how it has driven work, the process for how objectives and milestones have been updated and how work has been scrutinised throughout in order to take on any learning for the development, implementation and delivery of the new strategy.

Many of the themes picked up in this evaluation are later explored further in the wider review.

The current Housing & Homelessness Strategy (2018-21) was approved by Cabinet and adopted by Oxford City Council in January 2018.

The 5 main objectives of the strategy are:

- Increase housing supply and improving access to affordable housing
- Preventing homelessness and meeting the needs of vulnerable people
- Making best use of Private Sector accommodation
- Investing to create sustainable communities that are safe and healthy
- Being an effective landlord and delivering quality services

### 3.1 - Summary of achievements

It is evident that the Council and partners have achieved a great deal in fulfilling its aims and objectives as laid out in the strategy. We have also worked with partners to deliver aspects of work that are in line with the strategy, but not necessarily laid out as objectives. This has been necessary when the landscape has changes (for example handling the emergency that the Covid-19 emergency presented) and shows that we are able to react and adjust our service provision as needed to meet demand and change in priorities.

Key achievements under the 5 priorities are detailed below.

Priority 1: Increase the supply and improve access to affordable housing

- We have worked with partners to secure funding through the Oxfordshire Growth Board for the Housing and Growth Deal to the value of £60 million for affordable housing. The schemes planned within Oxford have started on site and future schemes are on track to start on time.
- Established OX Place (previously Oxford City Housing Limited, or OCHL), the Council owned company developing social housing in the city. OX Place had up to June 2021, started development on 10 sites, with public consultation about to begin in relation to other sites, and an ambitious business plan to deliver significantly more homes over coming years.
- At the end of January 2021, the Barton Park development has delivered 223 units of accommodation, with 95 let to households on the Council's housing register. When completed, Barton Park will have delivered 885 new homes, with 354 of these let at social rent by OX Place.
- Across all developments in the city since the April 2018 and until the end of March 2021, over 300 new affordable homes have been delivered.
- Affordable housing development rates during this period have increased compared to the previous strategic cycle, from an average of 77 units a year under the last strategy (2015-2018) to 147 a year units now (2018-2020). These rates are projected to increase further in coming years through identified sites.
- Our Local Plan has been accepted and signed off and includes opportunities to develop affordable housing across many sites in the city.
- We have worked with our neighbouring Districts to start to formulate agreements on how they can help meet Oxford's unmet housing need. The additional requirements to meet Oxford's unmet housing need have been incorporated in each District Council's local plan. The next step for agreements are the nominations for properties in Districts for households who are on the City Council's housing register.

Priority 2: Prevent homelessness and meet the needs of vulnerable people:

- Successfully implemented the Homelessness Reduction Act, introduced in April 2018. During the first two years operating under the HRA, we have prevented 322 number of households from becoming homeless through the new Prevention Duty and we relieved 143 households from homelessness under the new Relief Duty by assisting them to secure new accommodation.
- We have embedded a corporate commitment to homelessness prevention across the organisation.
- Delivered the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (now the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, or DLUHC) funded Oxfordshire Trailblazer Programme focussing on early or upstream prevention of homelessness, with learning now informing ongoing transformation.
- Enabled the use of the private rented sector for households in housing need by continuing the Real Lettings Scheme and starting a Rent Guarantee Scheme. We saw 126 households assisted to move on to homes in the private rented sector in 2018/19 and 104 in 2019/20.
- Worked with our partners in the County and District Councils to re-commission the Young Person's Pathway, increasing our financial contribution to providing accommodation and support for young persons in housing need.
- Reduced the number of households that need to be in temporary accommodation to under 120 at any one time, ranging between 78 and 99 households during 2019/20, lower per capita than many comparator urban authorities.

- Since spring 2018 and up until summer 2021, we have successfully bid for just over £5m funding from the Government's Rapid Rehousing Pathway, Rough Sleeping Initiatives Schemes and Next Steps Accommodation Programme to prevent and tackle rough sleeping. Funding has been awarded for (not exhaustive) a multi-agency service hub - the new Engagement and Assessment Centre at Floyds Row - , additional capacity for the city's outreach team, navigator posts to support long-term rough sleepers, and most recently funding for the short term accommodation provided for rough sleepers in YHA and Canterbury House due to the Covid-19 crisis, as well as longer term funding to provide permanent homes through the expansion of Housing First (including the purchase of properties) and funds to help assist move-on to the private rented sector. Some of the funding received has been made in partnership with other Districts in the County.
- We have also increased our own funding for supported accommodation.
- We have worked in partnership with Districts and County Council and Crisis to enhance our homeless prevention work.
- In a multi-agency bid, we have secured funding from the Department of Health and Social Care from the Shared Outcomes Fund to deliver a pilot project focussing on achieving better outcomes for persons in hospital who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless on discharge. The fund is part of DHSC's drive to 'improve health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities, through action to end rough sleeping'.
- In addition to this we successfully delivered the 'Everyone In' initiative that involved providing accommodation and support services for those rough sleeping and people who were housed in communal areas, during the first wave of the Covid-19 crisis. Just over 110 units of accommodation were provided through the pandemic.

#### Priority 3: Make best use of Private Sector accommodation

- We expanded our use of the private rented sector to prevent homelessness through the creation of the Rent Guarantee Scheme.
- Delivered campaigns to increase the number of private landlords that are working with our Home Choice Scheme.
- Teams across the Council continue to work together in order to ensure that private rented sector accommodation in the city is of good standard. We have advanced plans for a selective licencing scheme for private landlords, with a consultation held over winter 2020/21, that seeks to improve the standards of private rented sector accommodation in the city.
- Since April 2018 and up until the end of November 2020, we have brought back 79 empty properties for domestic use.
- Progressed plans for renewing our additional licensing scheme, building on the success of the previous schemes in improving standards in the HMO stock.

#### Priority 4: Invest to create sustainable communities that are safe and healthy

- We have continued to support households in Oxford that face financial hardship due to welfare reform. In 2019/20, we administered £440,762.19 in Discretionary Housing Payments to help households afford their rent. Recently, we have integrated the Welfare Reform Team into our housing team to improve customer journeys and allow for better sharing of best practice.
- The regeneration of Blackbird Leys has progressed and the Council's development partners, Catalyst, held public consultation events in November 2020
- A significant investment programme has been carried out across Council owned homes, and properties have been improved in line with Energy Efficiently targets.

- We have continued to provide energy efficiency advice to our tenants through our Energy Advice Officers.
- We have promoted energy efficiency across all tenures and agreed an enforcement approach, with a pilot which ended in March 2020, which saw a 100% compliance rate for domestic properties. Enforcement powers in relation to EPCs has been delegated from County, following approval from City and County Cabinets, with just agency agreement to be finalised.
- The Barton Healthy Town project completed with good practise shared with partners.
- During the Covid-19 crisis, the Council set up community hubs to be able to respond to the needs of the community. Putting staff into the community to support during the crisis, enabled us to respond better to issues such a food and fuel poverty, and isolation. Learning from this approach has been used to inform service transformation and integration of services.

Priority 5: Be an effective landlord and deliver quality services

- We have continued to roll out our resident ambassador programme to help deliver a tenant-led approach of our landlord services. A Tenant Involvement Portal went live in March 2020 and we achieved TPAS reaccreditation.
- We have continued to deliver our Removal Expenses and Mobility Scheme for Council tenants who wants to move and downsize. This service has been provided for 53 households from April 2018 to the end of January 2021.
- We developed a new Tenancy Strategy that is in place until 2023 that sets out the Council's requirements and expectations of social housing providers operating within the city, helping ensure social landlords in the city operate in a way that meets housing needs, and provide secure, affordable homes.
- We revised our Allocations Scheme to take into account changes due to the Homelessness Reduction Act, the development of OX Place and the recommendations following the review of older persons' housing.
- All schemes identified within the Great Estates programme were delivered by the end of March 2021.
- Progressed the refurbishment of the tower blocks in the city, and ensured full health and safety compliance, which is now near completion.

Since the Rough Sleeping Action Plan was incorporated to the Housing and Homelessness Strategy as an addendum in autumn 2019, we have moved ahead with the opening of the new accommodation and assessment hub at Floyds Row early in 2020. We had a promising start, but the centre had to close at the end of March due to the pandemic in order to comply with social distancing regulations. It has since reopened in a Covid compliant way, but with reduced function.

Much of the work in relation to rough sleeping since April 2020 has been focussed on providing accommodation for rough sleepers and those who were previously in communal settings (such as Floyd's Row). As of end of January 2021, total of 319 rough sleepers and people who had been at imminent risk of rough sleeping had been accommodated in interim accommodation through the 'Everyone In' scheme between end of March 2020 and end of January 2021; 138 of these have moved on successfully to other accommodation.

We have also worked with the Oxfordshire Districts and County Council, and health partners, alongside Crisis to establish a joint strategy for preventing and reducing rough sleeping and are working to deliver housing led services across Oxfordshire from April 2022. This was informed by a Crisis-led feasibility study carried out through 2020, and its findings informed the drafting of the new

strategy. The draft strategy was consulted upon in early 2021 and was approved by Oxfordshire County Council's Cabinet in October 2021. This is explored further in chapter 4.

### 3.2 - Challenges for the current strategy

Despite the many achievements under the current strategy, some key and significant challenges remain which need to be taken into consideration in the development of the new strategy, and underlines the need for a renewal of the Council's strategy. These challenges have to be tackled in an increasingly difficult financial climate, for the Council as a local authority, for businesses and households.

- We still need to deliver more affordable homes in the city to meet housing need. While we have been successful in increasing supply of affordable homes during the latest strategic period, and the current pipeline of future supply is set to further increase delivery, supply is not yet at a level to make a significant impact on affordability in the city.
- There is still a small but entrenched number of people who sleep rough in the city. Even after the Everybody In directive from central government a small population has continued to sleep rough on the streets of Oxford.
- The profile of households that seek our help when homeless is changing and this is presenting new challenges. We are seeing greater demand from single homeless people, who have different support and accommodation needs from our historic profile of clients.
- Rents in the private rented sector remain expensive and unaffordable for households on lower incomes, leading to homelessness.
- Climate change, and the impact of this, means that we need to make progress now to meet the net zero carbon ambitions for domestic buildings in the city in order to help prevent the start effects of climate change.

### 3.3 - Strategy delivery and monitoring

Reviewing the current strategy, and the role it has had in driving and delivering work and the monitoring processes associated with the strategy, the recommendations for the new strategy are as follows:

- A shorter and more focused strategy document is created, informed by this detailed review and evidence base.
- Annual reviews and updates of the Action Plan to ensure the strategy remains relevant and plays a key role in driving work across the organisation.
- Key data sets are monitored to inform annual reviews and updates to the Action Plan.
- A clearer governance and scrutiny process is established to ensure work is delivered.

## 4.0 - Local and National Policy Context

### Key Findings – Local and National Policy Context

- Recent years have seen significant national and local policy change, which will have significant impacts on the next strategy.
- Locally, these changes include the development of a new county-wide homelessness and rough sleeping strategy, the publication of the Crisis Housing-led feasibility report, and the new Oxford local plan.
- Nationally, a number of major policy changes have either happened recently or are underway, including significant national changes in approach to rough sleeping, planning and additional regulation on both the social and private rented housing sectors.
- The Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the Council and its services, and has had a major effect on homelessness in the city.
- The cost of living crisis that followed the pandemic, fuelled by high inflation and increases to energy costs, will lead to households and businesses seeing pressure on finances.

A number of local and national policy changes and developments have happened in recent years that are important for the review and subsequent strategy to be informed by and address.

### 4.1 - The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 came into effect on 3 April 2018. The Act widened the duties of local authorities to help people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

New provisions introduced by the act include:

- A new duty to prevent homelessness – Prevention Duty – which means that local authorities must take reasonable steps to prevent homelessness for a eligible applicant at risk of homelessness with 56 days, regardless of priority need. This can involve assisting the household to stay in their current accommodation, or helping them find a new place to live.
- A new duty to relieve homelessness – Relief Duty – which means that local authorities must take reasonable steps to help the applicant to secure suitable accommodation, regardless of priority need, for example by funding a rent deposit or working with private landlords to make properties available.
- Requirement to carry out an assessment and personalised housing plan.
- Public bodies now have a duty to refer people whom they know are threatened with homelessness.
- Applicants have the right to ask for a review of any points of the new legislation.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 brought about the biggest changes to homelessness legislation for 40 years, refocussing local authority statutory homelessness services on the prevention of homelessness, with a more person centred and collaborative approach, as well as providing a catalyst for broader culture change in the way people experiencing homelessness are treated. The requirements of the HRA led to the Council re-organising how it works with homeless applicants. It has also led to a shift to the types of households we are now supporting. The act is still influencing the development of the Council's services several years since implementation, with many



impacts still emerging and needing to be responded to, therefore the act will continue to be a key driver in the coming years.

A change in the data collected for homeless applicants was also introduced at the same time as the HRA. The Homelessness Case Level Information Collection, or H-CLIC, replaced the P1E forms. The new system collects more detailed data (anonymous) on the circumstances of households owed a duty under the HRA, as well as the activities undertaken by local authorities to prevent and relieve homelessness and the outcome of such activities. This means that we now have a lot more data available to us that we can use both to see developing trends and use as intelligence to change or develop the services we deliver.

The data collected by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, or DLUHC (previously Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government) from all local authorities through H-CLIC is published showing the activity in each local authority over a quarter. ([Statutory Homelessness, Statistics data set: Live tables on homelessness](#)) Data on temporary accommodation is however collected and published as a snap-shot at the end of each quarter. Due to the significant changes to the legislation and data collection in April 2018, H-CLIC data was referred to by the government department as 'experimental' data for some time following its introduction. We look at our own data for the periods 2018/19 and 2019/20 with some caution, because of this. Our own internal processes and procedures for how to record and input data changed through these periods following advice and guidance from DLUHC.

The introduction of both the new data collection and also the changes to legislation that came about in April 2018, does mean that the data available pre-HRA and post-HRA is not directly comparable. DLUHC advises that only data on temporary accommodation and Main Duty decisions are comparable, but that any comparison made should still be made with caution as there are still lingering data quality issues with data collected nationally following the implementation of H-CLIC. We would also point out that as the context and the way in which we are now operating our homelessness services under the new legislation is very different, even these figures should not be directly compared. For example, the number of households owed a Main Duty is a lot lower since the introduction of the HRA, as more households are prevented or relieved from homelessness prior to a Main Duty decision has to be considered and made (for further details, see chapter 5).

## 4.2 - National Rough Sleeping Strategy

In 2018 the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (now the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, DLUHC) published a [Rough Sleeping Strategy](#) and a [Delivery Plan](#). The Rough Sleeping Strategy sets out the Government's plan to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and end it by 2027. The strategy was also accompanied with financial commitments from the government, in the form of funds that local authorities had to bid for, demonstrating how initiatives and plans would meet the aims of the national strategy. The latest Rough Sleeping Initiative programme provides funding over three years (2022-25) which is the first time this programme has offered more than single year funding. This is a welcome development in that it allows local authorities to plan for services to be delivered over this period. However the amount of funding in the programme reduces each year compared to 2021/22.

The delivery plan sets out that all local authorities update their strategies and rebadge them as homelessness and rough sleeping strategies, that their strategies are made available online and

submitted to DLUHC and that local authorities report progress in delivering these strategies and publish annual action plans.

In Oxford, the Rough Sleeping Action Plan was included as an addendum to the existing Housing & Homelessness Strategy as part of the mid-point review process of the strategy in autumn 2019.

Building on the achievements of the national Rough Sleeping Strategy, the government has developed and published a new strategy, [‘Ending Rough Sleeping for Good’](#). The strategy was published in September 2022.

Whilst the previous rough sleeping strategy sets out what local authorities need to do to reduce and end rough sleeping, the new strategy promises to be a cross-Government strategy, developed in partnership and setting out commitments across key departments. The cross-Government approach has been adopted as there is recognition that ending rough sleeping requires a systems approach. The new strategy will focus on preventing homelessness wherever possible, but where this cannot be prevented, intervening as quickly as possible with tailored, person centre support to enable person a long-term recovery.

### 4.3 - Oxfordshire’s Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2021-26

Oxfordshire’s Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, developed during 2020 and approved by Oxfordshire County Council’s Cabinet in October 2021, is the first County-wide and multi-agency strategy in relation to homelessness in Oxfordshire. The strategy focuses on doing the best for single people across Oxfordshire that are affected by homelessness and rough sleeping, working across geographical and professional boundaries to end rough sleeping and target resources collectively and in a prioritised way to meet the needs and aspirations of people affected. The strategy is primarily focussed on single person households.

The strategy sets out the vision ‘To prevent and resolve homelessness, so that no one sleeps rough in Oxfordshire’ and will underpin a transformation in the way housing, social care and health services work together and with people in need of housing and support. The strategy will also inform future commissioning of services. The vision is to be achieved through:

- A set of principles that guides all the work carried out through the strategy, emphasising the inclusion of those with lived experience into how services are designed and delivered
- Mission/purpose to transform the way all services work, which outlines a clear accountability for systems leaders to deliver the strategy.
- 5 priorities that outlines objectives and actions for how the priorities are to be achieved.

Three pieces of work have primarily influenced and informed the development of the strategy:

- A year-long ‘Housing-led Feasibility Study’, carried out by Crisis during 2019-2020 in Oxfordshire, that investigated the feasibility of a housing-led approach for Oxfordshire by looking at the experiences of single homeless people in Oxfordshire.
- Recommendations of the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board’s (SAR) Thematic Review of Homelessness 2019, which explored the circumstances surrounding the deaths of 9 individuals who had all experienced what the report term multiple exclusion homelessness leading up to, and at the time of their deaths in 2018/19
- The ‘Everyone In’ response delivered by the Oxfordshire local authorities from the end of March as a response to the Covid-19 crisis.

How the Countywide strategy has contributed towards the change in provision of service for persons experiencing rough sleeping is covered in more detail in chapter 8.

The City and District Councils as housing authorities are required by law to have their own homelessness strategies, based on a local 'review of homelessness'. Although a county-wide strategy for homelessness and/or rough sleeping is not a statutory requirement, it is seen as fundamental to have an effective approach to tackling homelessness across the county. The new Oxford Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy will therefore align with and draw from the County-wide strategy.

#### 4.4 - Crisis Housing-led Feasibility Study for Oxfordshire

The [housing-led feasibility study for Oxfordshire](#) that has informed the County-wide strategy investigates the feasibility of moving to a housing-led approach to tackling single homelessness across Oxfordshire. A housing-led approach to ending homelessness aims to move people into their own permanent homes as quickly as possible and provide them with the support they need to make it work.

The report states that the principles underlying the Housing First model (which is one type of housing-led model) can be implemented more widely and should benefit all those who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness, which we refer to as a housing-led approach.

- Having looked at the work that is taking place on different levels across Oxfordshire to prevent homelessness and tackle rough sleeping, the study finds that despite a lot of positive work to prevent and tackle rough sleeping by a wide range of organisations, this is hampered by a high level of silo-based working and by a lack of consistent data collection against which outcomes and progress can be monitored across the whole system.

Recommendations to bring about improvements include:

- Maximise the effectiveness of prevention activity.
- Improve case management throughout the system so that fewer people lose contact, and ensure that flexible support (i.e. which is not tied to a housing offer) can follow those with the most complex needs regardless of their current housing circumstances.
- Remove the additional barriers to accessing affordable housing which many rough sleepers and single homeless people face.
- Better co-ordination and consistency at countywide level, with an option to deliver more services and functions jointly

Whilst the County-wide strategy will inevitably drive homeless prevention and rough sleeping for single people, there are important elements of the housing-led feasibility study that provide learning for the wider spectrum of homelessness services in the city, that we have the opportunity to align with over the coming strategy cycle.

#### 4.5 - Private Rented Sector White Paper

In June 2022 the government published "[A Fairer Private Rented Sector](#)", the white paper for the Private Rented Sector. The main points of the white paper are:

- Privately rented homes will be required to meet the Decent Homes Standard for the first time.
- Section 21 'no fault' evictions will be abolished - a tenancy will only end if the tenant ends it or if the landlord has a valid ground for possession. All tenants who would previously have had an Assured Tenancy or Assured Shorthold Tenancy will move onto a single system of periodic tenancies. Tenants will need to give two months' notice to end their tenancy.
- Grounds for possession will be reformed to make sure that landlords have effective means to gain possession of their property where necessary. This will include new grounds for persistent arrears and sale of the property.
- Increases to rent will only be allowed once per year.
- A new single Ombudsman that all private landlords must join will be introduced.
- It will be illegal for landlords or agents to have blanket bans on renting to families with children or those in receipt of benefits.
- Tenants will be given the right to request that they can have a pet in their property, which the landlord must consider and cannot unreasonably refuse.

The new system of periodic tenancies will be implemented in two stages. There will be at least six months' notice of the first implementation date, after which all *new* tenancies will be periodic and governed by the new rules. Specific timing will depend on when Royal Assent is secured. All *existing* tenancies will transition to the new system on a second implementation date. After this point, all tenants will be protected from Section 21 eviction. There will be at least twelve months between the first and second dates.

The Queens Speech 2022 said a Renters Reform Bill would be introduced in the 2022-23 parliamentary session. Government Ministers have subsequently said the Bill will be introduced "in this Parliament".

#### 4.6 - Housing Revenue Account Changes

On 29 October 2018, the Government confirmed that the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) borrowing cap would be abolished with immediate effect. Local authorities with an HRA are therefore no longer constrained by Government controls over borrowing for housebuilding and other investments, and are able to borrow against their expected rental income. The HRA is fully explored in chapter 12.

#### 4.7 - Use of receipts from Right to Buy sales

In a response to a [consultation on the use of receipts from Right to Buy sales](#) the Government has announced the following changes are being made:

- Extending the timeframe local authorities have to spend new and existing Right to Buy receipts from 3 years to 5 years. This will make it easier for local authorities to undertake longer-term planning, including remediation of larger plots of land.
- Increasing the percentage cost of a new home that local authorities can fund using Right to Buy receipts from 30% to 40%. This will make it easier for authorities to fund replacement homes using Right to Buy receipts, as well as making it easier to build homes for social rent
- Introducing a cap on the use of Right to Buy receipts for acquisitions to help drive new supply.

- Allowing receipts to be used for shared ownership and First Homes, as well as housing at affordable and social rent, to help local authorities build the types of home most needed in their communities.

These changes took effect from 1 April 2021, with the exception of the acquisition cap, which was introduced from 1 April 2022, on a phased basis.

## 4.8 - Social Housing White Paper

In November 2020 the Government published [‘The charter for social housing residents: social housing white paper’](#) for England. The Charter sets out what every social housing resident should be able to expect:

1. To be safe in your home.
2. To know how your landlord is performing.
3. To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly.
4. To be treated with respect.
5. To have your voice heard by your landlord.
6. To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in.
7. To be supported to take your first step to ownership.

To deliver on this the Government will work with the Regulator of Social Housing to create a consumer regulatory regime, strengthening the formal standards against which landlords are regulated. Among the measures in the white paper are the following: a set of tenant satisfaction measures will be created, the complaints process and monitoring will be strengthened and the Decent Homes Standard will be reviewed.

The paper provides a broad framework for reform, but the detail of many of the proposals requires further development and some of the reforms require primary legislation before they can be implemented. In the Queen’s Speech 2022 the Government confirmed that a Social Housing Regulation Bill would be introduced in the 2022-23 parliamentary session.

The Regulator of Social Housing has consulted on new Tenant Satisfaction Measures and expect the new measures to come into force on 1 April 2023.

We explore the impacts of the white paper on the Council’s own housing stock in chapter 10.

## 4.9 - Planning Policy changes

The First Homes scheme launched in England in June 2021. First Homes is a new home-ownership affordable housing tenure with a minimum 30% discount against market value, with a maximum cap on the first sale after the discount is applied of £250,000. A minimum of 25 per cent of all affordable housing units secured through developer contributions should be First Homes. Initially these will be secured through section 106 planning obligations but, under proposed reforms, these would subsequently be secured through the Infrastructure Levy – see below. Local plans that have been

submitted for examination before 28 June 2021 are not required to reflect the First Homes policy requirements.

New Permitted Development Rights came into force on 1 August 2021. They permit the conversion of buildings currently falling under Class E (commercial / business / service uses) to residential properties, without the need for full planning permission, so long as prior approval is sought and a set of conditions are met - the building being redeveloped must have been vacant for 3 months, size is limited to 1,500 square metres, there should be a window in every room, the building must have been in commercial, business or service use for two years prior to conversion. It remains to be seen if this leads to development of poorer quality housing in the city in the future.

The Government first set out its agenda for planning reform for England in the Planning for the Future white paper in August 2020. The Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill 2022-23 introduced in May 2022 (following on from the Levelling Up White Paper Feb 2022) incorporates some of the proposals for planning reform outlined in the Planning for the Future white paper.

The Bill as it currently stands (June 2022) include:

- The introduction of an infrastructure levy, intended to replace the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and most developer contributions to local infrastructure via section 106 agreements;
- Simplified and standardised local plan process where the scope of local plans will be limited to 'locally specific' matters, with 'issues that apply in most areas' to be covered by National Development Management Policies.
- Local planning authorities would be required to make all planning decisions in accordance with their development plan (consisting of local and neighbourhood plans, spatial development strategy and supplementary plan) and any national development management policies unless material considerations strongly indicated otherwise. Any conflict between the development plan and a national development management policy (designated as such by the Secretary of State) would have to be resolved in favour of the national development management policy;
- A duty for local planning authorities to draw up a local design code;
- Abolish local authorities' duty to cooperate with prescribed bodies with regard to plan making, which would be replaced by a requirement to assist with certain plan making;

#### 4.10 - The Covid-19 Pandemic and the cost of living crisis

The Covid-19 pandemic that first struck the country and the world in spring 2020 introduced unprecedented challenges across all sectors of society, including local authorities. In order to tackle these challenges, the City Council introduced new ways to deliver services to our communities.

The Council modified the way the contact centre operated at the very start of the pandemic, realising that the population in Oxford would need to be supported in different ways under the very new circumstances. Local Response Hubs were set up across the city, operating from community centres in the city. The hubs were managed by Oxford City Council staff and included multi-disciplinary teams from across the Council (including housing) and partners from primary care networks. Originally set up to ensure the most vulnerable people received assistance and support, the new way of working locally in smaller areas of the city has been very successful and is now informing the re-shaping of some aspects of community and housing service delivery in the city.

As all Council offices closed with staff working from home, our housing options service moved from seeing households faced with homelessness in person, to conducting phone interviews and relying on customers to provide applications and supporting documentation via e-mail. Face to face interviews have taken place for single homeless people and rough sleepers at Floyds Row since the start of the pandemic. There is at present no electronic application forms for the majority of the services delivered through Housing Services.

Our housing company's and other's housebuilding programme was put on hold early on in the pandemic due to the initial lock down that restricted most employment activities across the country from taking place if they could not be done from home. With housebuilding resuming again in the summer of 2020, we have mitigated delays and the build programme remains on track.

At the start of the pandemic at the end of March 2020, the Government introduced measures to help prevent households from becoming homeless. Initially temporary measures, mortgage payment holidays, a ban on evictions from both social and private rented housing and an extension of notice periods, continued for an extended period of time. At the end of March 2020, local authorities were also asked by Government to provide self-contained accommodation through the 'Everyone In' scheme to rough sleepers, those who were accommodated in shelters with shared sleeping areas and to people who were at risk of sleeping rough.

Other measures introduced by the Government, like the furlough scheme, the alignment of the LHA rate to the 30<sup>th</sup> percentile in each Broad Market Area, pause on deductions for benefit overpayments and a temporary top-up of £20 per week for Universal Credit claimants, contributed to assist households struggling with finances to be in a better position to meet their housing costs. Whilst these measures have unfortunately not been enough for some, they have ensured far fewer households have been affected by unemployment or a loss of income than would have been the case if these measures had not been put into place at all. Many of these measures came to an end during spring or autumn 2021 and we are still to see what effect this will have on communities. We anticipate that financial hardship will hit many households in Oxford due to the end of measures like the £20 Universal Credit top-up.

As the country started to adapt to the pandemic and the launch of the government ['living with Covid-19'](#) response in early 2022, that focussed on enabling society and the economy to open up, and moving to a new phase of managing the pandemic, the country has seen rapidly rising inflation, resulting in a fall in disposable income for households. Exacerbated by increases in tax, as well as particularly high increases to energy costs, the effects on finances (for all parts of society, households, businesses, statutory bodies) has led to a 'cost of living crisis'.

Of particular concern, is the steep increase to energy bills, with fears that households and businesses not being able to afford to pay bills, resulting in closures of businesses and further increased costs to customers, and households falling into debt and arrears, which ultimately can result in homelessness if housing costs cannot be met.

The government has introduced some measures to assist households cope with increasing costs, including energy bill discounts to all households, and additional discounts for households on lower incomes. It is feared however, that the support committed to as of September 2022, is not going to be sufficient.

The longer-term impacts of the pandemic and the current cost of living crisis are not known at present, but the financial impact is likely to have be felt by households over the next year. We anticipate that there will be long-lasting effects that will affect local authorities for many years. The



immediate and predicted effects on homelessness, and the measures put in place both locally and nationally, will be discussed in more details in chapter 5.

#### 4.11 - Domestic Abuse Act 2021

A new Domestic Abuse Act comes into force in 2021 which places new duties on local authorities. ([Domestic Abuse Act fact sheet](#)) Measures in the Act include:

- A statutory definition of domestic abuse, emphasising that domestic abuse is not just physical violence, but can also be emotional, coercive or controlling, and economic abuse. As part of this definition, children will be explicitly recognised as victims if they see, hear or otherwise experience the effects of abuse.
- Extending the controlling or coercive behaviour offence to cover post-separation abuse.
- A duty on local authorities in England to provide support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation.
- All eligible homeless victims of domestic abuse automatically have 'priority need' for homelessness assistance.
- When local authorities rehouse victims of domestic abuse, they do not lose a secure lifetime or assured tenancy.
- A new Domestic Abuse Protection Notice and Domestic Abuse Protection Order, which will prevent perpetrators from contacting their victims, as well as force them to take positive steps to change their behaviour, e.g. seeking mental health support.

Oxfordshire County Council, as the Tier-1 authority, is responsible for carrying out a needs assessment and then develop a strategy based on this. As a Tier 2 authority, the City Council is required to cooperate and in the development and the delivery of the strategy.

During November 2021, the [County Council consulted](#) on the new '[Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy 2021-2024](#)'. This strategy outlines how Oxfordshire will implement the new statutory duties associated with the provision of safe accommodation as details in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. This strategy outlines what kind of accommodation and support should be made available to persons experiencing domestic abuse. The safe accommodation strategy has been developed and will be delivered alongside the broader Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Strategy 2019-2024.

#### 4.12 Health and Housing

Housing conditions have a great impact on people's physical and mental health. A range of studies have been carried out over the last few years to show the link between housing conditions and health outcomes. [The Health Foundation](#) carried out a study in December 2020, showing that:

- The quality of the property may impact negatively on physical health - for example, if a person's home is cold, hard to heat or suffers from damp, the inhabitants, particularly any children, will be more likely to experience respiratory issues, physical pain and headaches.
- Properties which are overcrowded for the household living there and where, for example, there is no outdoor space, have been found to act as a stressor harming both physical and mental health.
- Housing instability - typically in private rented accommodation, where people have less control over how long they can live in their home and therefore experience feelings of



insecurity - has been linked to increased stress levels and poor health outcomes. Frequent house moves can reduce engagement with health and other services and weaken links to local communities, adversely affecting health.

- Housing affordability - a growing number of people are spending more than 30% of their income on rent, which combined with rising costs in other essential areas (food, utilities) and below-inflation (if any) pay increases, is another cause of stress and associated negative health outcomes. A reduction in disposable income means people are less able to spend on things which may promote good physical and mental health, such as better quality food, exercise and leisure activities. Affordability issues also drive overcrowding, as people look to share the cost of living.

Around £7.5m households in England were estimated to live in poor housing in 2016/17. Poor housing involved either overcrowding, affordability issues, or living in a non-decent home. The introduction of the Decent Homes standard for social housing in 2000 - both a tool used to measure the standards of socially-rented homes and a multi-billion pound investment programme from central government - has seen an improvement in overall housing conditions for many. However, the quality of homes in the private rented sector is not subject to the same standards.

[Research](#) also shows that poor housing plays a significant part in driving health inequalities, and that people in low-income households are more likely to be affected by housing problems and experience higher housing costs.

As we will see in chapter 6 below in this review, physical and mental health issues, and unaffordability, are all drivers of homelessness. Ensuring people feel safe in their homes and live in good quality homes, is therefore important in order to prevent homelessness, and also tackle inequalities in the city.

## 5.0 - What is the extent of the homelessness problem in Oxford?

### Key Findings – What is the extent of the homelessness problem in Oxford?

- The introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act means that we are working with more households to prevent and relive their homelessness than in the past
- We have seen a gradual reduction in the number of households that have to be provided with temporary accommodation over the last 8 years, showing that we are preventing more households from becoming homeless.
- The number of rough sleepers in Oxford is on a downward trend after peaking in 2017, but is still very high when compared to other local authorities.
- Overall, the level of homelessness in Oxford is significantly higher than in our neighbouring local authorities.
- The overall picture on the level of homelessness has improved slightly compared to 2018, when the previous homelessness strategy came into place. Some of the improvement to the level of homelessness can likely be attributed to an increase in funding for homelessness services from the national Rough Sleeping Initiative and other funding streams, allowing for the provision of extra homelessness prevention support, as well as providing more services for rough sleepers.
- Caution must be taken when using the trends in homelessness of recent years to project future rates, with the pandemic's and the cost of living crisis full impacts yet to be felt, with ending of furlough, rise in unemployment and the eviction ban likely to contribute to a strong upward pressure on homelessness rates in the coming year.

To get a clear picture of the level of homelessness we are now facing in Oxford, we first need to define what homelessness means for the purpose of this review. As homelessness comes in many different forms, it can sometimes be difficult to account for, but in order to get as comprehensive picture as possible, we have included a number of different 'categories' of homelessness in this review and describe the trends for these over the last few years. These are:

- Households where we owe a statutory duty to assist to Prevent and Relieve homelessness
- Households where we have accepted a Main Duty
- Households in temporary accommodation
- Households included on the General Register for social housing and who are in the highest preference groups.
- Rough sleeping
- Hidden homelessness

In addition to the data for Oxford City in relation to the categories above, the information published by Shelter in the report [‘This is England: A picture of homelessness in 2019’](#) should also be considered when investigating the extent of homelessness in Oxford. The report has access to less local data sources than this review so is likely less accurate, but can instead provide a consistent measure across English local authorities, and therefore allows for a good national comparison of levels of homelessness. According to the report, Oxford ranked 111<sup>th</sup> out of 317 local authorities in England for homelessness as proportion compared to the overall population. The number of persons estimated to be homeless in Oxford at the time of the report was 237.

The level of homelessness for individual local authorities was calculated in the report using:

- Estimated no of people homeless and living in temporary accommodation arranged by the Council as at March 2019
- Estimated no. of people homeless and living in temporary accommodation arranged by them or homeless at home as at March 2019
- Number that were rough sleeping as at Autumn 2018

The three local authorities in England with the highest rates of homelessness as compared to their population was Newham, Haringey and Kensington & Chelsea.

This is how the level of homelessness in Oxford compares against local neighbours, and the peer group of authorities with similar local contexts, in 2019 when the report was produced. It should be noted however, that this data is pre-pandemic, and the numbers are likely to look very different in early 2021, primarily due to the 'Everyone In' scheme that saw a large number of people at imminent risk of rough sleeping and those experiencing rough sleeping accommodated in interim accommodation.

	<b>Estimated total no. of people who are homeless</b>	<b>Rate of ppl who are homeless (1 in x people)</b>	<b>Net rank (England)</b>
<b>Oxford</b>	237	651	111
<b>Cherwell</b>	76	1,963	208
<b>South Oxfordshire</b>	28	5,018	278
<b>Vale of White Horse</b>	28	4,776	276
<b>West Oxfordshire</b>	12	9,150	295
<b>Bristol</b>	1,609	288	62
<b>Cambridge</b>	181	695	118
<b>Milton Keynes</b>	1,959	137	37
<b>Reading</b>	593	275	60

Source: This is England: A picture of homelessness in 2019 – Shelter

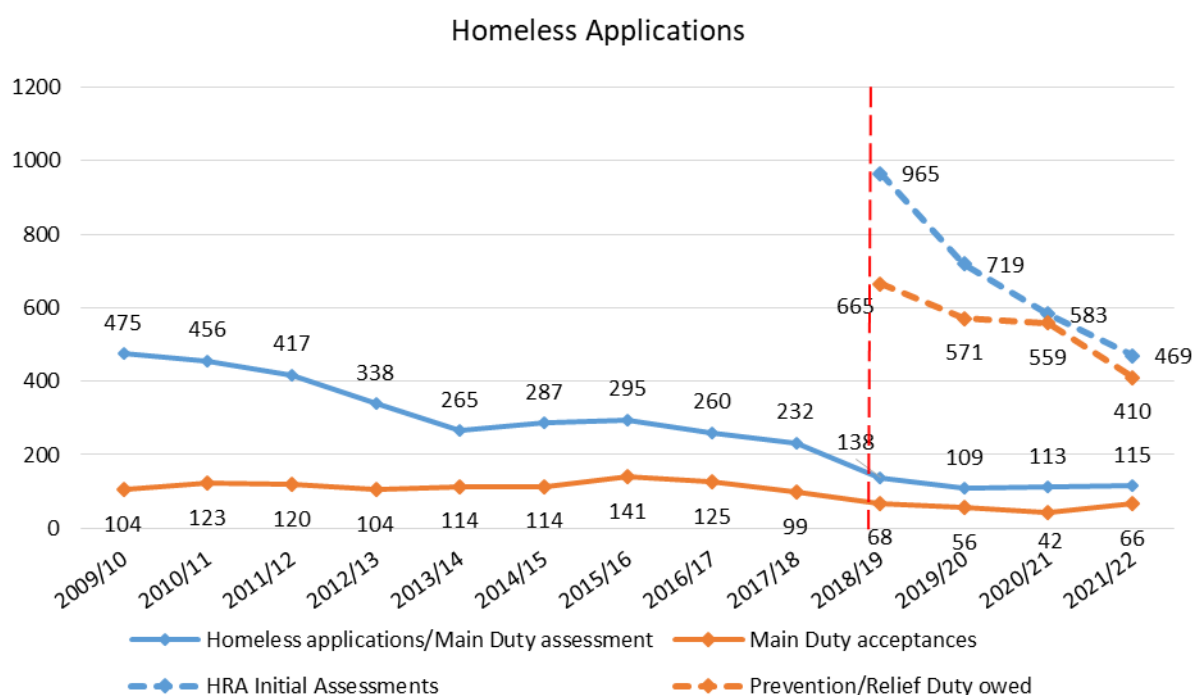
## 5.1 - Households at risk of becoming homeless and homeless households that we owe a duty to support

We are obliged by law to support certain households to relieve their homelessness either if they are already homeless and need assistance to secure accommodation; or to seek to prevent households from becoming homeless in the first place if they are threatened within homelessness within 56 days. We owe prevention and relief duties to all eligible households, irrespective of whether the applicant may or may not have priority need or is considered intentionally homeless. This service is delivered through the Housing Options team (part of Housing Needs) in Oxford City Council.

If our efforts to work with a household to prevent and relieve their homelessness have been unsuccessful and the household is homeless, we then owe a Main homelessness duty (Main Duty) towards applicants who are deemed to be eligible, in priority need, with a local connection and are unintentionally homeless. The Main Duty and definition has not changed since the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA), but households are now only owed a Main Duty if their homelessness has not been prevented or relieved.

Before the introduction of the HRA, we only had to accept homeless applications and offer assessments to those we believed were eligible and at risk of homelessness within 28 days, and we would only owe a Main Duty to those who were also in priority need and unintentionally homeless.

The introduction of the new duties under the HRA has therefore significantly widened the scope of who we work with, which has ultimately resulted in a significant increase in the number of households we complete an assessment for and who owe a duty towards overall. We can see this if we compare the number of households owed a prevention or relief duty – ranging between 665 and 410 between 2018/19 and 2021/22 to the number of households owed a Main Duty pre HRA which at its highest was 141. We can also see the increase by looking at the number of applications or assessments were carried out pre and post HRA. The number of homeless applications taken prior to the introduction of the HRA was at its highest 10 years ago at 475. Since 2013/14 however, the number of applications taken have ranged between 232 and 295. In 2018/19 when HRA was first introduced, we carried out 965 assessments. This number has gradually reduced and in 2021/22 we carried out 469 assessment, which is still significantly higher than the number of homeless applications we assessed in the years prior to the implementation of the HRA. As commented on in chapter 4.1, we treat the data from the early years of the implementation of the HRA with some caution as we, as all local authorities, were implementing significant changes to processes and procedures, as well as data collection during this period.



Source: MHCLG P1E Homelessness returns (2010/11 to 2017/18) and [DLUHC Statistical data set: Live tables on homelessness for relevant years](#)

We should however point out that the changes to the way we work under the HRA does mean that it is very difficult to draw clear conclusions on overall levels of homelessness from comparisons between pre and post 2018 data, as already mentioned in chapter 4.1. This is because the new duties are aimed at preventing and relieving homelessness, meaning that fewer households are then assessed for Main Duty than previously due to better prevention and relief work resolving their

cases before a main duty decision is made. This makes it more difficult to judge if actual homelessness levels have increased or decreased in the period through looking at Housing Options activity, aside from the clear increase of demand on the team from having to deliver the new HRA requirements, but does indicate more households are receiving support earlier to prevent and relieve their homelessness situation, and having their situation resolved before they need to have a Main Duty decision.

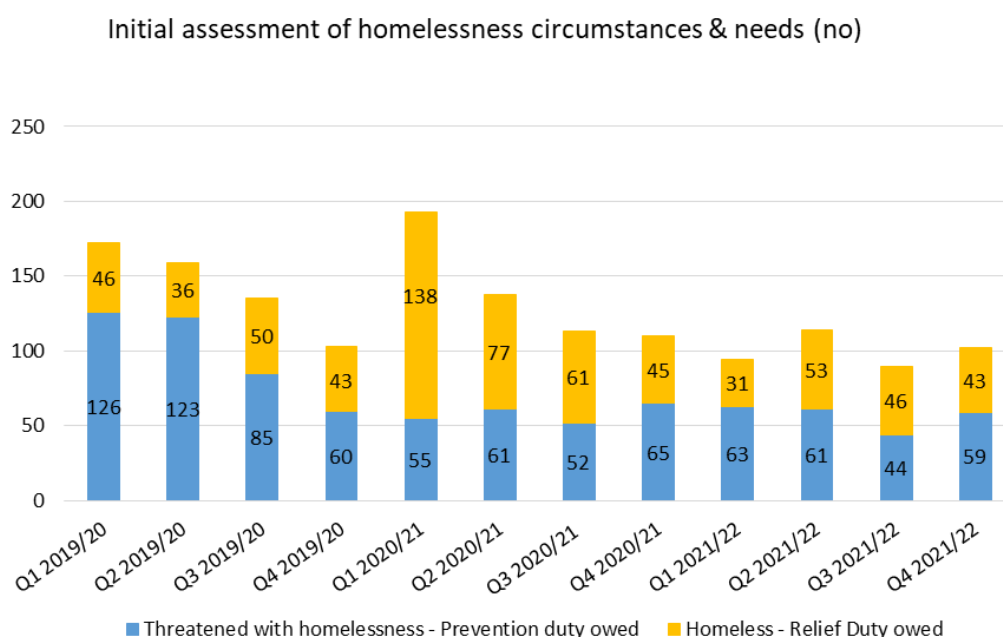
## 5.2 - Prevention and Relief Duties

The number of Prevention or Relief Duties we have accepted has fluctuated since over the years since the HRA was introduced.

The first quarter of 2020/21 saw a sharp increase in the number of households we owed a duty towards, which is primarily linked to the Covid-19 crisis and the provision of emergency housing for all rough sleepers (and acceptance of a Relief Duty). Subsequent quarters have seen levels of duties owed reduce to levels more comparable to previous periods and more normal circumstances. We expect that the overall reduction in duties owed during 2020/21 is a result of fewer households approaching us who are threatened with homelessness due to being asked to leave their private rented accommodation. We continued to see lower number of households owed a duty towards in the quarters following the pandemic compared to both pre-pandemic and pandemic levels. However, since summer 2022, we have started to see an increase again, which we provisionally link to the cost of living crisis.

As we will explore further in Chapter 7, we saw a reduction in the reason for homelessness being asked to leave PRS accommodation during 2020/21 due to a ban on evictions introduced by government during the pandemic. Since the ban was lifted during spring 2021, we have seen a gradual increase in people approaching us due to being asked to leave their accommodation.

The graph below illustrates the level of initial assessments of homelessness and needs (HRA Initial Assessments) that have been carried out since April 2019 and the outcome of these assessments.



Source: [DLUHC Statistical data set: Live tables on homelessness for relevant periods](#)

Before the pandemic, we accepted significantly more Prevention Duties than Relief Duties. The sharp increase in Relief Duties accepted during the first 6 months of 2020/21 (Q1 and Q2) is due to the 'Everyone In' mandate. All rough sleepers and single homeless people accommodated through the schemes set up from end of March 2020, were offered an initial assessment resulting in a Relief Duty. The proportion of Prevention Duties owed has since then started to increase.

In 2019/20 the proportion of households for which we accepted a Prevention or Relief duty was lower than the national average, but broadly in line with the regional average for the South East. Compared to the other local authorities in Oxfordshire, the proportion of accepted duties was significantly higher, based on the number of households resident in the areas.

During the same period, the percentage Prevention Duties we accepted as a percentage of duties accepted was significantly higher than the national and regional average. This indicated that households come to us for assistance before they are homeless and this improves the chances of us preventing homelessness from happening. Apart from West Oxfordshire, the other local authorities in the County show a similar picture, whilst areas like Bristol and Reading have a very high percentage of Relief Duties accepted.

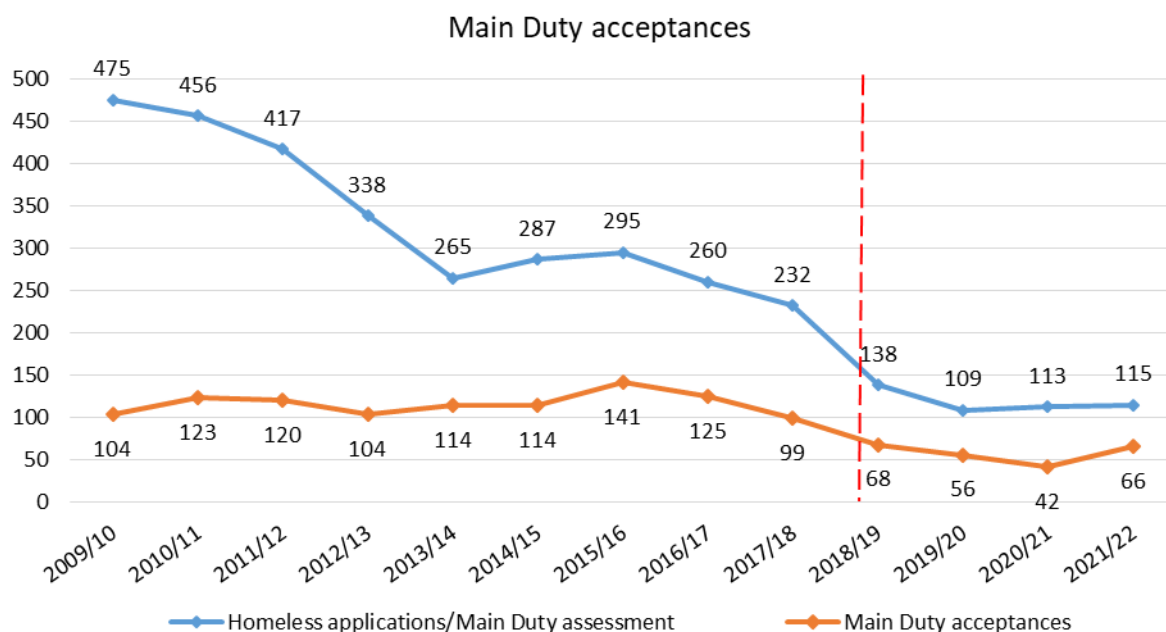
This picture has however changed significantly following the pandemic. When comparing 2019/20 (pre-pandemic year) and 2021/22 (we are refraining from using data for 2020/21 due to the significant impacts of the pandemic), we have seen a reduction in the number of duties we have accepted, which is a larger reduction when compared to the national and regional averages. We have also seen the number of prevention duties reduced, whilst the number of relief duties we accepted increased. This is an indication that more households now approach us when they are homeless. Most local authorities in our comparator group has seen the same development. However, South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse, has notably seen an increase in Prevention Duties they accept.

	2021/22 (compared to 2019/20 data)			
	Total households assessed as a duty owed	Total households assessed as duty owed per (000s) households	Households owed Prevention Duty % of total duties owed	Households owed Relief Duty % of total duties owed
<b>Oxford</b>	410 (33% reduction)	7.73 (-2.94)	57% (-12% points)	43% (+12% points)
<b>South East</b>	34,430 (16% reduction)	8.9 (-1.75)	50% (-4% points)	50% (+4% points)
<b>England</b>	278,110 (4% reduction)	11.65 (-0.66)	48% (-4% points)	52% (+4% points)
<b>Cherwell</b>	376 (8% reduction)	5.97 (-0.67)	42% (-28% points)	58% (+28% points)
<b>South Oxfordshire</b>	374 (2% reduction)	6.45 (-0.67)	89% (+7% points)	11% (7% point drop)
<b>Vale of White Horse</b>	400 (16% increase)	6.77 (+0.83)	86% (+5% points)	14% (-5% points)
<b>West Oxfordshire</b>	262 (9% reduction)	5.46 (-0.63)	36% (-17% points)	64% (+17% points)
<b>Bristol</b>	2,741 (27% increase)	13.84 (+3.13)	19% (-9% points)	81% (+9% points)
<b>Cambridge</b>	618 (6% reduction)	14.05 (-0.89)	43% (+7% points)	57% (-7% points)
<b>Milton Keynes</b>	1,479 (49% reduction)	13.70 (-9.16)	35% (-13% points)	65% (+13% points)
<b>Reading</b>	980 (2% reduction)	14.85 (-0.39)	28% (-4% points)	72% (+4% points)

Source: [DLUHC Statistical data set: Live tables on homelessness for relevant periods](#). Please note: As commented on in chapter 4.1, we treat the data from the early years of the implementation of the HRA with some caution as we, as all local authorities, were implementing significant changes to processes and procedures, as well as data collection during this period. The comparison between 2019/20 and 2021/22 should therefore also be treated with caution.

### 5.3 - Main Homelessness Duty

Due to successful work under prevention and relief duty, the number of households we assessed for Main Duty, reduced following the implementation of the HRA. In 2021/22, 115 households were assessed for a Main Duty with 66 of these (57%) accepted. In previous years, we have assessed between 232 and 475 applications for Main Duty. A reduction in the number of Main Duty decisions made has also been a national trend following the implementation of the HRA.



Source: MHCLG P1E Homelessness returns (2010/11 to 2017/18) and [DLUHC Statistical data set: Live tables on homelessness for relevant periods](#)

Despite the decline in the total number of Main Duties assessed, the proportion of acceptances for Main Duty decisions has increased compared to previous years. The proportion of acceptances was at its highest in 2021/22 at 57%, whilst in 2009/10, the rate was only 21.9%. Whenever possible, we try to resolve homelessness before a case move on to a Main Duty, and in particular where we suspect that any decision under Main Duty would be a negative one (not homeless, not in priority need, intentionally homeless), as such a decision limits what the local authority can do to assist in the future. This approach has contributed to the increase to the proportion of decisions resulting in Main Duty owed. Compared to the national and regional averages however, our acceptance rate per total decision made is still lower.

When looking at Main Duty acceptance rates per 1,000 households in an area, our acceptance rate has generally been lower than the average for England over the years. Our acceptance rate is also lower than that of the South East and our comparator local authorities outside of Oxfordshire. We see this, along with the decrease in the overall number of Main Duty assessments carried out, as evidence of us preventing and relieving homelessness effectively, as this ultimately results in there being no need to progress the case and assess a Main Duty. However, our acceptance rate was higher than other local authorities in Oxfordshire. We know that our neighbouring districts do good prevention and relief work, which supports our view that a lower level of main duty acceptance is linked to preventing greater levels of homelessness.



	<b>2021/22 (compared to 2019/20 data)</b>		
	<b>Total number of main duty decisions 2021/22 (compared to 2019/20 data)</b>	<b>Main Duty owed as % of total Main Duty decisions</b>	<b>Households assessed as Main Duty owed per (000s) households</b>
<b>Oxford</b>	115 (5% increase)	58% (+7% points)	1.25 (+0.21)
<b>South East</b>	8,410 (13% decrease)	67% (+3% points)	1.50 (-0.12)
<b>England</b>	62,070 (1% decrease)	68% (+4% points)	1.76 (+0.05)
<b>Cherwell</b>	43 (21% increase)	74% (+37% points)	0.51 (+0.30)
<b>South Oxfordshire</b>	15 (72% decrease)	66% (+7% points)	0.17 (-0.16)
<b>Vale of White Horse</b>	29 (no change)	72% (+24% points)	0.36 (+0.11)
<b>West Oxfordshire</b>	103 (33% increase)	88% (+15% points)	1.90 (+0.75)
<b>Bristol</b>	1,305 (39% increase)	79% (-1% point)	5.23 (+1.61)
<b>Cambridge</b>	176 (18% decrease)	58% (+16% points)	2.34 (+0.32)
<b>Milton Keynes</b>	434 (60% decrease)	82% (-9% points)	3.30 (-3.52)
<b>Reading</b>	218 (10% decrease)	72% (+5% points)	2.40 (-0.11)

Source: [DLUHC Statistical data set: Live tables on homelessness for relevant periods](#)

## 5.4 - Temporary Accommodation

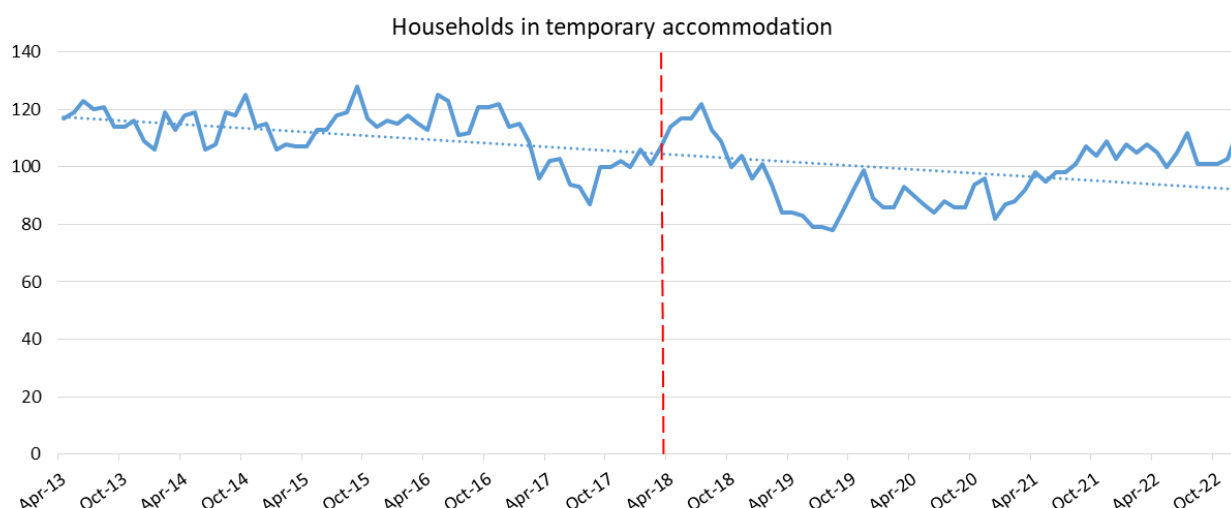
Under certain circumstances the Council has a legal obligation to provide temporary accommodation to homeless applicants.

The number of households in temporary accommodation over the last decade has followed a fluctuating, but gradually declining trajectory. There was a clear reduction between summer 2018 and autumn 2019 from over 120 to under 80. The numbers have since fluctuated, but have broadly remained in line with the declining trend of the past decade. This is contradictory to trends for many other local authorities that have seen the need to use temporary accommodation since the introduction of the HRA. However, despite this positive picture, since the pandemic started we have seen an increase in the number placements of households in temporary accommodation.

Most of the temporary accommodation stock the Council operates is either owned directly by the Council through its housing revenue account or its general fund. Historically the Council has made more use of private sector leased properties for temporary accommodation but has moved away from this expensive model, with greater in-house provision, supported by investment in new stock including units in Bicester and outside Didcot. In urgent circumstances households can be placed in “nightly charge” accommodation, such as a hotel or B&B, to ensure they have a place to stay at very short notice. This is kept to a minimum, and stays in this form of accommodation typically last days before moving to more suitable accommodation. The Council is also committed to no B&B use for families over 6 weeks, with no family stays in B&B over 6 weeks recorded for many years.

It is a priority for the Council to keep the number of households in temporary accommodation as low as possible, and only use this option as a last resort and when all other prevention and relief activities have been unsuccessful. Living in temporary accommodation can have a detrimental and destabilising effect on households, in particular children, and the provision and management of such accommodation is expensive for the Council.

Whilst the overall number of households in temporary accommodation has reduced over the last decade, we have seen a change to the household make-up of those placed, with a marked increase in singles placed in temporary accommodation in previous years.



*Please note: Data for the period April 2013 to March 2021 is calculated as per the P1E definition. From April 2021, the number of households in temporary accommodation shows the actual number of households occupying temporary accommodation. The numbers up until March 2021 and the number from April 2021 are therefore not directly comparable. Data from April 2021 does include those who have had a negative decision and where duty has been discharged for example, whilst the P1E definition does not include such households. Source: P1E data and OCC internal data collection*

Compared to national and regional levels, our level of households in temporary accommodation remains low. Compared to the other local authorities in the County however, we have a high number of households in temporary accommodation. This is likely to stem from the greater levels of demand because Oxford city is an urban authority with higher levels of deprivation.

We explore temporary accommodation in greater detail in chapter 8.

	Total number of households in TA Dec 2019	Number of households in TA Dec 2019 per (000s)	Total number of households in TA Dec 2020	Number of households in TA Dec 2020 per (000s)	Total number of households in TA Dec 2021	Number of households in TA Dec 2021 per (000s)
<b>Oxford</b>	87	1.58	82	1.53	100	1.88
<b>South East</b>	8,820	2.32	10,340	2.71	10,820	2.83
<b>England</b>	88,310	3.78	95,100	4.04	96,410	4.07
<b>Cherwell</b>	24	0.4	20	0.33	20	0.32
<b>South Oxfordshire</b>	10	0.18	22	0.38	5	0.09
<b>Vale of White Horse</b>	8	0.15	14	0.25	17	0.29
<b>West Oxfordshire</b>	22	0.48	28	0.59	51	1.07
<b>Bristol</b>	561	2.88	910	4.65	1,002	5.09

	Total number of households in TA Dec 2019	Number of households in TA Dec 2019 per (000s)	Total number of households in TA Dec 2020	Number of households in TA Dec 2020 per (000s)	Total number of households in TA Dec 2021	Number of households in TA Dec 2021 per (000s)
<b>Cambridge</b>	106	2.41	91	2.07	106	2.42
<b>Milton Keynes</b>	690	6.34	1,071	10.03	989	9.20
<b>Reading</b>	150	2.27	195	2.99	172	2.63

Source: [DLUHC Statistical data set: Live tables on homelessness for relevant periods](#) (including households numbers as published in relevant tables)

## 5.5 - Households included on the register for social housing

The number of households included on the register for social housing in Oxford gives us an indication of how many households are seeking and waiting to access alternative more secure, suitable and affordable accommodation than they are currently in.

Oxford as of October 2022 has 2,960 households registered on the Councils register for social housing, or 5.4% of the city's population. 1,729 of these are on the general register, made up of households who do not currently live in social housing in Oxford, and 1,231 on the transfer register, households who are currently in social housing and seeking to move.

The Oxford housing register prioritises households via a criteria that places each household in band from 1 (being top priority) to 5, based on their circumstances. Of 2,960 households, 1,563 or 52.8% were placed into bands 1-4, due to hitting certain criteria that demonstrates their additional housing need. 1,397 or 47.2% have been placed in band 5, deemed as not hitting any band criteria and therefore not in sufficient housing need to be placed in a higher band.

The criteria that determine which band a household is placed into include examples such as overcrowding, under occupation, and homelessness. Breaking these criteria down to see how many households these are applicable for helps show where housing need is currently emerging from outside of the social housing stock (in bands 1-4 on just the general register, so excluding the transfer register). The largest group of 359 (46.6%) households were due to overcrowding in the current home, followed by 293 (38.0%) households currently either homeless or at risk of homelessness, followed by 54 (7.0%) due to a health or disability need, 38 (4.9%) awarded priority through an exceptional circumstance, and 27 (3.5%) in a variety of other smaller categories. There will be some cross over within these groups with households able to fit under multiple categories, with some households coming under the reason which gives them their greatest priority. Chapter 8 explores the distribution of allocations of social housing to each of these categories.

Around 3.1% of Oxford's households were on the general register in 2022 seeking to move into social housing (excluding those already in social housing seeking to be rehoused). The number of households on the general register has fluctuated over the recent few years, and we need to be careful to draw conclusions on trends with no clear pattern emerging, with it more likely the fluctuations are linked to periodic drives to improve the management of the register by staff through the updating of information, which often sees many households excluded due to finding changes in their circumstances or a failure to reapply.

When comparing the number on the general register to other local authorities it can be observed we are roughly in line with our comparator urban authorities, who also have their own housing stock.

The comparison however has limited use, with similar seemingly random fluctuations in the numbers on the lists observable in the other authorities' data. The number of people on the register is likely only providing a partial indication of demand for social housing in each area, with each authority managing its own allocation scheme and register rules, that may include or exclude different groups, with different profiles and levels of social housing stock likely existing across the areas which could impact demand.

Certainly the earlier findings of this review have shown acute demand for affordable housing in the city, with a long term undersupply of affordable housing that people can bid on through the housing register, but this high and growing demand is not seen in Oxford's housing register data over recent years. This creates the question of to what extent do the current rules and eligibility of the Council allocations scheme exclude people from the housing register, masking true demand? And how many people in the city do not apply for social housing who would benefit from it, because they know how unlikely they are to be successful in gaining housing due to this undersupply?

#### Percentage of households on the housing waiting list (excl transfer applicants)

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Oxford City Council	4.4%	3.9%	3.0%	2.6%	3.1%
Bristol City Council	5.1%	4.6%	6.1%	6.3%	7.0%
Cambridge City Council	4.9%	5.0%	5.3%	5.9%	3.8%
Milton Keynes Council	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.2%	2.5%
Reading Borough Council	7.8%	7.0%	7.2%	4.4%	4.4%

## 5.6 - Rough Sleeping

The number of persons rough sleeping in the city has increased significantly in the last 8 years, mirroring a national trend and peaking in 2017 with 63 persons counted during the annual street count<sup>1</sup>. Since then, the number of rough sleepers has decreased. The decrease can in part be attributed to the additional funding the Council has put into initiatives tackling rough sleeping, including funds received from the Government's Rough Sleeping Initiative.

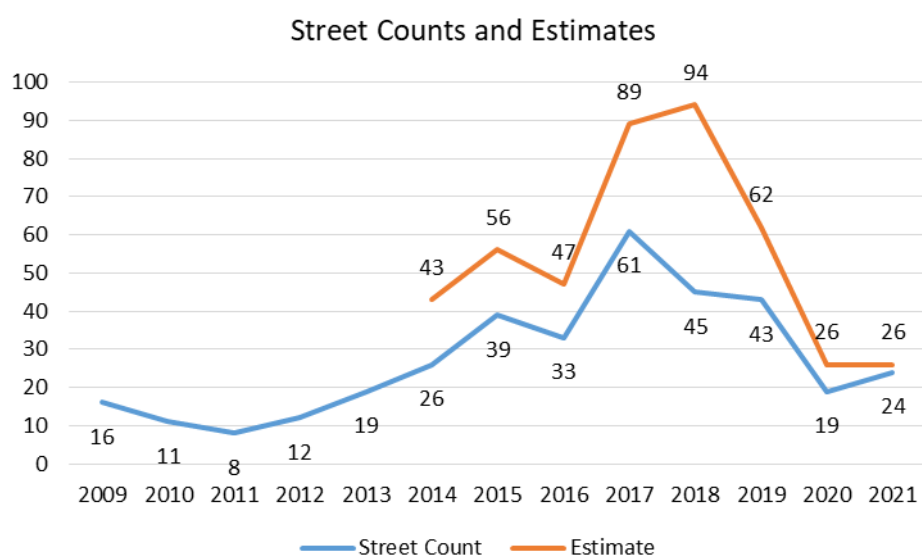
In 2020, the number of rough sleepers reduced to levels last seen in 2013, achieved as part of the 'Everyone In' mandate. Under this mandate, all local authorities in the country were asked to provide accommodation for all rough sleepers and those accommodated in communal areas to allow people to live in self-contained accommodation during the pandemic.

Between March 2020 and the end of January 2021, we accommodated 319 individuals in interim accommodation under 'Everyone In', including around 60 persons who were decanted from communal settings into interim accommodation at the end of March 2020. In mid-March 2021, 116 people were accommodated across three sites of interim accommodation - 92 were rough sleeping at the time they accessed the provision, and the remaining 24 had been at imminent risk of rough

<sup>1</sup> Street counts are one of two methods local authorities are advised to use in order to arrive at and report rough sleeping numbers to government on an annual basis. Street counts are carried out on one night in November of every year, where people seen bedded down are counted. To carry out an estimate of those rough sleeping is the second method, and that used to our neighbouring Districts to report the number of rough sleepers. This is an intelligence and multi-agency based exercise, where all those believed to be rough sleeping on a set night in November are included.

sleeping at time of access. Our last remaining interim accommodation as part of this initiative, closed in February 2022.

Since the end of the 'Everyone In' mandate and accompanying funding, the number of people seen rough sleeping in the city has increased. Whilst the number of persons rough sleeping in Oxford remains high for a city of Oxford size, with 4.62 persons rough sleeping per 10,000 households in 2021 (using the street count number for 2021), this number has reduced significantly from almost 8 persons rough sleeping per 10,000 households in 2019.



The high number of rough sleepers is likely due to a range of factors, including the expensive and competitive Oxford housing market causing people to lose accommodation, alongside the well documented pull factors of people who sleep rough from surrounding areas to larger urban areas, made greater in Oxford due to its good range of statutory and charitable services on offer for people.

There was a reduction to the number of rough sleepers was seen across the country in 2020 compared to previous years. However, when comparing street count and estimate numbers for 2020 to previous years however, DLUHC advises that *'This year's rough sleeping snapshot coincided with a national lockdown throughout November and many areas were in the highest tier of restrictions in October. This is likely to have impacted people's risk of rough sleeping and should be noted when comparing this year's annual snapshot figures with previous years.'* Most local authorities would also have had some form of emergency accommodation available to rough sleepers during this time due to the 'Everyone In' mandate. At the end of November for example, around the time when the street count was carried out, we reported to DLUHC that we had 118 rough sleepers or people at risk of rough sleeping living in emergency accommodation provided in response to the pandemic.

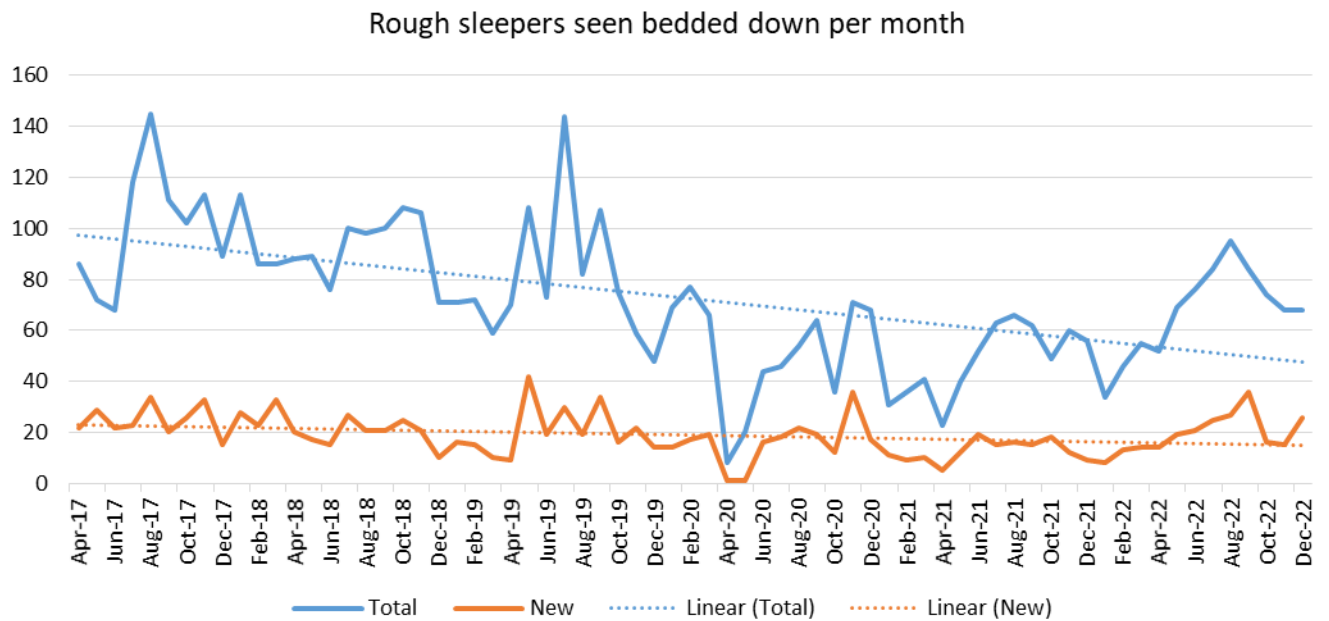
	Number of persons sleeping rough (2019 street count/estimates)	Number of persons sleeping rough in 2019 per 10,000 households	Number of persons sleeping rough (2020 street count/estimates)	Number of persons sleeping rough in 2020 per 10,000 households	Number of persons sleeping rough (2021 street count/estimates)	Number of persons sleeping rough in 2021 per 10,000 households
<b>Oxford</b>	43	7.97	19	3.45	24	4.52
<b>South East</b>	900	2.36	474	1.26	450	1.17
<b>England</b>	4,266	1.81	2,688	1.16	2,440	1.03
<b>Cherwell</b>	11	1.80	10	1.67	6	0.06
<b>South Oxfordshire</b>	4	0.70	3	0.53	Not available	Not available
<b>Vale of White Horse</b>	3	0.52	1	0.19	Not available	Not available
<b>West Oxfordshire</b>	3	0.64	5	1.08	5	1.06
<b>Bristol</b>	98	5.0	50	2.58	68	3.45
<b>Cambridge</b>	33	7.5	16	3.56	14	3.18
<b>Milton Keynes</b>	35	3.27	18	1.68	18	1.68
<b>Reading</b>	28	4.31	19	2.88	22	3.38

Source: [Rough Sleeping snapshot in England as published by DLUHC](#)

Notes on data: Oxford, Cambridge and Bristol carried out street counts in 2019, 2020 and 2021. Cherwell, South Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse, West Oxfordshire, Milton Keynes and Reading carried out estimates. Household numbers used are as published for relevant quarter in [DLUHC Statistical data set: Live tables on homelessness for relevant periods](#)

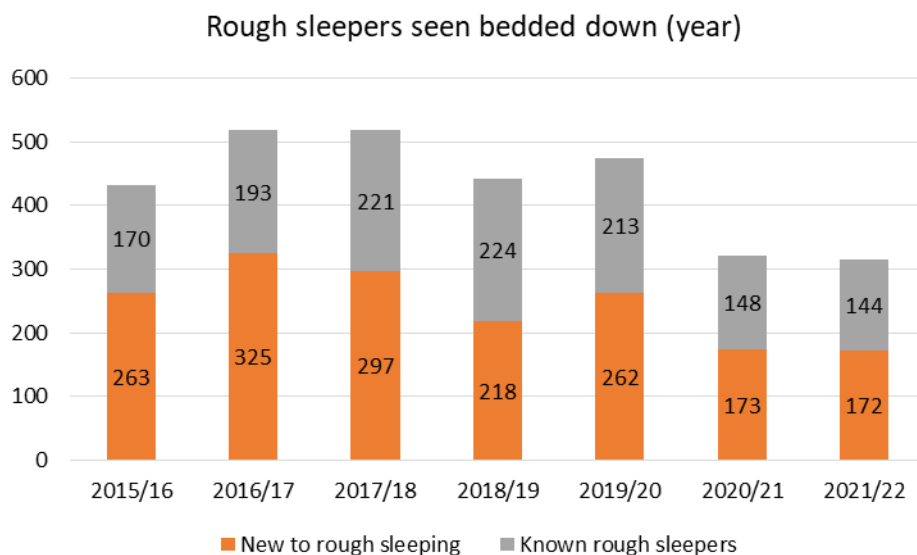
In addition to the street count and estimates, we collect other data on a regular basis on the level of rough sleeping in Oxford. The data captures numbers and information on rough sleepers seen bedded down in the city by our commissioned outreach team. This gives us a more comprehensive picture and trend of the level of rough sleeping throughout the year, and not only on a particular night as a snap-shot.

When looking at the number of individual rough sleepers seen bedded down in every month since 2017, we can see that the number has fluctuated, but that the overall trend is reducing sharply. The trend for people rough sleeping for the very first time in Oxford has however remained fairly constant and shows that despite our increased success in assisting people off the streets and into accommodation in recent years, we have further work to do to prevent new people ending up on the street.



Source: OxTHINK

While the majority of people seen rough sleeping on a monthly basis are known to services and have rough slept in the city before (sometimes for long and extended periods of time), when looking at that annual figures for rough sleeping we can see that new rough sleepers made up a large proportion of those seen rough sleeping each year. In fact they made up a majority of rough sleepers in 4 of the last 5 years of which we hold records for.



Source: OxTHINK

In the last two years, we saw a reduction in the overall number of persons experiencing rough sleeping, as evident in the graph above. We also saw a reduction in the number of persons who had



been rough sleeping in the city for longer periods of time. Since early spring 2022 however, we have started to see an increase in the number of rough sleepers in the city.

The provision of emergency accommodation under the Government's "Everyone In" initiative, provided an opportunity for longer term rough sleepers to access support and accommodation in a way that they hadn't before. This led to some breakthroughs for people who had been rough sleeping and 'circulating' through supported accommodation projects for many years. At times during 2020/21, the number of long term rough sleepers seen bedded down, was as low as one, and whilst this may have been due to others living in the interim accommodation, it has shown a way forward to end long term rough sleeping.

## 5.7 - Hidden Homelessness

We have a good sense of the number of households that are included in the various groups of homelessness accounted for above because we have at some point interacted with them, and are therefore included in one of the data sources we use. We do however acknowledge that there are groups of people that are homeless that we do not routinely capture in our data. This group of people are often referred to as 'hidden homeless'.

Those included in the 'hidden homeless' group can include those living in overcrowded, insecure or uninhabitable conditions; people living in squats; sofa-surfers; persons or families living with friends or family because they cannot afford their own home. They are described as 'hidden homeless' because they do not appear in any data or statistics. The government's own statistical releases on homelessness, note 'hidden homelessness' as a phenomenon, but also states they cannot quantify it in numbers. ([Statutory Homelessness Release October to December 2019](#))

The last piece of national [research into hidden homelessness was undertaken by Crisis in 2011](#) which found a sizeable group hidden from view of any homelessness services - in squats, with friends, in police cells, with strangers, or sleeping rough in less visible locations. It found that single homelessness was synonymous with hidden homelessness. Since then no equivalent piece of research has been conducted. Last year Crisis estimated that 63,000 people in England were 'sofa surfing' on any given night, as part of research into this issue. People who are sofa-surfing are likely to constitute 'hidden homeless'.

The Office for National Statistics has also published data on [young adults living with their parents across the country](#), which gives further insight into the issue of sofa-surfing. It shows that between 2010 and 2019 the percentage of 20-34 year olds living with their parents increased from 23% to 27%. The Office for National Statistics also published data on 'concealed families', which gives insight into the issue of 'sofa-surfing' for couples, couples with children and lone parents with children. The data available is from 2011, and showed that there were 858 such households in Oxford. The largest group were couple without children, making up 49% of 'concealed families'. 21% were lone parents with dependent children. It is of course difficult to know if any or some of these households were in touch with the Council or other homelessness services. If we look at the accommodation information given at time of application for those we owe a duty towards, we can get a sense of the number of households who may have been sofa-surfing prior to approaching the Council. We include here households who were living with friends and family as well as households stating that they had 'no fixed abode'<sup>2</sup>. This shows that 31.9% (125 households) of those we owed a prevention duty towards

and 51.2% (87 households) of those we owed a relief duty towards in 2019/20, may have been sofa-surfing and may therefore have been 'hidden homelessness' before they approached the Council for assistance. We have not got the full data for 2020/21 available at the time of writing, but can see that during the period September to December 2020, the rates of those who were accommodated with family, friends or had no fixed abode increased for households owed a prevention duty, but decreased slightly where a relief duty was owed. We can't unfortunately determine which household type these households were at this point in time.

		2019/20		2020/21 Q3	
Accommodation at time of application - Prevention Duty owed	Total households owed Prevention duty	392		47	
	Living with family	89	22.70%	18	38.30%
	Living with friends	36	9.20%	5	10.60%
	No fixed abode	0	0%	0	0%
		2019/20		2020/21 Q3	
Accommodation at time of application - Relief Duty owed	Total households owed Relief duty	172		57	
	Living with family	34	19.80%	11	19.30%
	Living with friends	15	8.70%	8	14.00%
	No fixed abode	38	22.70%	8	14%

*Notes on data: DLUHC states in the Detailed local authority level tables: financial year 2019-20, that 'no fixed abode' has been reported to have been overused by some authorities who are aware that living with friends and family was a more appropriate field. We have therefore chosen to include this category here.*

Source: [DLUHC Statistical data set: Live tables on homelessness for relevant periods](#)

Since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act, we are capturing more households that would previously have been 'hidden homeless' as our duties to help households have expanded, but it's likely a significant number remain beyond our knowledge.

As concluded in a recent report to Oxford City Council Cabinet discussing 'hidden homelessness' - 'In order to end homelessness, it must first be understood. Understanding requires evidence, and the Housing Needs service is making more and more use of data, not just to understand the picture of homelessness today, but to try and identify those households that are likely to be at risk of homelessness in the future. In this way we can ensure that homelessness is visible to us, which will allow us to develop the right solutions to end it.' ([Oxford City Council report to Scrutiny Committee](#))

## 5.8 - Covid-19 impact on the extent of homelessness in the City

As touched on in chapter 4, the Covid-19 pandemic introduced significant challenges to all aspects of society, including homelessness in the city. We also predict that the effects will be felt and play out for the foreseeable future.

We have seen some big changes to homelessness in the city since the start of the pandemic and the measures put in place both locally and nationally. The patterns here are similar to those seen in the rest of the country and the most prominent trends are:

- We saw an increase in pressure on our housing options service during the first few months of the pandemic in particular, driven in large part by a sharp increase in single people already homeless. Over the last quarters, the breakdown of household types we owe a duty towards has however changed, returning to similar levels as before the pandemic.
- The number of households threatened with homelessness due to a tenancy in the private rented sector ending, usually by far the most common reasons for homelessness, reduced significantly. We see this as a direct link to the ban on evictions. We fear that this is merely delaying evictions from taking place though, and that approaches from households being evicted from accommodation will gradually increase once the ban is lifted.
- Friends or family asking households to leave has been the predominant reason for homelessness since the start of the pandemic. Whilst this group may under normal circumstances have been able to stay with friends and family, the stringent measures introduced on all aspects of life during the lock-down, will have put extra strain on relationships.
- The number of rough sleepers had reduced dramatically compared to previous years, due to the additional accommodation provided through the 'Everyone In' scheme.
- In relation to these changes, we have seen a gradual return back to numbers seen before the pandemic, including a reduction of duties owed compared to 2019/20, more people are losing their tenancies in the private rented sector, and the number of persons experiencing rough sleeping has increased.

We can also see from our internal data that the collection of rent across the tenancies in our Council owned housing stock were impacted by the pandemic. Initially arrears rose during the first lockdown, most likely due to the economic impact and jobs losses, alongside an ending of many forms of arrears recovery action. The arrears situation has since improved, with arrears now returning to close to pre-pandemic trends. A study by the Resolution Foundation carried out in February 2021 looking more broadly at arrears across the country, found that rent arrears across tenures have seen a steady increase as the pandemic has continued. The report estimates that 9% of families living in social housing were behind with their rent payment in January 2021, with 6% of those living in the private rented sector in arrears and 2% of those with a mortgage behind with payments. This equates to over 750,000 families being behind with payment, with 300,000 of these with dependent children. The report further points out that this level of arrears are at least twice as high as before the pandemic.

The report has further found that a higher proportion of those in the private rented sector have seen earnings fall or lost their job compared to those with a mortgage. ([Resolution Foundation report: Getting ahead on falling behind, February 2021](#)).

In addition to the challenges households may have faced during the pandemic, the cost of living crisis adds further difficulties in our communities. A combination of marginal increases to Housing Benefits, rapidly increasing food and fuel costs, as well as increases in rents, and the end of the eviction ban puts more households at risk of becoming homeless. Homelessness charities such as [Crisis](#) has expressed concern that the cost of living crisis will lead to an increase in homelessness across the country.

With a significantly higher proportion of households living in the private rented sector in Oxford than other parts of the country, the impact on homelessness in Oxford could therefore also be significantly higher.

As seen in chapter 2, unemployment rates increased significantly in Oxford during the pandemic, but employment rates have since improved. The rates remain slightly higher than post-pandemic. With incomes still affected by unemployment, and the cost of living seeing incomes go less far in covering household expenses, as well as potential debt incurred during financial hardship and falling behind with rent payments, is likely to lead to an increase to the number of households that will struggle with already unaffordable living and housing costs.

We also face big challenges in relation to the ongoing pressures to provide accommodation for those accommodated under the 'Everyone In' scheme. As pointed out in a Crisis study into the initial impacts of the pandemic on homelessness across the country, there is 'growing anxiety around how long the expectation of providing emergency Covid-19 accommodation will continue for and how they are expected to maintain this level of support without additional move-on options...'. ([The impact of Covid-19 on people facing homelessness, Crisis November 2020](#)) The provision of accommodation made available through 'Everyone In' in Oxford effectively ended at the end of February 2022. We have been able to mitigate the potential effects of this, by using the funding we were awarded from the Next Step Accommodation Programme to secure longer term accommodation such as Housing First and shared accommodation units to ensure that no one has to return to rough sleeping. However, the number of rough sleepers on the streets of Oxford has increased during early summer 2022, as has the number in many other urban areas.

## 5.9 - In summary – The overall picture of homelessness levels in Oxford

Bringing the different sources of information contained in this chapter together to form a picture, we get a better overall view of the level of homelessness in Oxford, where it is heading, and what is possibly driving it.

Overall the rate of homelessness is high, and has been for some time. On almost all measures Oxford reports higher rates than its Oxfordshire neighbours, such the number of homelessness presentations, the numbers in temporary accommodation, and the number of rough sleepers. When you move away from rural Oxfordshire, and look to similar urban areas that may be a better comparison Oxford is more in line with the rates observed there. Oxford has a similar rate per head of population for relief and prevention duties as Bristol, and lower rates than Reading, Cambridge and Milton Keynes, while for temporary accommodation rates Oxford comes out as the lowest of all the urban comparison group. However our rough sleeping rates are some of the highest in the comparison group.

To add to this complex picture we are also seeing different trends in different parts of the homelessness system. Temporary accommodation use has been declining gradually for almost 10 years now, contrary to increasing trends observed in many other urban areas. We saw an increase in rough sleeping during the first three quarters of the past decade, with an injection of funding from central government and the Everyone In response during the pandemic, we saw a decline in rough sleeping numbers. Since early spring 2022, the number of people rough sleeping in the city has started to increase.

Taking this all together, it is clear that Oxford has a persistently high rate of homelessness compared against the County average, and high rates of rough sleeping compared to national averages, but that most measures have shown improvement in recent years compared to 2018, when the previous homelessness strategy came into place. This certainly can be observed in the rough sleeper and temporary accommodation data, with it harder to make as firm conclusions in the homelessness

presentations data due to the HRA fundamentally changing how we work with these clients. This slight improvement to the overall picture of homelessness can likely be attributed to an increase in investment into homelessness services by the Council enabled by extra central government grant funding, allowing for the provision of extra homelessness prevention support, as well as providing more services for rough sleepers, but this will be explored further in future chapters.

It also needs noting that while the rates of homelessness may have improved over the last strategic period, the city now finds itself in a very different time, with the effects of the pandemic still to be seen and with the effects of the cost of living still to be seen.

## 6.0 - Who are becoming homeless in Oxford?

### Key Findings – Who are becoming homeless in Oxford?

- We can observe some important changes in the profile of homeless households receiving support from the Council, with a significant increase in the number of single households over recent years.
- The Homelessness Reduction Act has resulted in the Council supporting significantly more men, who have historically made up a low share of cases supported by the Council.
- Working households make up the largest group of homeless households in Oxford when broken down by economic status. This is different to the wider region and country.
- The black community is significantly overrepresented in Oxford homelessness cases, compared to share of the population.
- We have witnessed a huge shift in the homelessness age breakdown over the last 10 years. Homeless households led by 16-24 year olds have gone from 57.7% in 2010/11 to 17% in 2019/20.
- Over 60% of households owed a homelessness duty declare at least one support need, with underreporting probably masking a large number with support needs and often a multitude of needs.

The review has already established that homelessness can take many different forms. It is also the case that certain people and groups are more vulnerable to homelessness, with certain groups of people impacted by homelessness more than others. Therefore just as it is important to understand the overall levels of homelessness in Oxford, it is also important to understand who is affected by homelessness and how patterns have changed in the past and may change in the future, in order to inform service development and design.

The following chapter is broken into different sections covering areas such as gender, ethnicity and support needs.

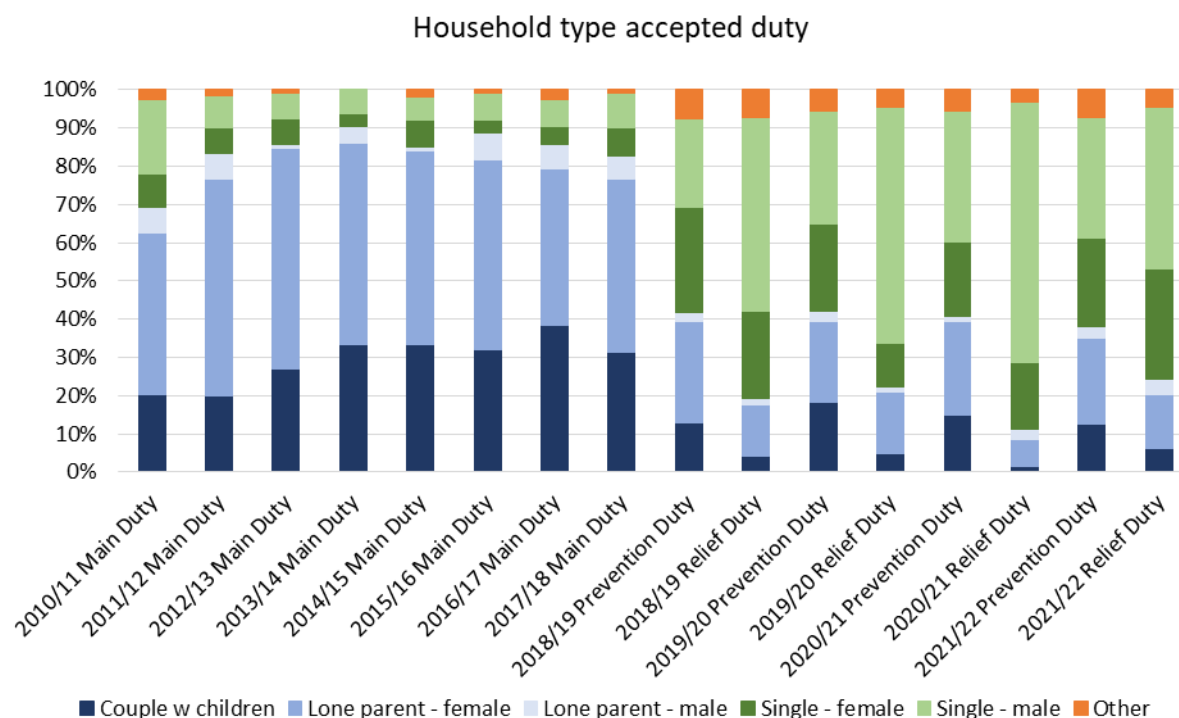
Unfortunately we do not hold sufficient data on certain protect characteristics, such as sexual orientation, to provide detail and analysis. This is an area that will be considered in the future strategy to ensure we strengthen data collection to be able to provide this information in the future.

### 6.1 - Household Type and Gender

One of the main aims of the changes to legislation introduced by the Homelessness Reduction Act was to improve the legal framework to prevent and tackle single homelessness. Since the introduction of the act, we are now working with significantly more single person households than we did in the past.

In fact, the majority of households we accept a Prevention or Relief Duty towards are singles. One of the main drivers for this change is that both Prevention and Relief Duties are blind to priority need and whether or not a person is intentionally homeless and we are therefore obliged to prevent and relieve single person's homelessness. In the past, we would only have had to assist single persons under a homelessness Main Duty, which required persons to be deemed in priority need and unintentionally homeless, which is a threshold many single households fail to meet. This has resulted

in a significant shift of emphasis of services away from dealing with family households, to a mix of singles and families.



Source: [DLUHC Statistical data set: Live tables on homelessness for relevant periods](#)

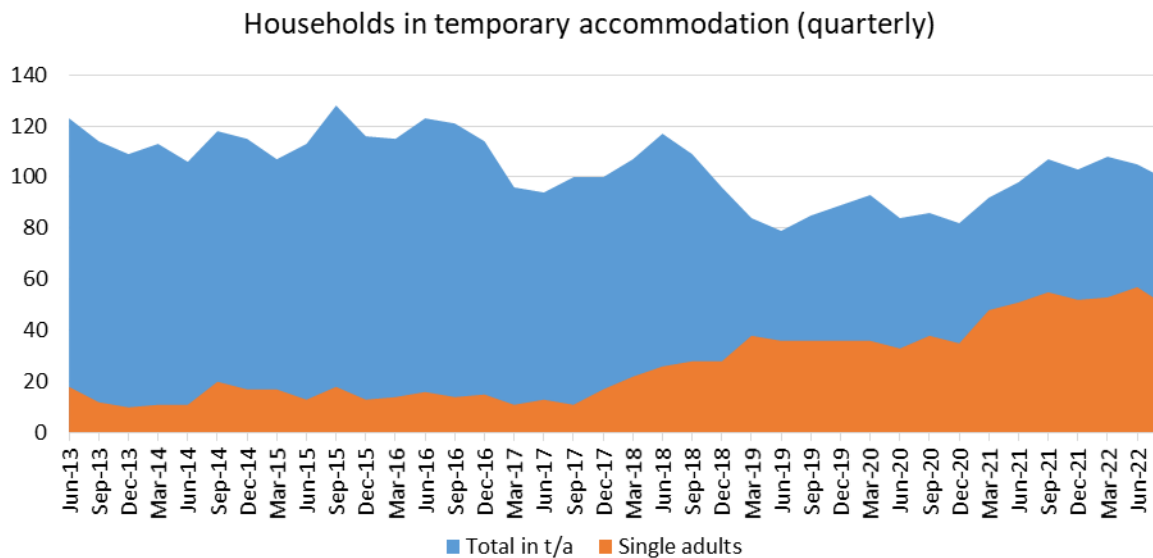
Households where a relief duty has been accepted, i.e. someone is already homeless, are overwhelmingly single persons and predominantly male.

The overall gender profile for households we work with under statutory duties has changed significantly since the introduction of the HRA, with the proportion of duties owed to single adult males increasing significantly. This is primarily due to the increase in both prevention and primarily relief duties owed to single males. In 2017/18 the proportion of households owed a duty (Main Duty) who were either single or lone parent male was 15.2%. In 2021/22, single and lone parent males owed a prevention duty was 34.3%, and single/lone parent males owed a relief duty made up 46.4% of all households owed a relief duty. The proportion of single males did however decrease in 2021/22, compared to previous years under the HRA. In 2019/20 for example, 62.8% of households owed a relief duty were single/lone parent male. Whilst the data pre and post HRA is not directly comparable, this does show that we are working with more males under a statutory duty than in the past.

The proportion of single females, including female lone parents, that we owe a relief duty towards increased in 2021/22 compared to previous years. In 2019/20 for example, 27.9% of households owed a relief duty were single/lone parent females, and in 2021/22 this had increased to 42.9%

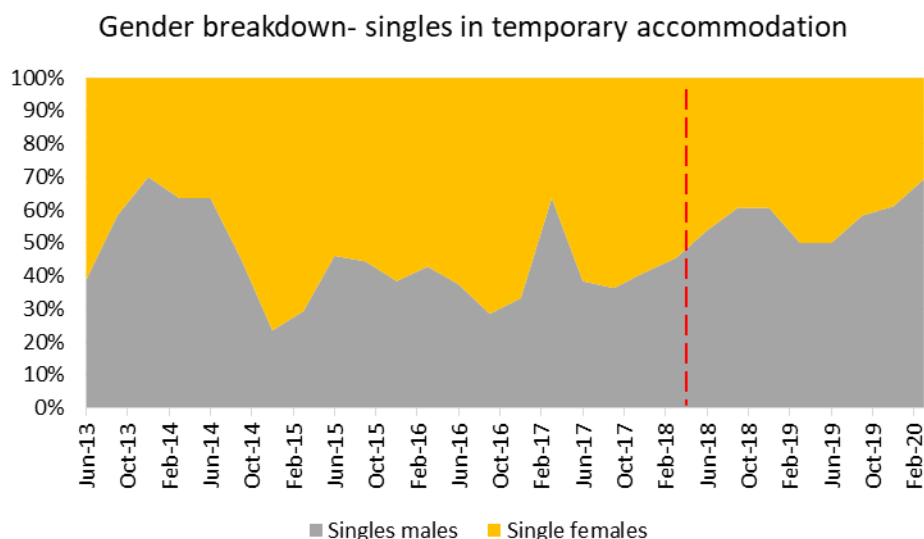
Lone parents who are female remain the predominant group for non-singles owed a duty post HRA.

We have also seen a sharp increase in the number of singles placed in temporary accommodation since the introduction of the HRA, which is directly linked to the increase in singles we owe a statutory duty towards following HRA, and these duties being blind to both priority need and intentionality.



Source: MHCLG P1E Homelessness returns and [DLUHC Statistical data set: Live tables on homelessness for relevant](#) periods. Please note that numbers in t/a from April 2020 and onwards, does not include those placed in emergency accommodation through the 'Everyone In' scheme.

The proportion of single male and single females in our temporary accommodation has fluctuated throughout the years, and the average for the two groups is also similar, but with a slightly higher average of males – at 9.96 compared to females at 9.93 - having been in temporary accommodation calculated over the period June 2013 to March 2020. We can however see, that since the introduction of the HRA, the proportion of single males in temporary accommodation as compared to females, has gradually increased.



Source: as above



The gender breakdown of those rough sleeping in the city has been consistent over the last few years, with males being more likely to be found rough sleeping than females.

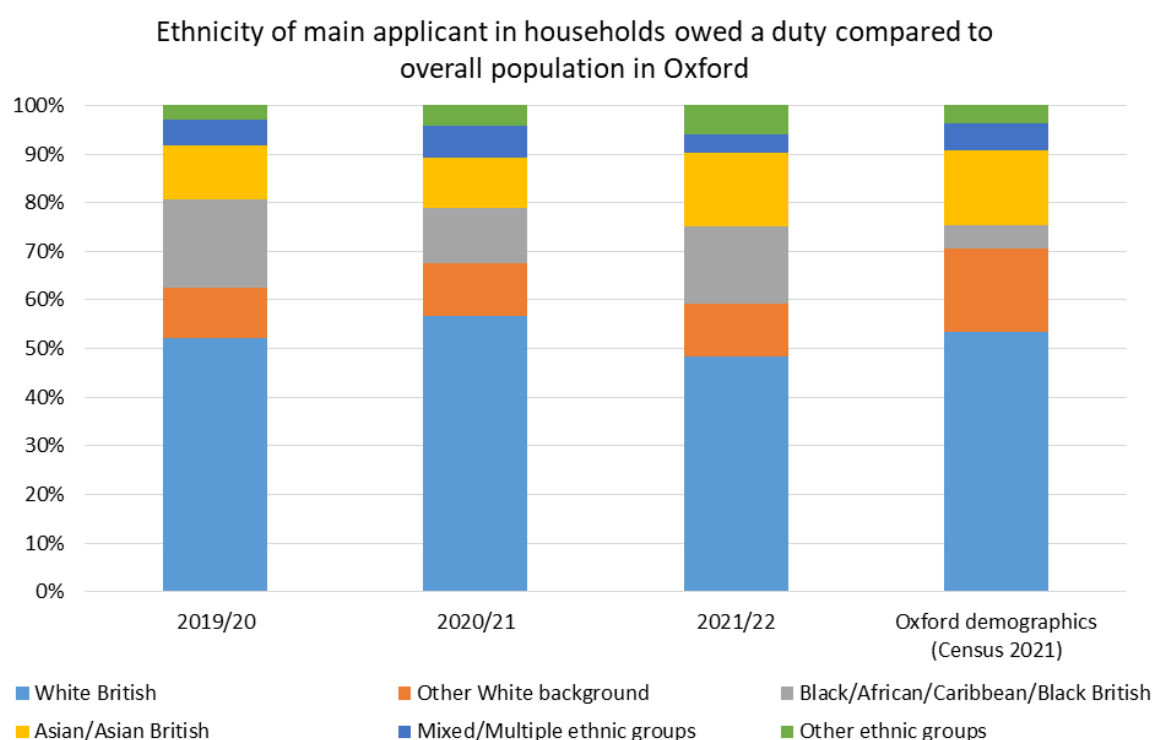
Gender	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Male	82%	83%	83%	82%	83%
Female	18%	17%	17%	18%	17%

Source: OxTHINK

## 6.2 - Ethnicity

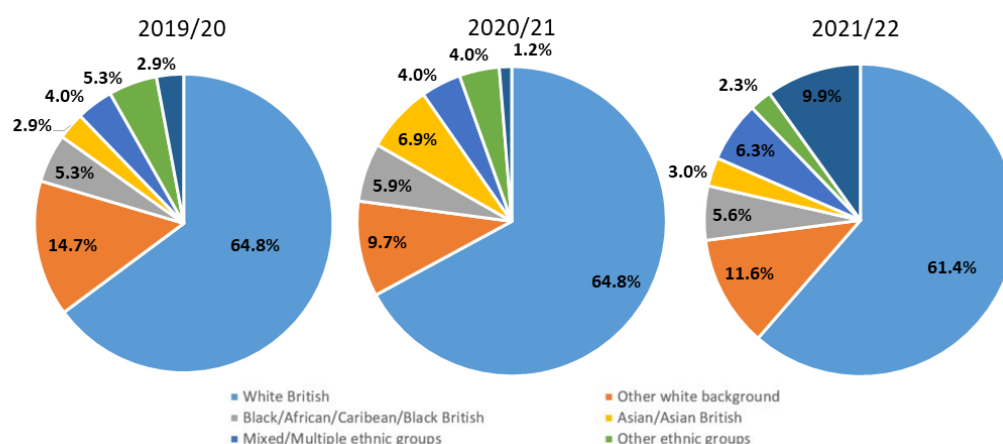
Over the last few years, the largest proportion of households we owed a homeless duty towards identified themselves as White British. This has also been the case for the last 10 years.

Whilst White British made the largest proportion of households we owe a duty towards, this is a lower share than compared to the population. Black/African/Caribbean/Black British are proportionally more affected by homelessness than any other ethnic groups compared to their overall population share in Oxford.



*Notes on data:* We have discounted cases where ethnicity was recorded as 'not known', *Source:* [DLUHC Statistical data set: Live tables on homelessness for relevant periods and Census 2021](#)

The ethnicity for rough sleepers in Oxford is more similar to the overall demographics of the City. People identifying themselves as White British and of any other white background make up the largest proportions. We saw a reduction in people identifying themselves as of other white backgrounds in 2020/21 compared to the previous year. Asian and Asian British persons are under-represented amongst rough sleepers compared to the overall population. However, in 2020/21, we saw a 4% increase in of persons rough sleeping and identifying as Asian or Asian British



Source: OxTHINK

Since 2019/20, we have seen an increase in the number of rough sleepers in the City who are EEA nationals compared to the previous years.

Nationality	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
UK	85%	84%	81%	79%	80%
EEA	8%	8%	14%	12%	15%
Non-EEA	7%	8%	5%	9%	5%

Source: OxTHINK. This breakdown discounts the number where nationality is not known

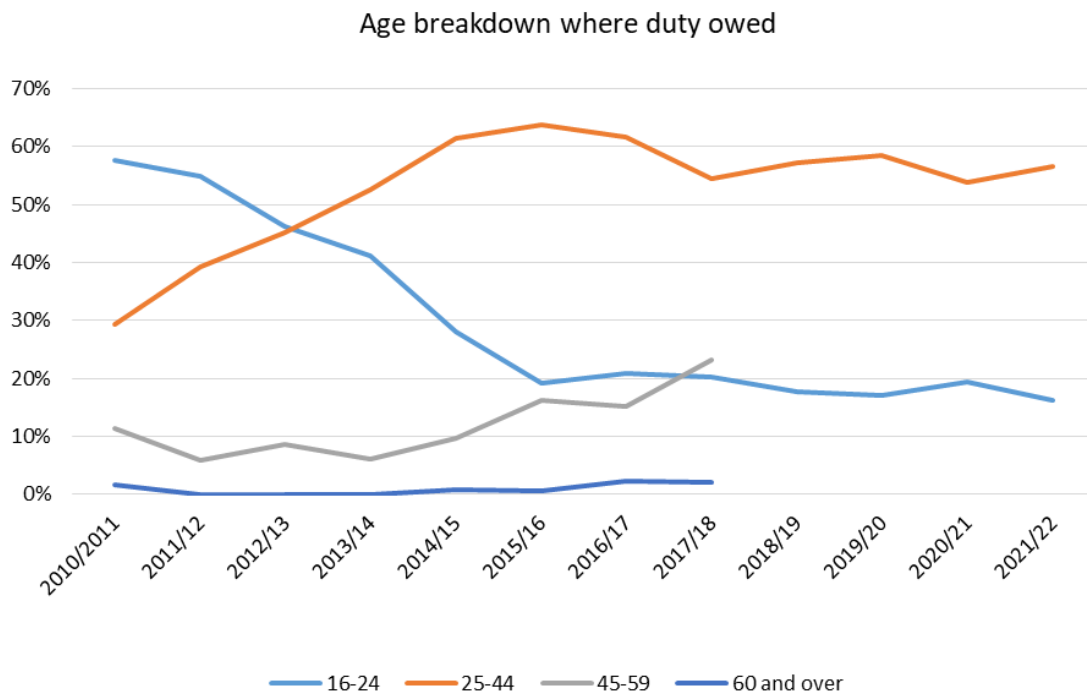
Looking at ethnicity and overcrowding on the housing register we see that in particular Bangladeshi (55.8%), Pakistani (42.4%), Mixed White and Asian (52.6%) and Other mixed (44.0%) households are much more likely to be overcrowded than other households (average 24.3%).

### 6.3 - Age

The age group categories captured and reported before the Homelessness Reduction Act came into effect are not the same as reported now under the HRA. However, we can see that over the last 10 years, we have seen a change in the age profile of homeless households. The proportion of people in the age group 16 to 24 has reduced from 57.7% in 2010/11 to 16.3% in 2021/22. This may be linked to the wider shift we have observed of less homelessness being driven from friend/ family eviction (see below chapter 7.1), who are often young adults leaving a parental home, and more homelessness now being driven by end of private tenancies which is more likely to be young families renting properties, and single adults in HMOs, coming from older demographic groups, these factors are explored further in the next chapter. In 2020/21, we saw a slight increase in the number of households owed a duty where the main applicant was 16-24 of age. As we will see later in chapter 7, we also saw an increase in homelessness due to friend/family eviction during 2020/21, and this points towards young persons aged 16-24 being asked to leave their family homes.

From 2019/20 data on households aged 16-24 we owed a prevention or relief duty towards, we can further see:

- 34% had dependent children, compared to 37% across all age groups
- 64% were single households, compared to 59% across all age groups
- 52% were male and 48% female, compared to 67% and 33% respectively for all age groups



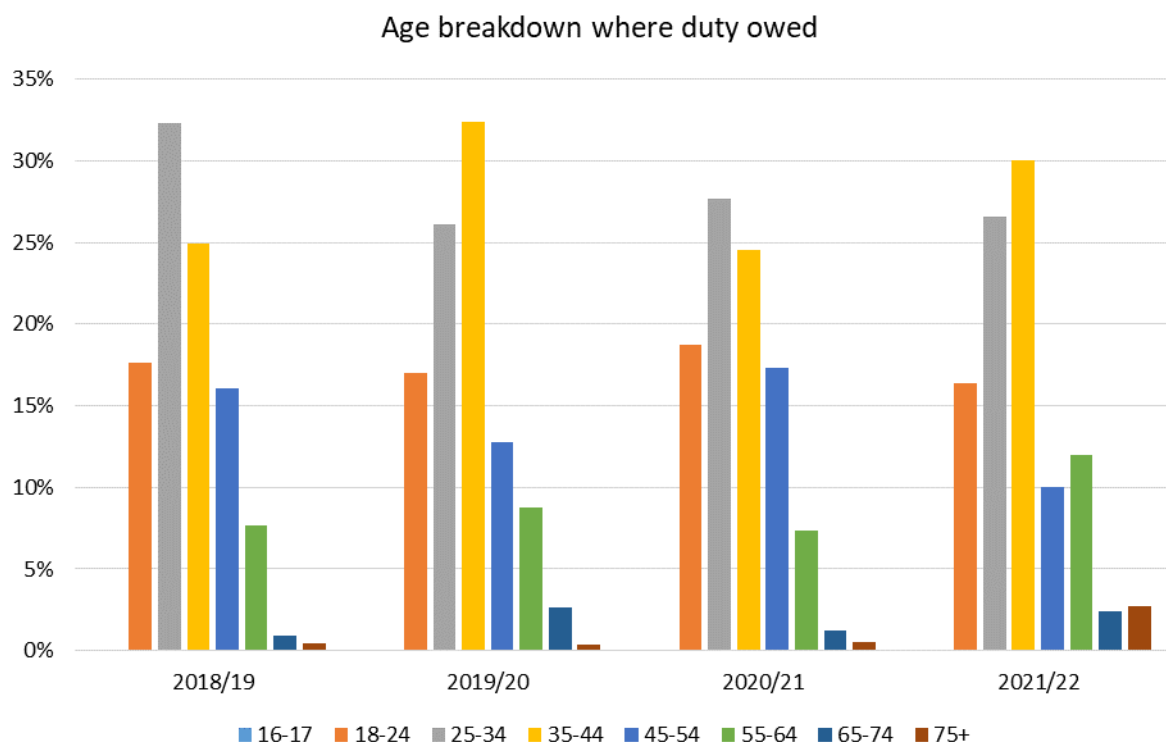
Source: MHCLG P1E Homelessness returns (2010/11 to 2017/18) and [DLUHC Statistical data set: Live tables on homelessness for relevant periods](#)

In 2018/19, 25-34 year olds were the largest proportion of households we owed a duty towards at 32.3%. In 2021/22, this had reduced to 26.6%, with 35-44 year olds the largest proportion with 30%. The age of main applicants for who we owed a duty towards in 2021/22 were broadly in line with the picture across England and the South East, but with a slightly higher proportion of households aged 35-44.

## 2021/22

Age	Oxford	South East	England
16-17	0%	1%	1%
18-24	16%	19%	19%
25-34	27%	30%	31%
35-44	30%	23%	24%
45-54	10%	14%	14 %
55-64	12%	9%	7 %
65-74	2%	3%	3%
75+	3%	1%	1%

Source: [DLUHC Statistical data set: Live tables on homelessness for relevant periods](#)



Source: [DLUHC Statistical data set: Live tables on homelessness for relevant periods](#)

The age of those seen rough sleeping in the city correspond with the groups for those we have accepted a Prevention or Relief Duty towards and have not changed significantly over the last few years. The most dominant age group for rough sleepers is 35 – 44 year olds.

Age	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
18-24	6%	7%	9%	11%	7%
25-34	22%	25%	22%	25%	25%
35-44	34%	33%	33%	31%	33%
45-54	26%	24%	23%	21%	23%
55-64	10%	9%	11%	9%	10%
65+	2%	2%	3%	3%	2%

Source: OxTHINK

## 6.4 - Economic status

Since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act, the employment status of those owed a homeless duty is now collected. This give us a better insight into the wider circumstances of households faced with homelessness that can help us shape the prevention and relief activities we provide in the future.

In 2018/19, households where the main applicant was in full-time work was the largest group we owed a prevention or relief duty towards. Those in full-time work made up 22.3%. During the same year, 20.3% of households were registered unemployed. The following year, 2019/20, the largest proportion of households we owed a Prevention or Relief Duty towards were unemployed, making up 28% of those we owed a duty towards, an increase of almost 8% on 2018/19.

In both 2018/19 and 2019/20, those in work (full-time and part-time combined) made up the largest proportion of households where a Prevention or Relief Duty were owed. Compared to the national and South East averages, the proportion of households in work (full-time and part-time) where we owe a duty, is higher. Compared to the other Districts in the County however, we see a lower proportion of households owed a duty who were in work.

The relatively high levels of households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness in Oxford and that are in work, is a sign that even for those working, housing is unaffordable in the City for some. This is linked to section 2.6 of the review, which explore how many in the city are on incomes not sufficient to afford average house and rent prices, and seems to confirm that high levels of unaffordability, even for those working, is leading to homelessness.

The effects of the pandemic has however had an impact on the employment status of those we owe a duty towards. In 2020/21, those registered unemployed accounted for 43.5% of those we owed a duty towards, a significant increase from 28% in the previous year. We link this to the increase in unemployment during the pandemic (as explored in chapter 2). In 2021/22, we can see that there starts to be a shift back to more persons in employment seeking our assistance however.

When compared to the overall Oxford demographics, those registered unemployed are significantly over-represented amongst households we owe a duty towards. Those not working due to long-term illness/disability were also over-represented when compared to the overall Oxford population.

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Oxford demographics (Census 2011)
<b>Registered unemployed</b>	20.3%	28%	43.5%	31.5%	3.2%
<b>Not working due to long-term illness/disability</b>	16.5%	13.1%	13.8%	12.2%	2.6%
<b>Full-time work</b>	22.3%	20.4%	14.0%	18.8%	36.2%
<b>Part-time work</b>	16.7%	14.4%	8.2%	14.4%	10.4%
<b>Not seeking work/at home</b>	9.9%	9.6%	5.9%	8.0%	3.5%
<b>Not registered unemployed but seeking work</b>	6.6%	5.3%	5.2%	1.5%	Not available
<b>Retired</b>	1.4%	2.8%	1.6%	3.9%	7%
<b>Student/training</b>	0.6%	1.4%	0.5%	0.5%	28.1%
<b>Other</b>	4.6%	3%	3.4%	2.0%	8.8%
<b>Not known</b>	1.1%	2%	3.8%	7.3%	Not available

Source: [DLUHC Statistical data set: Live tables on homelessness for relevant periods](#) and Census 2011

## 6.5 - Support Needs

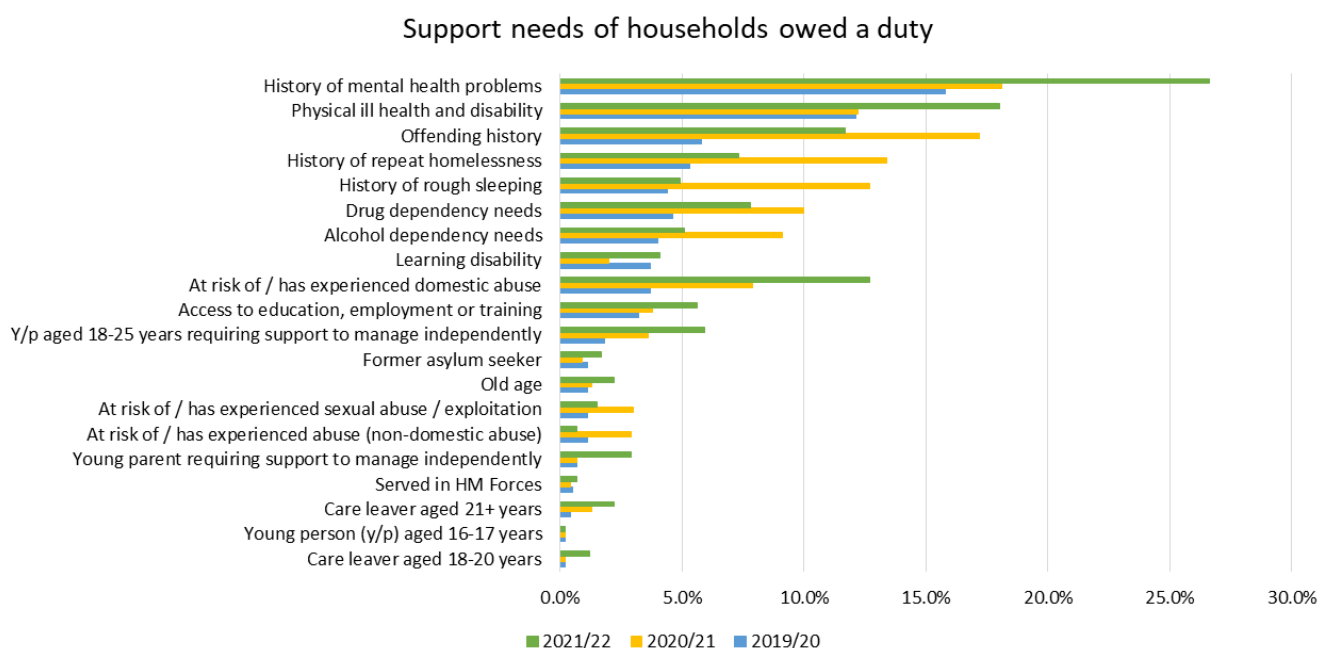
We have already seen above, that those not able to work due to long term health or disability, are proportionately more affected by homelessness. The new data reporting requirements under the Homelessness Reduction Act means that we are now also collecting data on a wider set of support needs that households may have. This gives us a good insight into the wider support needs that households facing homelessness are faced with.

In 2019/20, 32.6% of households owed a Prevention or Relief Duty had one or more support needs identified. Compared to other local authorities, this number is relatively low. We do believe however, that we are under-reporting the level of support needs and we are working to improve our data collection and data quality here. In 2021/22, the rate of households with identified support needs increased to 61.7%. This indicates that we have improved our data collection to some extent, but may also be because of the changing profile of those needing support during the pandemic.

	<b>2021/22</b>		
	<b>Percentage households w support needs of total owed duty</b>	<b>Total households with support need(s) owed a duty</b>	<b>Total number of support needs for those owed a duty</b>
<b>Oxford</b>	61.7%	253	510
<b>South East</b>	52.2%	19,000	39,790
<b>England</b>	51.7%	143,910	315,710
<b>Cherwell</b>	63.6%%	239	555
<b>South Oxfordshire</b>	55.3%	207	335
<b>Vale of white Horse</b>	60.3%	241	369
<b>West Oxfordshire</b>	57.6%	151	382
<b>Bristol</b>	76.7%	2,103	5,313
<b>Cambridge</b>	48.9%	302	942
<b>Milton Keynes</b>	44.8%	663	1,288
<b>Reading</b>	27.4%	269	462

Source: [DLUHC Statistical data set: Live tables on homelessness for relevant periods](#)

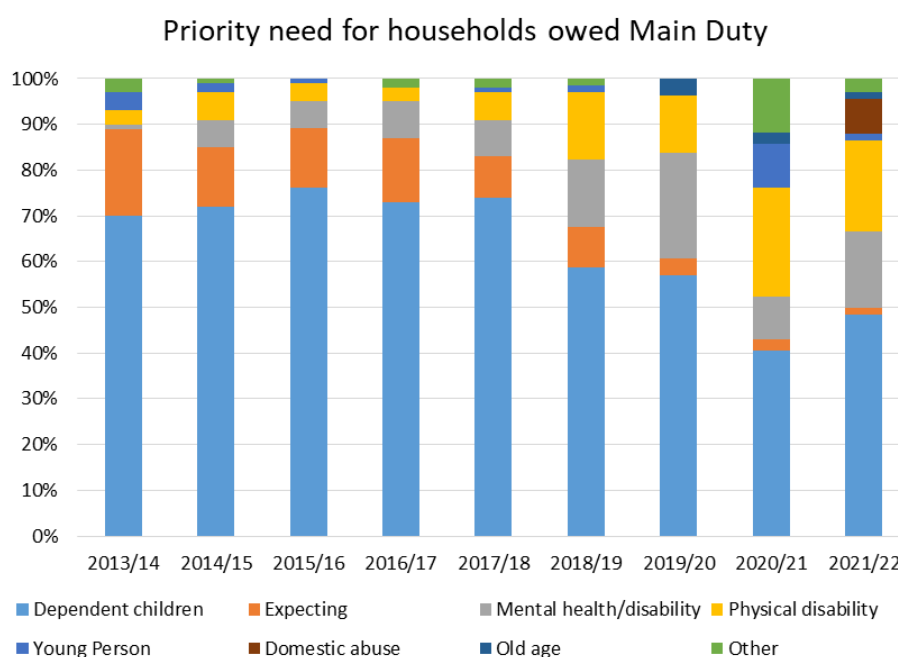
The most common support need registered for households in Oxford in the last three years was mental health. In 2020/21, we saw a sharp increase in households identified with support needs in relation to offending history, homelessness and rough sleeping alcohol and drug dependency needs, as well as households who were at risk of or had experienced domestic abuse.



Source: [DLUHC Statistical data set: Live tables on homelessness for relevant periods](#)

If we look at the priority need categories for households owed a homelessness Main Duty since 2013/14 to 2021/22 this gives us an alternative view of certain support needs, and a longer time frame to consider trends, before the HRA was implemented. We can see that the proportion of households in priority need due to physical or mental health/disability has increased since the introduction of HRA, but the largest proportion of households owed a Main Duty continues to be those with dependent children (which is a reason for priority need). One of the reasons why the proportion of households with children has reduced in the last two years, may partly be due to the increased prevention and relief work, which means households with children are better able to sustain existing accommodation or move to secure accommodation before the case progresses to a Main Duty.

We can however see that in recent years, the proportion of priority need decisions linked to physical disability, increased significantly. Since the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act, we have also seen an increase in people owed a main duty due to domestic abuse. It may be that it is harder to assist those who have high support needs, as this often requires multiple agencies to work together to find a suitable housing solution and this can take time, resulting in the need for a Main Duty to be triggered.



Source: MHCLG P1E Homelessness returns (2010/11 to 2017/18) and [DLUHC Statistical data set: Live tables on homelessness for relevant periods](#)

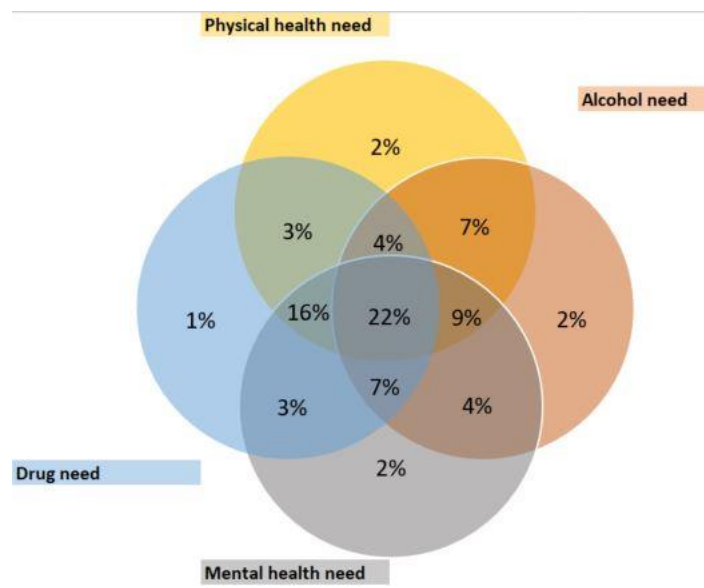
We also hold separate data on the support needs for those seen rough sleeping in the city. This shows that the vast majority of those rough sleeping have support needs, with mental health the most dominant. The vast majority of rough sleepers have multiple needs, which makes them more vulnerable and can create barriers to securing accommodation.

Out of the 475 persons seen rough sleeping in the city in 2019/20, 138 had an assessment of support needs in the same period. 22% had a combination of alcohol, drug, physical and mental health needs and 16% drug, physical and mental health needs. Only 4% of those assessed had no support needs and 85% had more than one support need. In subsequent years, the recording of support needs for rough sleepers has not been logged for a large proportion of those seen rough sleeping.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Drug need	61%	65%	59%
Mental health need	71%	70%	70%
Alcohol need	57%	50%	59%
Physical health need	53%	55%	69%

Source: OxTHINK





Source: OxTHINK

## 7.0 – What is causing homelessness in Oxford?

### Key Findings – What is causing homelessness in Oxford?

- Structural factors that contribute to homelessness in Oxford include high levels of unaffordability in the housing market, and significant areas of deprivation in the city. These structural issues, combine with individual factors to cause homelessness.
- The Council’s data on the causes of statutory homelessness shows the ending of private rented tenancies being the most significant cause in the city, although the eviction ban throughout the pandemic decreased such occurrences. Eviction from the homes of family and friends is the second biggest factor.
- Comparing to regional and national averages, our district neighbours, and our comparator urban authorities, the ending of private rented tenancies has the greatest impact in Oxford.
- Other council data sets support the PRS being the major source of homelessness in the city, such as over 50% of Discretionary Housing Payments awards going to household living in the PRS in the last years, seeking to avoid cases of homelessness.
- The picture of what is causing rough sleeping is more mixed. With the PRS, relationship and family breakdown, and prison leavers all significant factors.

In order to combat and prevent homelessness it is important to understand why people are being made homeless in the UK, and in our city. This understanding of the underlying reasons is crucial to providing even better prevention and pre-prevention services to combat homelessness.

The report [Homelessness - Rapid Evidence Assessment, Alma Economics, March 2019](#)), commissioned by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, summarises the existing evidence on causes of homelessness in the UK. The research they looked at divided the causes of homelessness into structural and individual factors.

- *“Structural factors are wider societal and economic issues that affect opportunities and social environments for individuals. This includes unfavourable housing and labour market conditions, reduced welfare and benefits, rising levels of poverty and the growing fragmentation of the family.*
- *Individual factors apply to the personal circumstances of a homeless person. These factors may include personal crisis, traumatic events, mental health or addiction challenges. Relationship problems can include domestic abuse and violence, addiction, mental health problems of other family members and a lack of financial resilience.*

*Structural factors create the conditions within which homelessness will occur and people with personal problems are more vulnerable to these adverse social and economic trends than others. Hence, the high concentration of people with personal problems in the homeless population can be explained by their susceptibility to structural forces and not solely by their personal circumstances.”*

Our introductory chapters describing Oxford and its housing market described some of the structural factors that can lead to homelessness in an area. We have an unaffordable housing market with wages not in line with house prices and rents, there has been a national squeeze on welfare benefits and the Local Housing Allowance does not cover market rents in the city. We have also seen that there are areas of Oxford that suffer from poverty and deprivation.

In the previous section that looks at who is homeless in the City, we can also clearly see evidence of the individual factors that make people more vulnerable to homelessness in Oxford, such as having one or more support needs or being unable to work due to ill health or disability. We have also seen that even those in work, may struggle financially to afford to live in the City and become homeless.

## 7.1 - What is causing statutory homelessness?

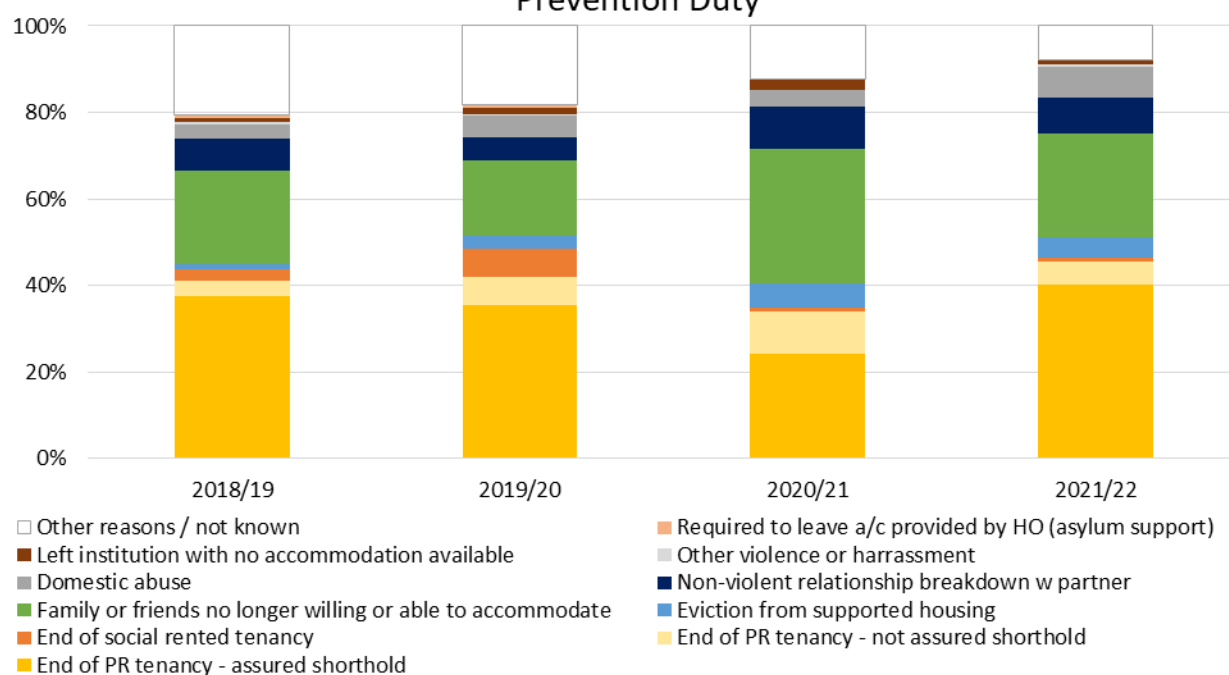
We can also look at data collected for those we owe a statutory duty towards to find out why a household either lost or nearly lost their homes. Looking at information in relation to those households we owed a Prevention and Relief Duty towards, the most common reason why the households we owed a Prevention Duty towards lost their last settled home was that their private rented tenancy ended (end of an Assured Shorthold tenancy (AST) and non-AST). In 2020/21, we saw a drop in the proportion of households losing their PRS assured shorthold tenancies and an increase in households being asked to leave family and friends' homes compared to 2019/20 data.. This can be attributed to the ban on evictions due to Covid-19.

On the other hand, those most common reason why households that we owed a Relief Duty towards lost their accommodation was due to family or friends no longer being able to accommodate them). Since the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act in April 2021, we have seen a sharp increase in the number of households we owe a relief duty towards were reasons for homelessness was domestic abuse. In 2021/22, 21.5% were homeless due to domestic abuse, compared to 7.6% in 2018/19.

Households owed a Relief Duty were more likely to have lost their accommodation due to relationship breakdown, violence/harassment, leaving institution or being evicted from supported housing than applicants owed a Prevention Duty. Households owed a Prevention Duty on the other hand, were more likely to have lost their accommodation due to eviction from social housing than those owed a Relief Duty.

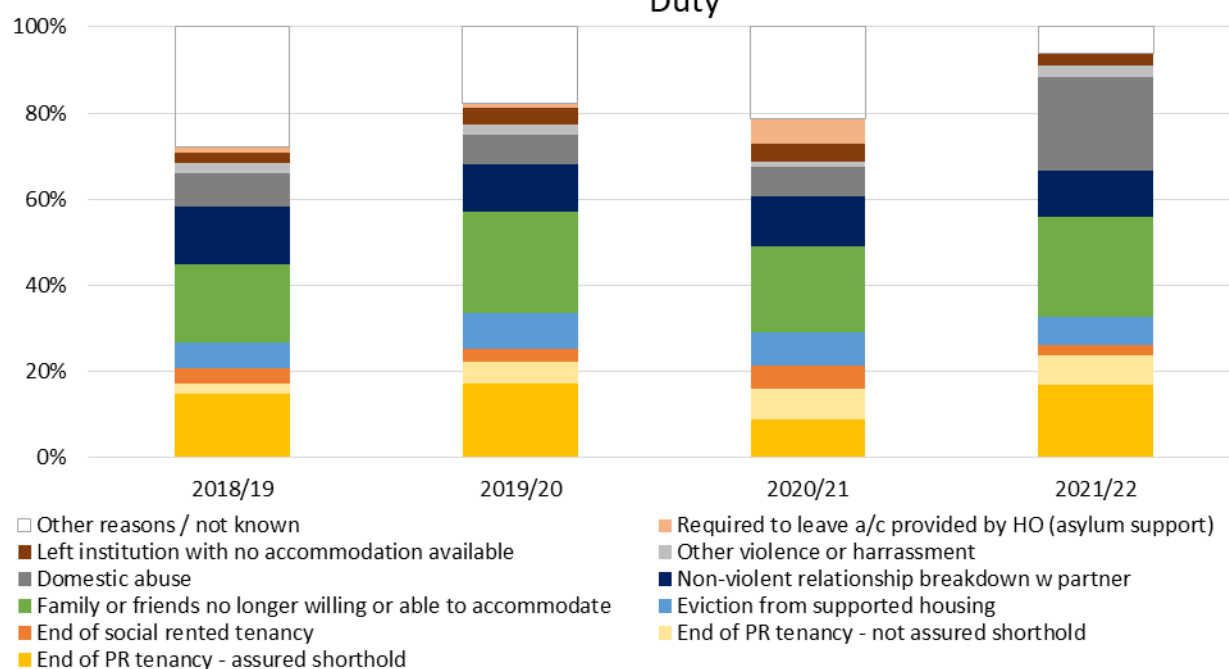
We also see a relatively small, but still significant number of people who are homeless due to leaving an institution and having no accommodation to go to. This refers to people leaving institutions such as prisons and hospitals (both general and psychiatric). We can see this data by both looking at the accommodation at the time when the homeless application was made, and also reason why a person lost their last settled accommodation. We are working closely with partners to reduce these instances, by focussing on early homeless prevention work (see Chapter 8 for further information).

### Reason for loss of last settled home for households owed a Prevention Duty



Source: [DLUHC Statistical data set: Live tables on homelessness for relevant periods](#)

### Reason for loss of last settled home for households owed a Relief Duty



Source: [DLUHC Statistical data set: Live tables on homelessness for relevant periods](#)

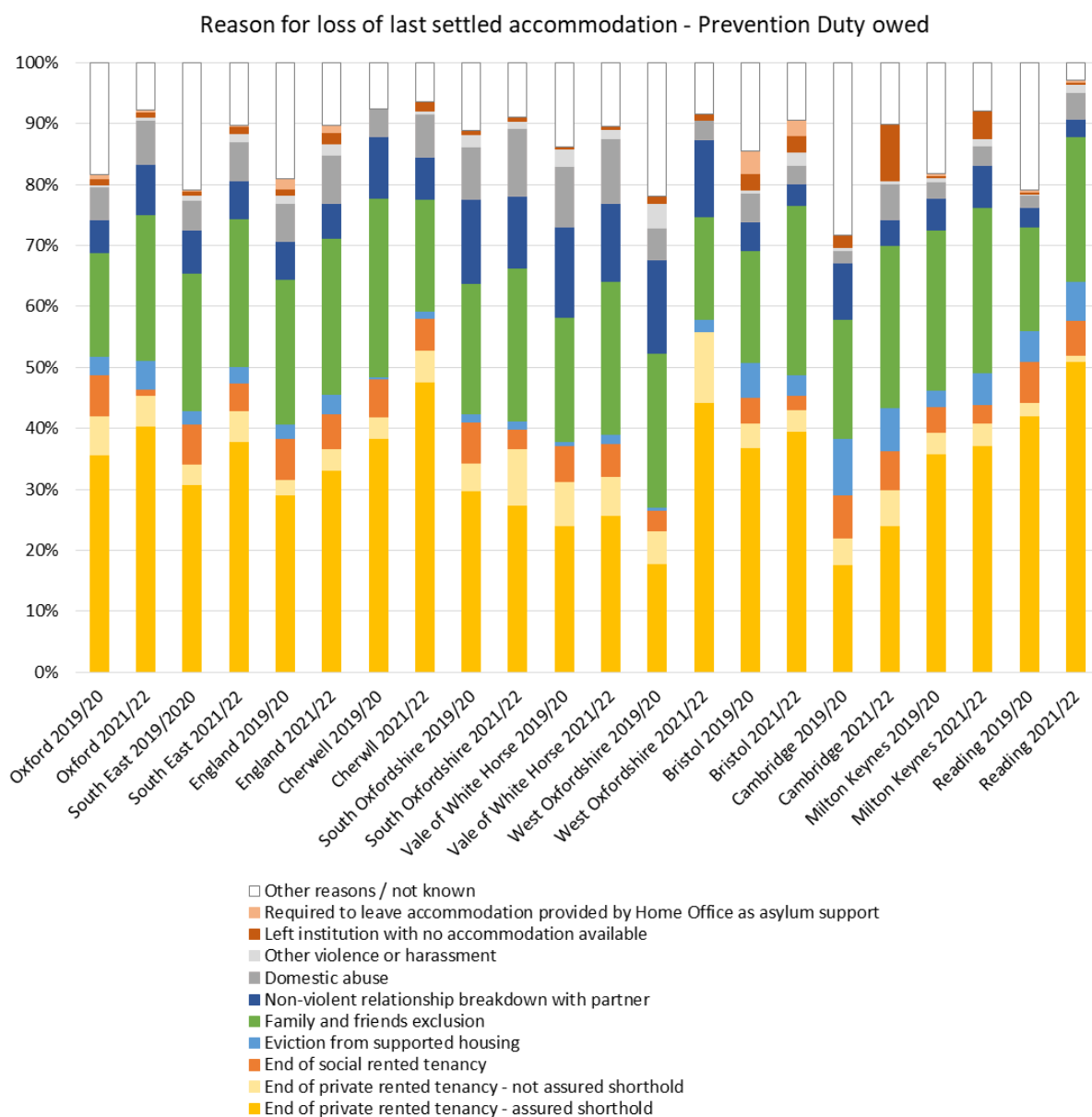
Whilst the end of a tenancy in the private rented sector is the main reason for homelessness over all, the main reasons why young people (16-24) lose their home is due to family and friends no longer being willing or able to accommodate them. 54% of young people where we accepted a prevention or relief duty in 2019/20 lost their last settled home due to family or friend evictions, compared to 19% for all age groups.

Compared with England as a whole, and also compared to our neighbouring local authorities, applicants in Oxford were more likely to apply as homeless due to losing a private rented tenancy and less likely to be evicted by family or friends across both prevention and relief duties pre-pandemic. In 2021/22, most local authorities in our comparator group, has seen an increase on 2019/20 levels of those losing their private sector tenancy, with Cherwell and West Oxfordshire now seeing higher levels of these instances than Oxford.

Oxford has an expensive and competitive private rented housing market, and the data suggests this is leading to greater numbers of households becoming homeless as a result.

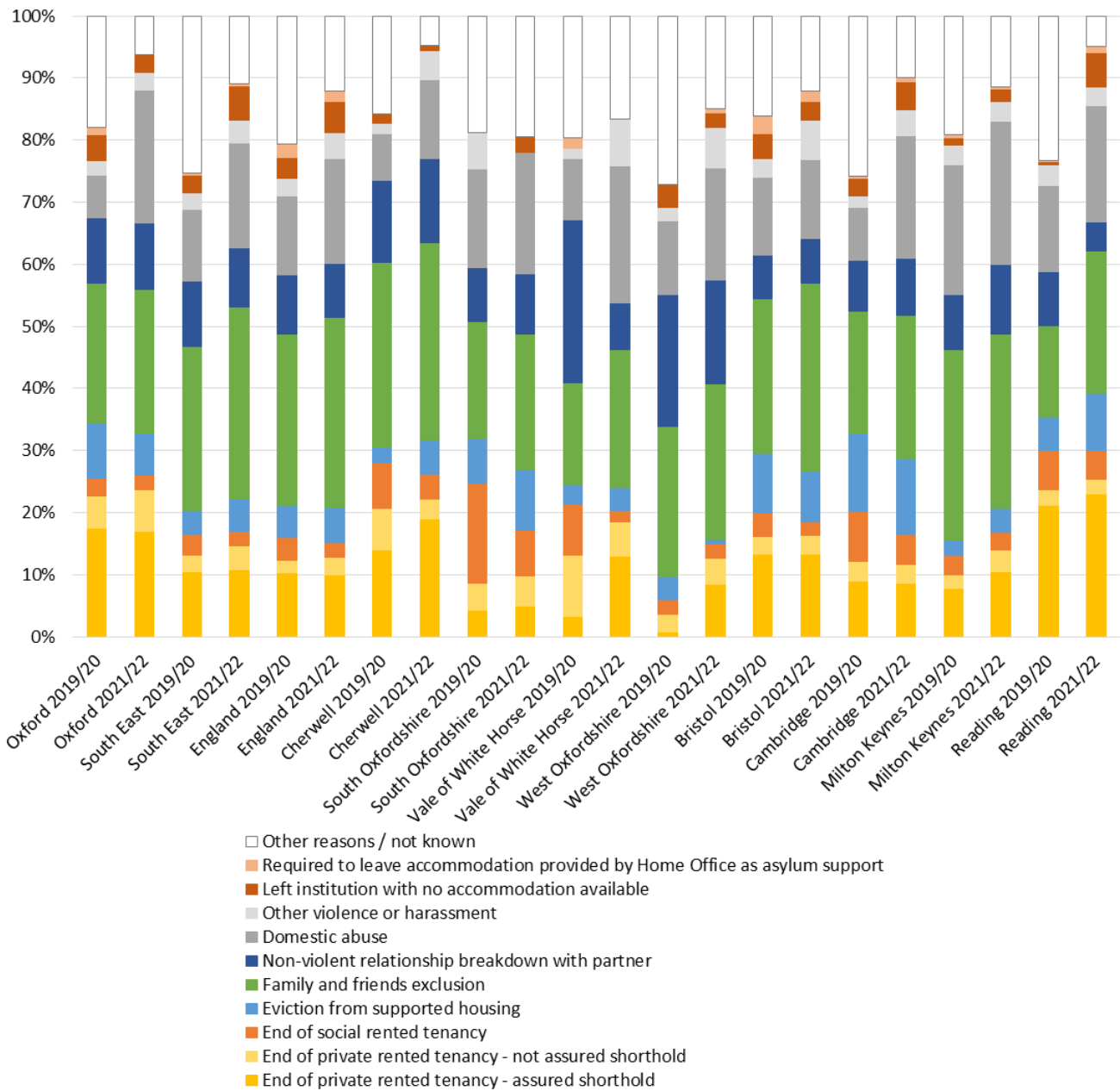
A higher percentage of applicants in Oxford owed prevention and a relief duty, had lost their accommodation due to being evicted from supported housing than in England and our neighbouring local authorities. There is a large number of supported accommodation units in Oxford City compared with the rest of the County which explains why the rate may be higher in Oxford City. However, it does show us that even when people live in supported accommodation, they can struggle to sustain a tenancy

A lower percentage of households in Oxford owed a relief duty had lost their accommodation due to domestic abuse compared to the average for England and also compared to our neighbouring local authorities.



Source: [DLUHC Statistical data set: Live tables on homelessness for relevant periods](#).

### Reason for loss of last settled accommodation - Relief Duty owed

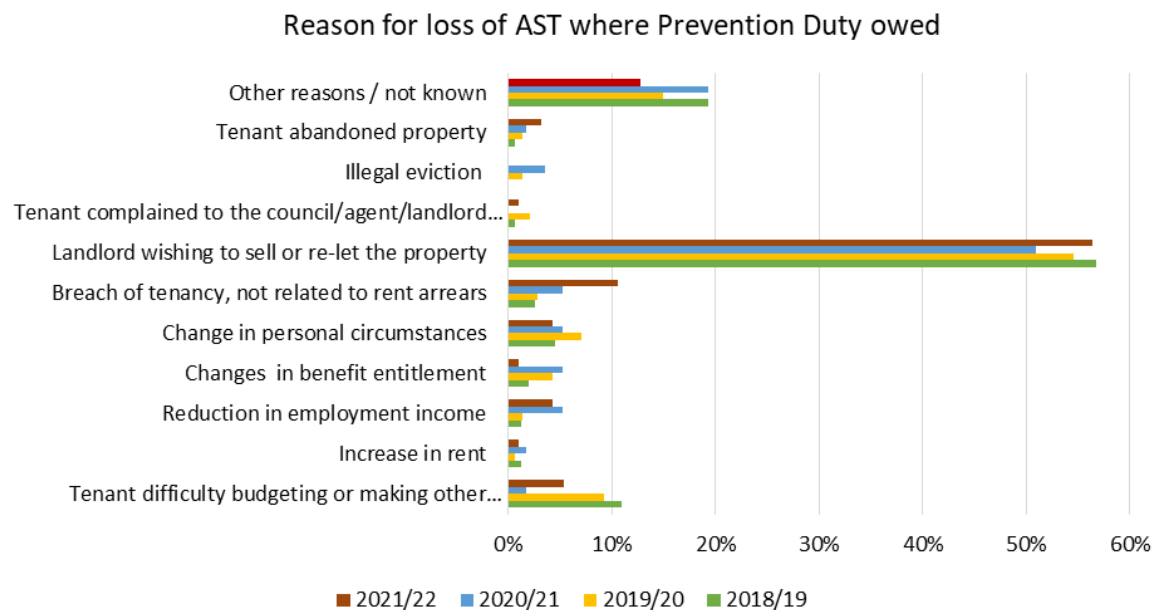


Source: [DLUHC Statistical data set: Live tables on homelessness for relevant periods](#).

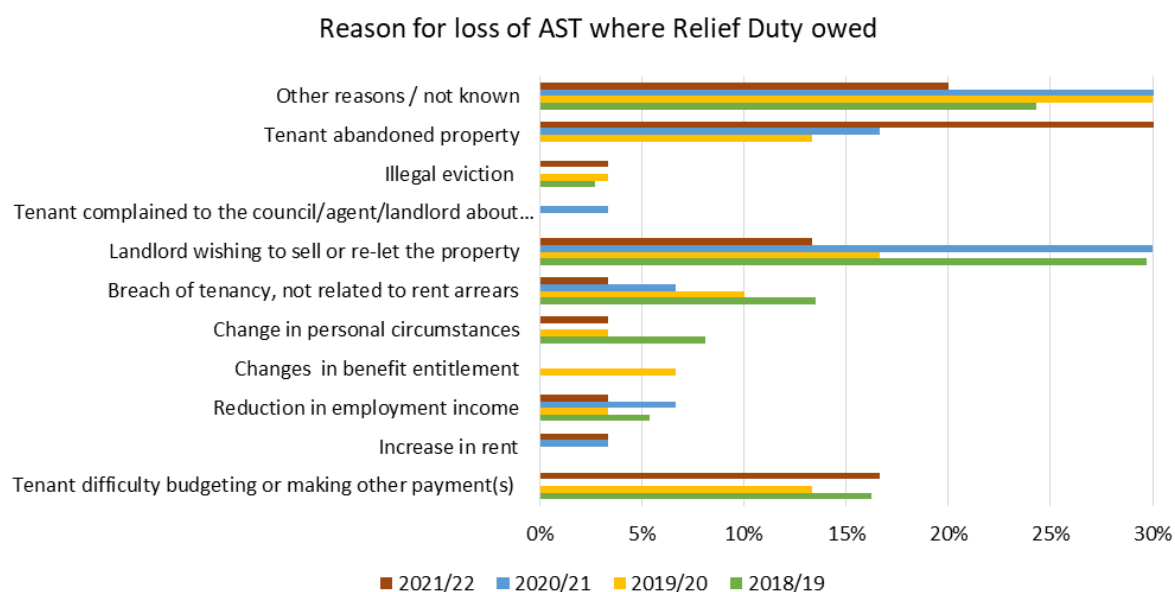
Looking at the data, it is clear that the main reasons why households become homeless and threatened with homelessness in Oxford, is that they lose their private rented tenancy, with perhaps the quarters during the pandemic being the exception due to the eviction ban.

Looking deeper into why private tenancies end, we see that the main reason people lose their PRS tenancies is due to landlords wishing to sell or re-let their properties. This has been the reason for over 50% of PRS tenancies ending for those owed prevention duty since 2018/19. The picture over the last few years for those we owe a relief duty towards is a bit more mixed. Landlord selling or re-

letting their properties was the main reason for loss of tenancy in 2018/19 and 2020/21. However, tenant abandonment was by far the most common reason in 2021/22.



Source: [DLUHC Statistical data set: Live tables on homelessness for relevant periods](#)



Source: [DLUHC Statistical data set: Live tables on homelessness for relevant periods](#)

The above data should however be taken with a note of caution, it is suspected this stated reason is over reported on homeless applications to avoid questions on arrears and property upkeep that could jeopardise future rehousing, and therefore may be hiding the real issues of unaffordability and



rent arrears. Plus it may be in a landlord's interest to declare this reason, in order to get the local authority to support moving their tenant, even if selling isn't the intention.

When considering why Oxford sees greater amounts of homelessness due to end of private rented tenancies, it certainly does not seem plausible that the reason for this is that we have a greater number of landlords simply seeking to sell or re-let properties, and instead it is more likely this is being driven by high rents and unaffordability, masked by misreporting. It is also likely to be included in the high reporting of "other". Further research into this area may prove valuable. Due to a change in data reporting requirement, from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022, we will also be able to distinguish between landlord wishing to sell their properties on the one hand, and those wishing to re-let on the others.

We can see some indication of financial difficulties leading to loss of a tenancy in the private rented sector when looking at data sources. Following landlords wishing to sell or re-let their properties, the next most common reason (apart from 'other'), where both Prevention and Relief Duty was owed, was due to tenant having difficulty budgeting or making other payment(s).

## 7.2 - What is causing rough sleeping?

The Council's commissioned outreach team collects information from rough sleepers about their last settled base prior to rough sleeping as well as the reasons for leaving this accommodation. This data is however limited in scope, as it has not been possible to collect this information from everyone sleeping rough. We have here used data in relation to those who were new to rough sleeping in the city over the last two years, and where data has been recorded for those, in order to get a better picture of why people end up rough sleeping in the first place.

Much of the data isn't precise enough and the data sample is small and there are therefore limitations to us drawing firm conclusions from this data set. The information does however show a similar picture for reasons for homelessness for those we owe a prevention and relief duty towards. The picture that emerges from the rough sleeping data is complex, and shows the diverse reasons for rough sleeping. A significant number of people are clearly losing their PRS accommodation, but relationship breakdown is also a major driver.

<b>Last settled base for new rough sleepers seen bedded in year where information has been recorded</b>	<b>2019/20 base 90</b>	<b>2020/21 base 88</b>	<b>2021/22 base 67</b>
Asylum support accommodation	0%	2%	0%
Family home	18%	32%	22%
Hostel/supported accommodation	4%	8%	15%
Social Housing (LA and HA)	9%	3%	4%
Other	10%	9%	4%
Prison	10%	8%	7%
Private rented (incl. tied a/c)	38%	24%	33%
Staying with family/friends	8%	10%	1%
TA - non-LA	1%	2%	0%
TA – LA	2%	1%	0%

<b>Reason for leaving last settled base for new rough sleepers seen bedded in year where information has been recorded</b>	<b>2019/20 base 79</b>	<b>2020/21 base 80</b>	<b>2021/22 base 56</b>
Abandoned	8%	8%	18%
Evicted	18%	16%	23%
Left prison	10%	9%	7%
Relationship breakdown	25%	36%	29%
Seeking work	1%	1%	2%
End of PRS (incl. end of tied a/c)	5%	-	2%
Other	33%	30%	20%

Source: OxTHINK

*Notes on data: 262 new rough sleepers were seen bedded down in the city in 2019/20. Information about last settled base was collected from 90 (34%) of them and information about reason for leaving last settled base was collected for 79 (30%). 173 new rough sleepers were seen bedded down in the city in 2020/21. Information about last settled base was collected from 88 (50%) of them and information about reason for leaving last settled base was collected for 80 (46%). 172 new rough sleepers were seen bedded down in the city in 2021/22. Information about last settled based was collected from 67 (38%) of them and information about reason for leaving last settled base was collected for 56 (32%).*

### 7.3 - What is driving demand for Discretionary Housing Payments?

In addition to the data available in relation to statutory homelessness that gives us some information about why people are homeless or become threatened with homelessness, we can also see that households in Oxford are under financial pressure through other work the Council delivers.

Households can apply to the Council for a Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) if they cannot afford to pay their rent, with payments made in order to temporarily sustain a tenancy while a long term solution is sought to avoid homelessness. The total number of claims has fluctuated over the last few years. Some households may make more than one claim each financial year and may also be paid more than once.

The Council receives funding from the government every year to fund DHP payments made to households. Over the last few years, the funding the Council received has reduced, despite there being continuously high need for these payments.

	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>
Total claims made	626	604	675	474
No claims paid	472	513	572	323
Total spend	£415,865.00	£440,762.19	£560,937	£413,026.30
Average payment per claim	£875.51	£806.86	£1,027.36	£1,278.72

The main reason for successful DHP claims made by households are due to the effects on households of the Welfare Reforms introduced over the last decade – Benefit Cap and the Bedroom Tax - as well as the Local Housing Allowance not covering the whole rent charged.

<b>Reason for application (successful claims):</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/2020</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>
Benefit Cap	42%	31%	36%	38%
Bedroom Tax	29%	34%	34%	35%
LHA shortfall	23%	31%	24%	20%
Combination of reforms	2%	1%	4%	5%
Other	4%	3%	3%	3%

We can also see that the majority of claims that are paid out are to households living in the private rented sector, including households housed via our Home Choice Scheme, and that households are primarily in receipt of Universal Credit.

Around a third of DHP goes to Council tenants, typically to cover Benefit Cap and Bedroom Tax. Under occupancy has fallen in recent years within the Council housing stock (see chapter 10) but a share of tenants continue to require DHP to cover their Bedroom Tax charge. With ongoing pressure on the DHP fund, the new strategy should consider what more could be done to support Council tenants still impacted by the Bedroom Tax.

In this last years, we have seen an increase in successful claims from households in the PRS compared to previous years. We have also seen a marked increase in claims paid to households in receipt of Universal Credit, at the same time as the proportion of households who are working has seen a reduction.

<b>Tenancy type (successful claims):</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>
Private Rented Sector	37%	40%	42%	43%
Council Tenant	37%	38%	37%	33%
Housing Associations	17%	14%	13%	15%
Home Choice (Councils PRS access scheme)	9%	8%	7%	9%

<b>Income type (successful claims):</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>
Passported benefits (Income Support, Income Based Job Seekers Allowance and Employment Support Allowance etc.)	51%	33%	19%	13%
Working, low earnings	10%	9%	4%	3%
Not pass ported benefits but not working	2%	2%	0%	0%
Pensioner	1%	2%	1%	1%
Universal Credit	35%	55%	76%	83%
Other/no income	1%	0%	0%	0%

This is further evidence showing that many households in the city that have to rely on the private rented sector, cannot afford the high rents, with added pressure on households due to the Welfare Reforms introduced over the last decade.

## 7.4 - Summary of the causes of homelessness

In summary, a range of structural and individual factors cause each case of homelessness, but clear trends can be observed within the data and evidence to show us what the major structural issues are that drive homelessness in Oxford.

The private rented sector is clearly the most important source of homelessness, generating a plurality (although not a majority) of the homelessness in the city. This can clearly be observed in the statutory homelessness data showing the ending of PRS tenancies as the biggest single factor, and Oxford recording the greatest share of homelessness caused by ending of PRS tenancies when compared to regional and national averages, and our district and urban authority comparators. DHP data also supports this picture, and shows the high demand for support from those in the PRS, who depend on this support to avoid homelessness. Linking these findings to early sections of the review, it is clear the high levels of unaffordability in the Oxford housing market are a major driver in the high rate of homelessness coming out of the PRS, although the data the Council holds on reasons for loss of PRS tenancy are less clear, we believe partially due to misreporting.

Other significant drivers of homelessness include eviction from family and friend provided accommodation, non-violent relationship breakdown, domestic abuse, leaving an institution without any accommodation to go to, and eviction from supported accommodation.

The picture of what is causing people to become street homeless for the very first time is more mixed. With the PRS, relationship and family breakdown, and prison leavers all significant factors, however there has been significant variation in the data over the past two years, and only captures a portion of the rough sleeping population.

## 8.0 - What are the Council and other organisations doing to tackle homelessness?

### Key Findings – What are the Council and other organisations doing to tackle homelessness?

- We are broadly in line with the national and regional averages with our success in preventing and relieving homelessness for those we have a legal duty towards, and are more successful in delivering prevention outcomes than most of our urban authority peer group.
- We are very effective at prevention and relieving homelessness by securing private rented accommodation for homeless households, exceeding rates nationally and in the county. However we have less success supporting homeless households into the social rented sector.
- There is a diverse and good homelessness prevention offer in Oxford, delivered by the city Council and its partners, but this will need to be built on and better coordinated in order to meet our ambition to prevent more cases of homelessness.
- The number of households in temporary accommodation is low when compared both historically and to other authorities, but we face challenges such as supporting increasing numbers of singles with greater support needs in the accommodation, and tackling long stays in the accommodation.
- We have had considerable success with our private rented sector access schemes, but that long term trend of rents increasing faster than wages and benefits puts considerable pressure on their continued viability, and they require continued adaption and renewal to stay effective.
- In 2019/20 only 20.4% of social housing lets in Oxford went to households who were defined as homeless or at risk of homelessness, and within this figure only 4.5% to rough sleepers/ those leaving supported accommodation.
- There are extensive services available in the city to house and support rough sleepers, many of which have expanded and improved in recent years, resulting in a drop in the street count. However to achieve further progress new commitments and approaches need to be made, work that is being taken forward by the county-wide homelessness and rough sleeping strategy, which focuses on greater prevention of rough sleeping, and more flexible and holistic support.

Oxford has a strong network of statutory and non-statutory services that, directly or indirectly, provide support to households to prevent and relieve homelessness. The City Council as the housing authority for Oxford provides a number of statutory services supporting homeless households, such as a Housing Options Service that provides advice and support to households facing homelessness, and provides temporary accommodation to those who are homeless before we assist a move to more permanent accommodation. We also operate schemes that help us access accommodation in the Private Rented Sector for homeless households, and we operate the housing register to allocate social housing for those in need.

As well as the services we are required to deliver under law, the City Council also has a strong non-statutory homeless offer such as rough sleeping services and 'upstream' homelessness prevention services, which are in line with the Council's values and prioritises. The majority of these services have been recommissioned on a countywide basis and are delivered by an Alliance of providers.

Alongside the City Council sits a wider network of services that work with us to combat homelessness, including the County Council, Health and Police etc.; and a strong 3<sup>rd</sup> sector providing a range of different support, including debt and finance advice and access to training and education.

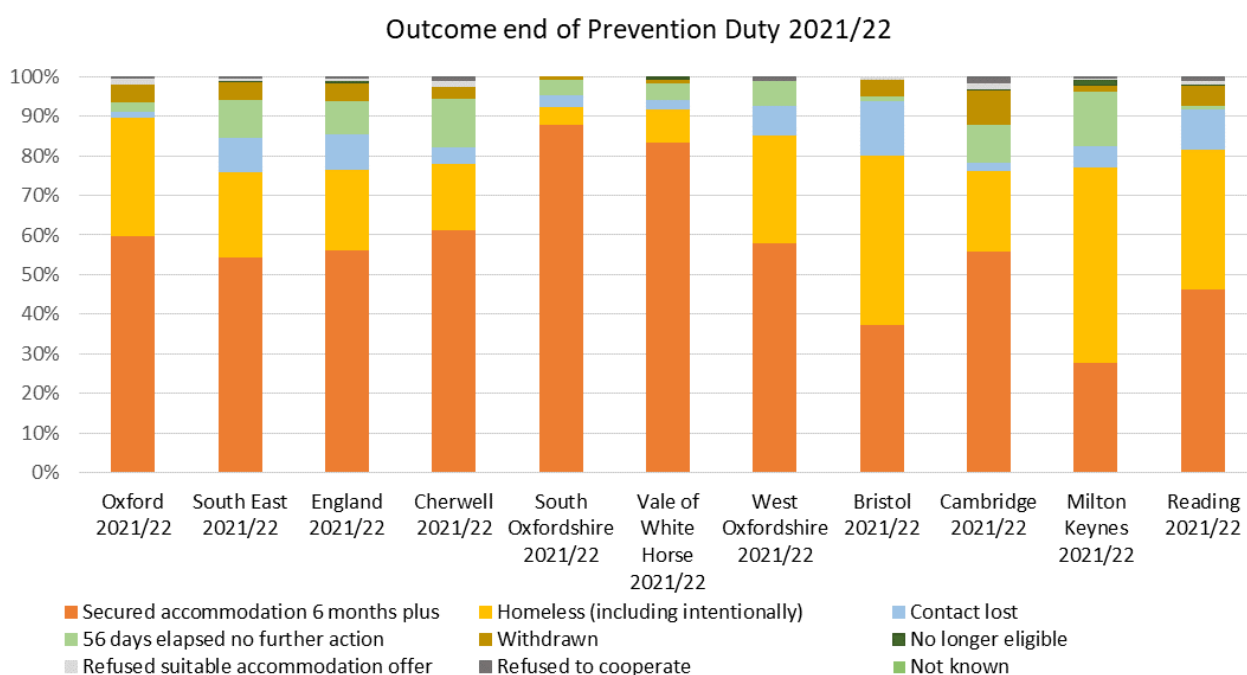
## 8.1 - Statutory support and assistance to prevent and relieve homelessness available in Oxford

As a local authority, we have many different teams that work with and within communities and that will provide activities contributing to homeless prevention. The service many households will first approach is the Council's Housing Options Team that delivers the front line of our statutory response to homelessness.

When households approach the Council asking for assistance and advice in relation to their housing, but who are not yet homeless or threatened with homelessness within 56 days, the Housing Options team will provide general advice. Such advice includes how to find private rented accommodation in the city, providing information on how to get help with the payment of a rent deposit, the level of Local Housing Allowance that would be applicable to the household and contact details of other organisations in Oxford that may be able to assist. It is key that the advice given is good and comprehensive, so that households can take actions, or be assisted to do this, in order to prevent them from becoming threatened with homelessness. Therefore, if a household has specific needs or needs specific assistance, we will also help households link in with more specialist organisations.

When advice is not enough, and a household becomes threatened with homelessness within 56 days and we owe a Prevention Duty under the HRA, we face a number of different challenges to prevent homelessness. In 2019/20 we assisted 53.6% of households we owed a prevention duty towards to secure accommodation (existing or alternative accommodation) and prevented their homelessness. This number increased to 60.4% in 2020/21, with a slight decrease seen again in 2021/22 to 59.9%. However, we have unfortunately seen an increase in prevention duties ending with homelessness. In 2019/20, 19.6% of prevention duties ended in homelessness, whilst in 2021/22, this had increased to 30%.

Compared to the national prevention outcomes for accommodation secured at end of prevention duty, we compare well. When compared to our neighbouring Districts South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse, that have rates just above 80% when it comes to securing accommodation at end of prevention duty, we are not performing as well. That our District colleagues have significantly higher positive prevention duty outcomes is perhaps due greater amounts of affordable housing available, which can make it easier to assist households to access accommodation. However, when looking to our comparator group of urban authorities with similar challenges in their housing markets and levels of deprivation, our successful prevention outcomes are approximately level or exceed the other cities.

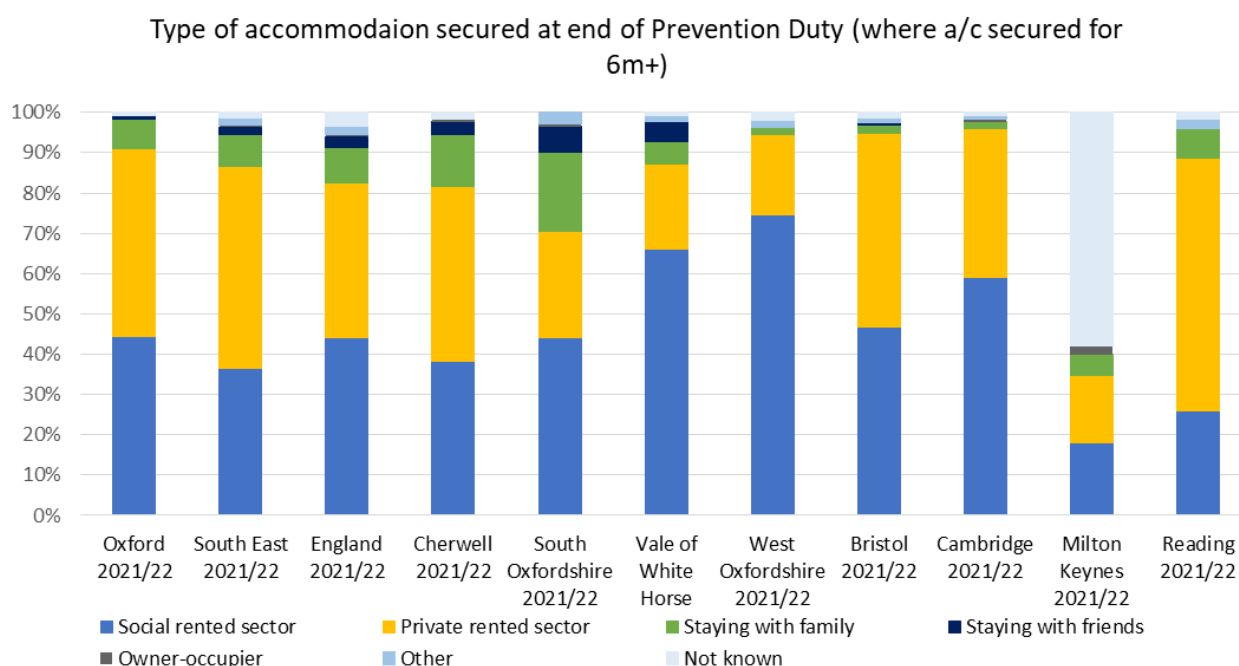


Source: [DLUHC Statistical data set: Live tables on homelessness for relevant periods](#)

For households where accommodation was secured (existing or alternative accommodation) at end of prevention duty, our neighbouring local authorities had a very high proportion of households being assisted to secure social rented accommodation. In Oxford however, securing accommodation in the private rented sector was most common. This shows our considerable success in rehousing homeless households into the private sector. Our ability to access new or secure existing PRS for households, despite the challenge of doing this in a competitive and often unaffordable market is crucial as this is the largest tenure sector in the city.

We have however made good progress over the last two years, and significantly increased the proportion of households that we assist to secure accommodation in the social rented sector. In 2019/20, 27.9% were assisted to access social rented accommodation at the end of prevention duty. This has increased to 44.4% in 2021/22.

Our comparatively low rate of accommodation secured for households in the social sector is likely due to both the low rate of households threatened with losing their accommodation in the social rented sector in the first place, and the limitations of availability of social housing as alternative accommodation source. Our limited access to social housing is linked to particular challenges in urban areas where there is lower supply of new build social homes due to available land and significantly higher demand for social housing due to higher deprivation levels and unaffordability in the private sector.



Source: [DLUHC Statistical data set: Live tables on homelessness for relevant periods](#)

It is difficult to compare prevention duty outcomes here like-for-like as circumstances both nationally and regionally are very different. Our challenges in having access to affordable housing in general, and social housing in particular, makes prevention more difficult. As previously examined, a high proportion of households we worked with were in full-time employment, but still had to seek assistance from us to prevent their homelessness. We see this as a direct link to the unaffordability of housing in the city, both in terms of renting and buying a home.

All these findings underline the ongoing need to ensure effective access to the private rented sector, both in assisting households to stay in PRS they are at risk of losing and where this is not possible, we need to provide assistance to secure alternative accommodation in this sector. This is going to be challenging with the government again freezing the local housing allowance, and the ongoing impact of the Benefit Cap. The Council should also consider new ways to improve access to social housing for those experiencing homelessness.

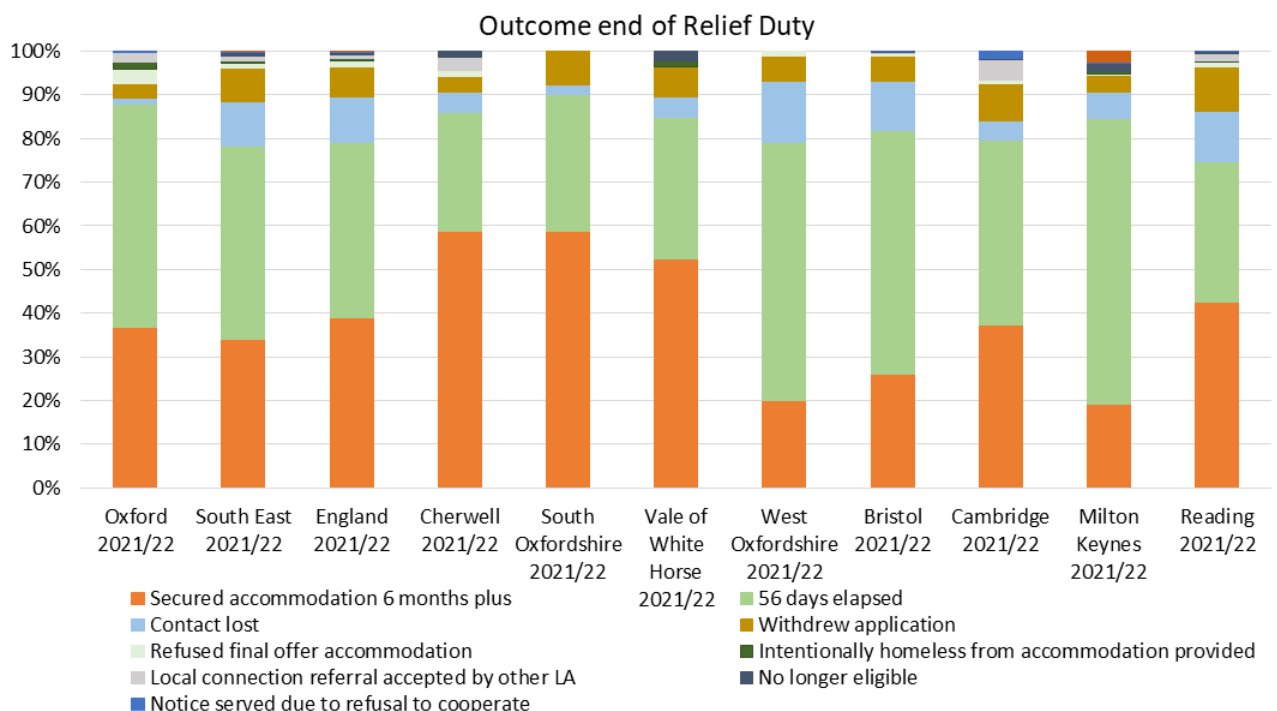
Where possible, we want to assist households to stay in their existing accommodation, as the upheaval of moving home, is stressful and costly. For those households we assist to secure accommodation (i.e. prevented homelessness), we had a high rate of households assisted to stay in their existing accommodation compared to our neighbouring local authorities. However, in 2021/22, we saw an increase in the number of households that we assisted to move to alternative accommodation. In 2019/20, we assisted 76.2% to move to alternative accommodation where prevention duty ended, and in 2021/22 this figure was 81.5%. Preventing households from having to move from their existing home in order to prevent homelessness is something we should work on improving even further in the future, particularly in the context that it is difficult to access affordable accommodation when an alternative is needed.



	2021/22		
	Secured accommodation for 6+ months (reason for prevention duty ending)	Moved to alternative accommodation	Stayed in existing accommodation
<b>Oxford</b>	124	81.5%	18.5%
<b>South East</b>	9,340	71.5%	28.5%
<b>England</b>	68,810	67.0%	33.0%
<b>Cherwell</b>	131	69.5%	30.5%
<b>South Oxfordshire</b>	290	72.1%	27.9%
<b>Vale of White Horse</b>	274	75.9%	24.1%
<b>West Oxfordshire</b>	55	94.5%	5.5%
<b>Bristol</b>	156	90.4%	9.60%
<b>Cambridge</b>	129	86.0%	14.0%
<b>Milton Keynes</b>	95	78.9%	21.2%
<b>Reading</b>	123	66.7%	33.3%

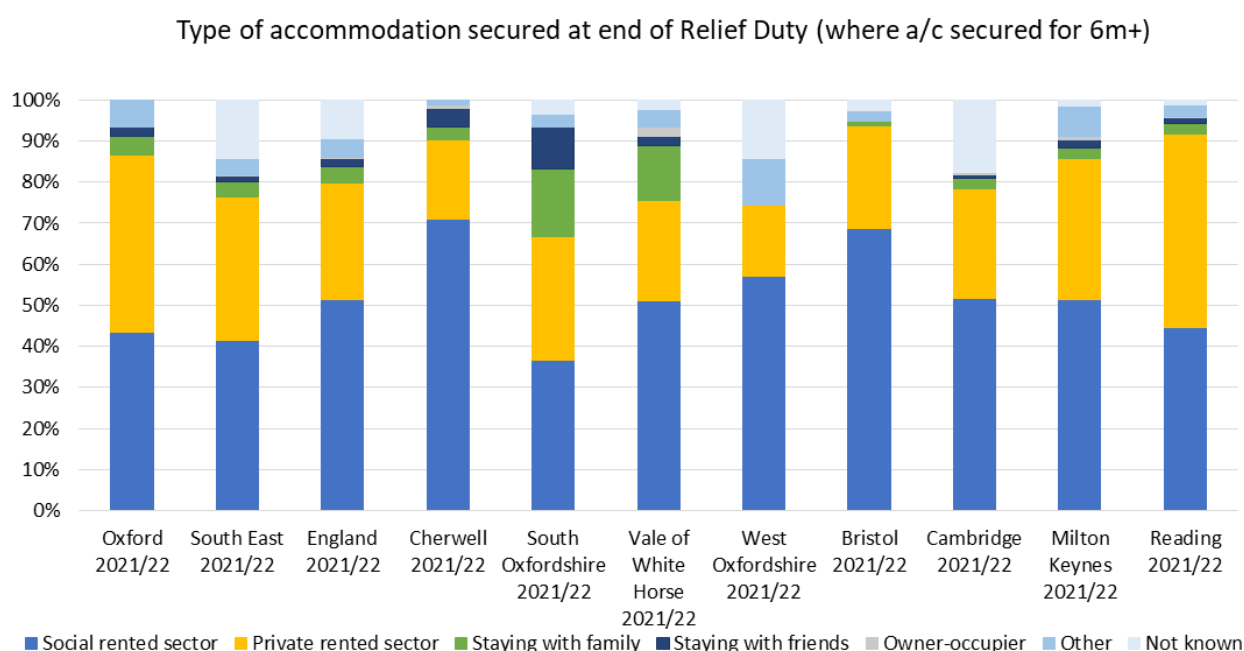
Source: [DLUHC Statistical data set: Live tables on homelessness for relevant periods](#)

For the households we owe a relief duty towards, we see similar challenges to assist households to secure accommodation when ending Relief Duties. Whilst we assisted over 50% of households owed a Prevention Duty to secure accommodation, in 2021/22 this rate is only 36.7% at the end of Relief Duty. This is in line with the regional average, but lower than all local authorities in the County apart from West Oxfordshire.



Source: [DLUHC Statistical data set: Live tables on homelessness for relevant periods](#)

Similarly to the accommodation secured under prevention duty, we make good use of the PRS sector when securing accommodation for households under relief duty in Oxford. It is interesting to see that local authorities such as Bristol, that are heavily reliant on the PRS to prevent homelessness, have a significantly higher reliance on the social rented sector when securing accommodation for those owed a relief duty.



Source: [DLUHC Statistical data set: Live tables on homelessness for relevant periods](#)

## 8.2 - Homelessness prevention in Oxford

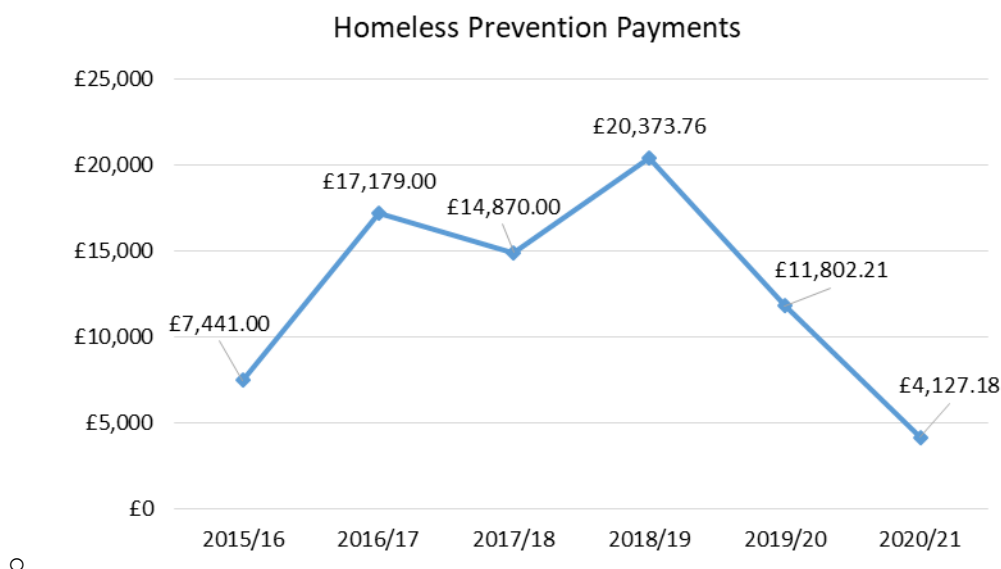
We have a number of different tools to provide applicants with support and help depending on their circumstances and what they need and want assistance with to prevent or relieve their homelessness. We work in partnership to provide the necessary support and assistance to prevent homelessness, both before a prevention duty comes into force and as measures under the prevention duty.

To achieve good prevention outcomes overall, our housing options team will often work with both internal teams and external agencies. In addition to the activities our Housing Options service provide, we have also developed a number of other prevention measures that sit across the organisation. Some of these measures will be used as 'early prevention' measures, meaning that we will work to prevent homelessness before a statutory duty is triggered. Where this has not been possible, the officers supporting a households under a statutory duty, will also work to seek to prevent homelessness.

Internal service and support we provide includes:

- We have a homeless prevention fund that can be used to make one-off payments to help prevent someone becoming homeless, e.g. by assisting with relocation expenses, paying a

deposit or paying a landlord to ensure a household can stay in their accommodation for a short period before other alternative accommodation is available.



- We run a Sanctuary Scheme in partnership with the police that support households that experience domestic abuse or hate crimes to remain in their existing home. A range of measures can be installed in a property free of charge to the customer to enable them to remain living safely in the home without the need to move to alternative accommodation.
- Over recent years, we have worked with housing associations and providers of supported housing to establish 'pre-eviction' protocols. This means that accommodation providers, other services and the Council should work proactively and collaboratively to provide support for households that may become at risk of or who are at risk of being evicted from their home, so that eviction is always the very last resort.
- Our Welfare Reform Team helps people who experience changes to their benefits or who are struggling to maintain tenancies due to financial difficulties. The team supports households to maximise their income through claiming the right benefits, find work or access training. A Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) can also be offered as a temporary measure to assist with rent payments. In 2021/22, the team prevented 220 households from becoming homeless. This is an increase from 166 in 2019/20, and shows that our ability to assist with DHPs is an essential tool in homelessness prevention.
- The Council's Tenancy Relations officer works in partnership with internal teams and external agencies to prevent illegal evictions and harassment of tenants who live in the Private Rented Sector. In 2019/20, 152 households were prevented from becoming homeless due to this work.
- Our Tenancy Sustainment Team work with tenants in the Council's accommodation who struggle to sustain their tenancy, and a specialist Income Officer supports tenants that have issues with their Universal Credit.
- We have a 'Furnished tenancy scheme' in place, where we provide furnishings to new tenants moving into Oxford City Council accommodation and who, without our assistance, may not be able to afford it. Furnishings include items such as carpets, cooker, refrigerator, beds and bedding and other items that are needed to set up a new home. The scheme seeks to ensure that the property becomes a home and that the tenancy is more likely to succeed, thus preventing homelessness.

- The HRA introduced a new duty – the Duty to Refer - on certain statutory agencies such as prison and probation services, social services and health and mental health services, to refer households who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless to the local housing authority. Organisations that do not have a formal duty to refer under the new legislation, can and do also refer cases to local authorities in an effort to prevent homelessness. Such organisations include advice agencies, supported housing providers, street services for rough sleepers, private landlords and faith organisations. We receive a large number of referrals through Duty to Refer. In 2021/22, we received a total of 373 referrals, a large increase compared to 272 referrals received in 2019/20. The majority of referrals – 38% - were made by probation/prison services. Over 40% of all referrals received were made in relation to households that were threatened with homelessness within 7 days, or already homeless. Referrals are often received when a household is very close to becoming homeless, and the prevention activities that we and other organisations can then put in place are very limited, which ultimately makes it more difficult to reach positive outcomes. The number of households that we carried out a homelessness assessment for following a referral, is captured in the data collection we provide to DLUHC on a quarterly basis. In 2021/22, our provisional data shows that 95 households were assessed under the HRA following a referral. The majority of referrals had been made by an agency subject to Duty to Refer. However, 27% of referrals were made by agencies that are not subject to this duty, such as outreach services, floating support and supported accommodation services. This data indicates that the vast majority of referrals we receive, never have an HRA initial assessment. There are many different reasons for this, such as households not engaging, or that the referred household has a local connection to another council which we then put them in touch with. Current data collection methods means that it is not easy to track outcomes from these cases. We acknowledge the need to strengthen our Duty to Refer offer, with better data collection and working better with partners to improve the quality and timeliness of referrals to ensure the best use of it to prevent cases of homelessness.
- We are also using embedded housing workers within key partners, such as prisons and hospitals, to support referrals ensuring they are regularly made, are of good quality, and ensure they are done as early as possible to maximise the chance of successful homelessness prevention, alongside broader benefits of improving joint working to improve client outcomes. There is currently an embedded worker within the mental health system, and the potential for one working within the prison in the future. We are also delivering the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) funded 'out-of-hospital' project that is focussed on achieving better outcomes for persons who are in hospital and who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless when they are discharged.
- During 2022, the Housing Needs team within the Council has undergone a significant restructure in order to transform the services that are provided. Embedded within this, is increased focus on early prevention of homelessness. As one of the main reasons for homelessness in the City is loss of PRS accommodation, a dedicated Private Rented Sector Tenancy Sustainment Team will lead on the delivery of preventative tenancy sustainment support for those living in this sector. In addition to this, we successfully bid for funding for a Landlord Mediation Service. Our service will be based on the '[Call B4 You Serve](#)' model, first established by Derby City Council. It encourages landlords to contact us for free advice before they serve a notice of eviction. The aim of the service is to support and advise landlords of solutions that will result in a positive solution for both landlord and tenant and where the tenant remains in the property. Learning from this model will inform our service delivery in the future.

There is also a wide network of organisations working to preventing homelessness in Oxford. The City Council supports many of these organisations through various grants in order to ensure that there are different and specialist services in Oxford, including longer term preventative approaches.

- Crisis Skylight specialises in single homeless households, through approaches such as having Housing Coaches that help to find accommodation in the Private Rented Sector, as well as help to fund deposit payments. Crisis can also provide a range of other support, including a wide and comprehensive range of education and training programmes for homeless people.
- If an applicant needs debt advice or support with benefit issues, the Citizens Advice or other local advice centres can provide assistance, as well as advice on other issues.
- Connections Support and Aspire provide advice, advocacy and practical help in relation to homeless prevention, tenancy sustainment, drug and alcohol misuse, offending and mental health difficulties.
- Where a household has multiple and complex needs, Elmore Community Services can offer more specialised support.
- When we think there is a need for a care package to be in place, we will refer to and work with Adult Social Care.
- For victims of domestic abuse, referrals can be made to the women's refuges or to an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA). IDVA works with people in Oxfordshire who are deemed at high risk of significant harm and trauma through abuse.

The Council and partners deliver a good range of preventive services, above what it has to do under its statutory requirement, covering a range of needs and client groups. However learning gained over recent years from work such as the Trailblazer Programme, the Crisis led Housing-Led feasibility study and learning from the Homelessness Reduction Act rollout, tell us that homelessness prevention in Oxford needs to go further, and ideally happen at an even earlier stage.

While we have significant and diverse provision for homelessness prevention, we need to consider if this sufficiently covers those client groups in most need. For example, we need to provide better and more comprehensive and holistic advice to households, and in particularly singles, that come to us to seek help, but who may not meet the threshold for statutory duties. We also believe that the current prevention offer for those living in the Private Rented Sector is insufficient, with the biggest source of homelessness in the city coming from the PRS, as evidenced by the last chapter.

Whilst it is positive and necessary to have a multitude of teams and services providing support, this strength does present some challenges. Providing diverse and specialist provision across multiple teams and external providers creates the challenge of better coordination and prioritisation across teams within the Council and external organisations. At the moment services can be too fragmented and do not as standard coordinate support closely enough to deliver the best outcome for clients. The Council will need to ensure its own teams working on the prevention of homelessness are closely coordinating and prioritising when facing high demand, in particular due to changing patterns of homelessness, to ensure the best outcomes for clients, but also engage external partners to ensure the best possible client journeys across organisations, maximizing opportunities to prevent homelessness.

To really make sure that we focus our prevention measures where they are needed and to make these work well to make the biggest difference, we also need to be more data and evidence led. This means that we need to use the data we have to inform what service and support we need to provide as well as collecting more information where there are gaps in our knowledge.

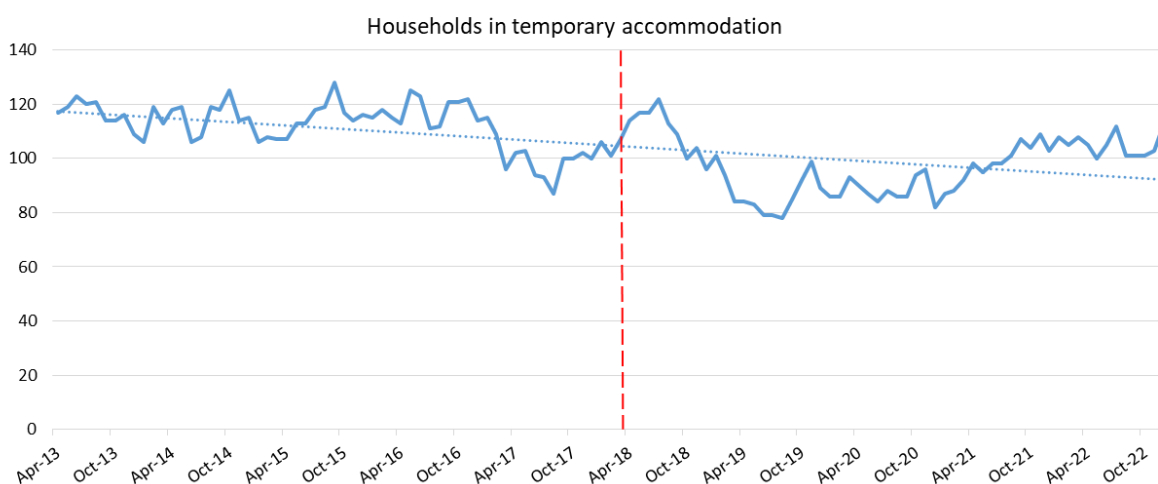
### 8.3 - The provision of Temporary Accommodation

As discussed in chapter 5, we have a legal obligation to provide temporary accommodation in certain circumstances to relieve homelessness. We mainly have our own stock for temporary accommodation use, some of which are Housing Revenue Account properties and some general fund and OX Place properties. The majority of these properties are located in Oxford, but a few are in Cherwell and South Oxfordshire. In some cases, if there is no suitable temporary accommodation available, we will place the applicant in bed & breakfast/hotel accommodation for short periods until temporary accommodation in our own stock becomes available, or another more sustainable housing solution is found.

When living in temporary accommodation, households are supported by staff to settle into the accommodation, manage the accommodation and to find suitable and permanent accommodation. We also link in with and refer to more specialised support agencies where this is needed.

As an organisation, we are striving to reduce the number of households that need to be placed in temporary accommodation. As previously explained, the last decade has seen gradually falling temporary accommodation usage in Oxford, a trend not seen universally in the county. Since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act in particular, trends across the country have seen most local authorities use temporary accommodation more. The reduction of use in Oxford that we saw after the introduction of the HRA, may be attributed to a number of complex factors, but we believe is mostly linked to our improved homelessness prevention offer, more focus on move-on in our temporary accommodation stock, and our improved Private Rented Sector access schemes which help to both avoid temporary accommodation placements and move people from temporary accommodation on into the private sector.

Since spring 2021, we have started to see higher numbers of households in temporary accommodation again. This can be linked to us changing the methods we use when looking at temporary accommodation numbers. We have not seen a sharp increase in placements through this period, but struggled to assist households to find alternative, suitable and affordable accommodation to move to. To address this, we are transforming our approach to assist households to move on from temporary accommodation, and in particular focussing on those households that have been in temporary accommodation for a longer period of time.



*Please note: Data for the period April 2013 to March 2021 is calculated as per the P1E definition. From April 2021, the number of households in temporary accommodation shows the actual number of households occupying temporary accommodation. The numbers up until March 2021 and the number from April 2021 are therefore not directly comparable. Data from April 2021 does include those who have had a negative decision and where duty has been discharged for example, whilst the P1E definition does not include such households.*

The length of time some households stay in this accommodation is far longer than we would want. At a snap-shot in June 2022, 56 (54%) out of the 103 households in accommodation at that time had lived in temporary accommodation for over 6 months, and 38 (37%) of these 56 households had been in temporary accommodation over 12 months. We want to prevent unnecessarily long stays in temporary accommodation from happening in the future.

We do however continue to have a better per capita temporary accommodation rates than our peer group of urban authorities (see chapter 5.4). Despite the success with our approach to temporary accommodation we believe we need to do more to both keep the number in temporary accommodation as low as possible and to reduce the time households spend in temporary accommodation. A range of different research carried out over the last decade shows that stays in interim or temporary accommodation have detrimental effects on households, and in particular on children. Being uncertain of the future of their housing situation, living in a place that can't really be called a "home", have negative effects on mental and physical health, education, and ultimate life chances (various sources; [The Impact of Homelessness of Health, LGA 2017](#); [Sick and Tired – The Impact of Temporary Accommodation on the Health of Homeless Families, Shelter 2004](#); [Bad Housing Leads to Bad Health – Time for a joined up approach in greater Manchester, January 2018](#); [The Impact of homelessness on babies and their families, NSPCC](#)), and it is therefore imperative that we keep numbers in temporary accommodation as low as possible and stays as short as possible.

In addition to the challenges in relation to numbers and length of stay, we have also seen a change in the type of households we are placing in temporary accommodation since the introduction of the HRA that presents further challenges. The new legislation has driven an increase in single households placed into our temporary accommodation and a large proportion of these singles have multiple support needs and require a high level of support to manage independently in their accommodation. This presents a number of challenges to us, both in relation to the kinds of support we and other agencies need to put in place for this cohort and also the kind of accommodation that we have available. If we are successful in future years in bringing down numbers in temporary accommodation further, and continue to see more demand from singles over other larger households, this will also create the need to review the profile of temporary accommodation housing stock, as demand for larger size units drops.

For all households, and in particularly for singles, there are a number of barriers to moving on from temporary accommodation and into permanent accommodation. Going forward, we need to find ways of tackling barriers to move on such as rent arrears and anti-social behaviour and suitable housing supply if we are to realise our ambition for households not to live in temporary accommodation for long periods of time. We need to provide holistic support focused on move on that starts as soon as a customer is placed in our temporary accommodation that picks up from the prevention work that the Options officer will have done prior to placement. We need to ensure that

we focus particularly on providing financial assistance to maximise customers' move on options. Lastly we need to ensure we use all the tools at our disposal to ensure sufficient housing supply for customers moving on from TA. This approach may involve a move away from the concept of "tenancy ready", where we work with a client in temporary accommodation until they are ready to sustain a permanent tenancy, to "tenancy supported" where support is provided in temporary accommodation which stays with them as they move on into permanent accommodation, breaking the need for a tenant to "prove" they are ready to move on, which should enable more effective move on for clients.

## 8.4 - Support to access accommodation in the Private Rented Sector

Due to the significant demand on social housing in the City, we have developed different schemes over the years to aid our ability to help homeless households or those threatened with homelessness to find accommodation in the private rented sector. Assisting households to find alternative accommodation in the private rented sector is the most common outcome for households we are assisting to prevent and relieve homelessness (see previous sections). Some of the households we assist to move into private rented sector housing previously lived in our temporary accommodation.

The majority of households we owe a Prevention or Relief Duty towards will be referred to our Private Rented Sector Team that oversees the different schemes and work with landlords and households to find a suitable and affordable property, either in the City or outside the City.

The different schemes we operate include:

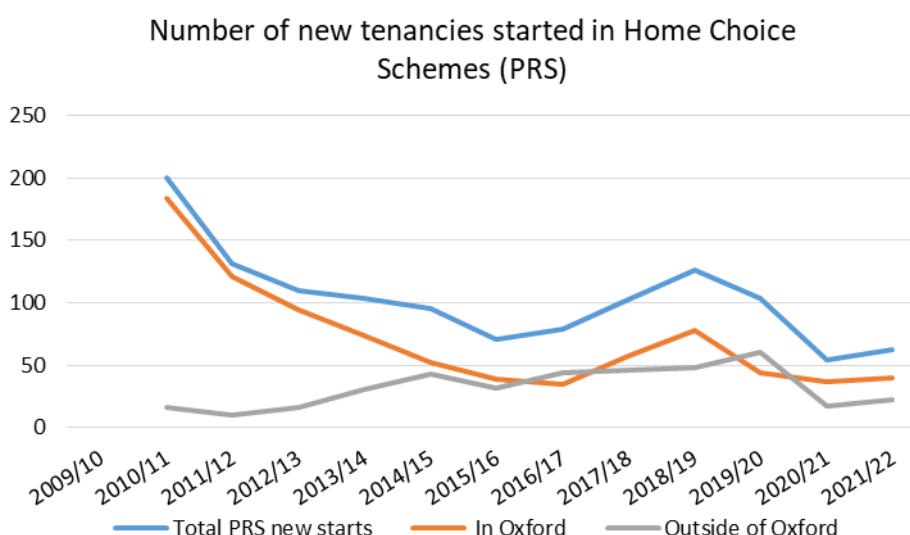
- Home Choice Scheme – set up in 2003 and offers incentives to landlords to let properties to homeless households, such as finder's fees, provision of cash or bond deposits and rent in advance. These measures support homeless tenants to access the private sector, overcoming issues such as lacking money for a deposit, or landlords turning down tenants who receive Housing Benefit.
- Real Lettings – We have invested £5m into the Real Lettings Scheme (via the National Homelessness Property Fund), in partnership with St Mungo's and Resonance, who have match funded £5m. This has enabled the purchase of 69 properties in Oxfordshire (mostly 2-bedroom properties) that we can nominate households to, whilst also securing a return on our capital investment. Tenants who are accepted and move into these properties receive support from St Mungo's, focussed on achieving financial independence and to sustain a tenancy to enable them to move on to independent accommodation after 3-4 years. Rents for these properties are set at LHA level to enable tenants to save money.
- Rent Guarantee Scheme launched in November 2016. Through this scheme, we offer support to tenants to sustain a tenancy, while attracting landlords through the offer of this tenancy sustainment and financial incentives. We pay rent directly to the landlord and we then collect rent from the tenants. The landlord is therefore guaranteed to receive the rent due in respect of the property. Tenants accommodated through the scheme benefit from coaching from our Housing Coaches, with the aim of tenants becoming financially independent and able to manage and sustain their tenancies.

Wherever possible, we try to secure properties within the city. However, as there is a big gap between rent levels and LHA rates in Oxford, this has proved to be increasingly difficult over the last



few years and consequently we also have to offer some suitable and affordable housing in areas outside of Oxford.

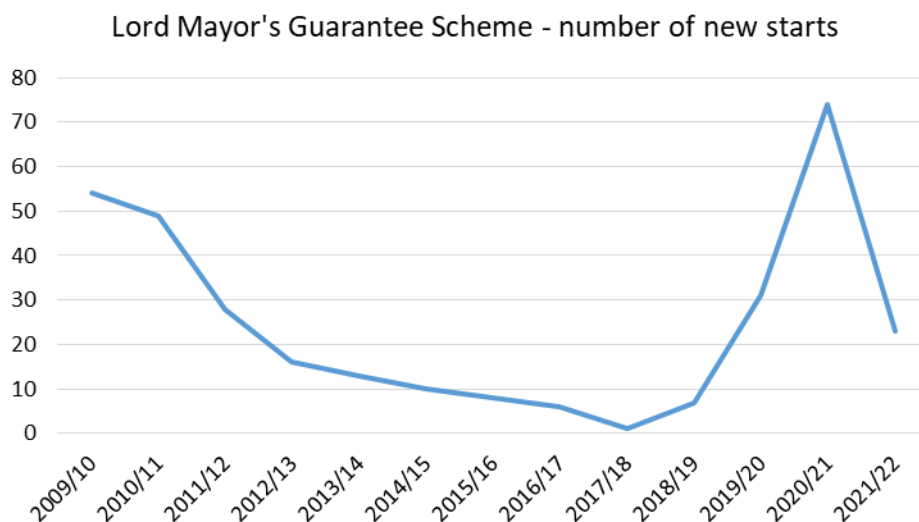
Over the last few 10 years, the number of households we have been able to assist into private rented sector accommodation has decreased. However, the establishment of the Real Lettings and Rent Guarantee Schemes have seen some recovery in the years leading up to the pandemic.



In addition to these schemes which are accessible for those we have a statutory homeless duty towards, we also have two rent deposit schemes through which we assist households with deposits and rent in advance payments to help them find their own accommodation.

The Lord Mayor's Deposit Guarantee Scheme assists with deposits and rent in advance to singles and couples threatened with homelessness. It has become increasingly difficult for people to find private rented accommodation that is affordable when on a low income, and because we can only support with a deposit where we are confident the household can afford the rent, this has caused the number of successful applications to fall over the last decade.

We did however see an increase in successful applications to the scheme in 2019/20 due to an increase in referrals to the scheme made for those we owe a statutory duty towards, it is estimated that around 2/3 of all successful applications were due to referrals for such cases, with 1/3 being households who approached us for assistance where we did not owe a duty. We also saw a large increase in applicants assisted through this scheme in 2020/21, when we helped 74 applicants. This is largely due to the offer of assistance to those housed through the 'Everyone In' scheme from the end of March 2020, where we were more flexible with clients during the pandemic and lockdown.



The Make It Happen & Move On Fund (partly funded through the Rough Sleeping Initiative) is another financial assistance scheme that is primarily aimed at assisting single people who:

- Are rough sleeping or at imminent risk of rough sleeping
- Live in supported accommodation through the Alliance

The aim of this fund is to help people into accommodation so that they do not have to access accommodation provided through the Alliance and to increase options for move-on for those who are in the pathway or emergency accommodation.

Across the different private rented sector access schemes the Council operates we have had a considerable success over the last 10 years in moving and sustaining homeless households in the sector, in very challenging circumstances. However, the persistent growth in rents, which aren't being kept up with by benefits or wages, are causing more acute unaffordability, and continue to put pressure on the viability of our schemes for the future. This is a significant challenge, as we not only want to ensure continued access to the PRS for homeless households, but expanded access in order to underpin our wider aspirations such as more effective move on into the PRS from the Adult Homeless Pathway, temporary accommodation and as a homelessness prevention measure.

Therefore a major challenge for the next strategic 5 year period will be to renew and reinvigorate our approach and offer in the sector to maximise access for homeless households to affordable and quality private rented accommodation. Learning from our newer schemes approach such as the Rent Guarantee Scheme, and how we have used the Lord Mayor's scheme more flexibly through the pandemic, offers a potential way forward. A review of the multitude of current schemes to consider their relative effectiveness, and future sustainability will be needed, and a revised offer formed to ensure the continued success of our private rented access.

The likely future direction of schemes will see greater emphasis and importance of support being provided beyond the placement in the privately property, with ongoing tenancy sustainment being key as we respond to more clients who have support needs and history of tenancy failure. With an increasing demand from single clients, move on to rooms in shared accommodation and one bedroom accommodation in the private sector will be key, with the emphasis of most our current schemes being for family accommodation. This changing demand from homelessness trends will

certainly require a reprioritisation of our property procurement to target different types of units, with an updated Home Choice offer that appeals to and encourages landlords with this different form of accommodation.

This raises the potential of our schemes having a greater involvement with the HMO market in the future, a housing type traditionally that has had a small part to play within our private rented sector access schemes, with potential for some trial sites in the near future as we seek to unlock greater amounts of move on accommodation for single households. The move to using HMO accommodation however would pose significant challenges for the Council due to the increased management they require, and the concentration of potentially vulnerable clients, so this will be an approach that will need to be developed with care. We also need to ensure alignment between our private rented sector access schemes and the Councils HMO licencing schemes, with the aim of a complimentary approach between these sections of the Council that encourages private landlords to let their properties through the Council in a social responsible way.

## 8.5 - The allocation of social housing

Households who want to access social housing in the city can apply to be included on the Housing Register. We have formed a partnership with the major registered providers of social housing in the city and maintain a common register on behalf of this partnership (Oxford Register of Affordable Housing (ORAH)).

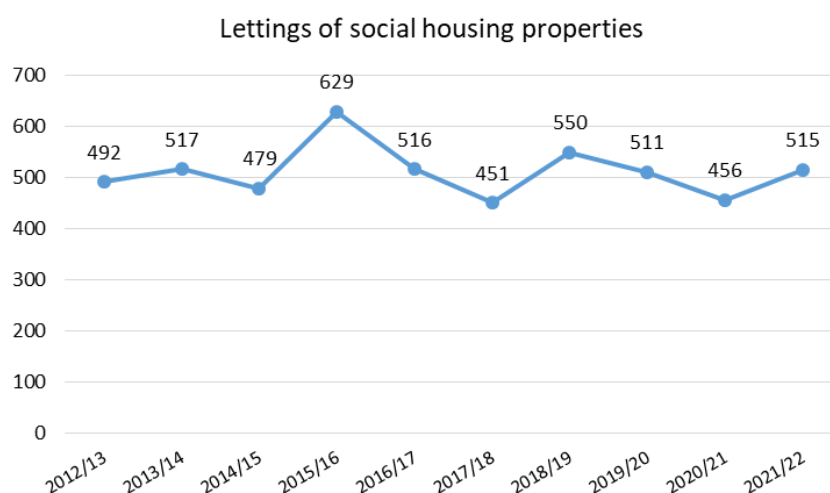
The Housing register consist of two lists:

- The Transfer List – this is for tenants who live in social housing in the city and who want to move to alternative social housing.
- The General Register – this is for all other households applying for social housing.

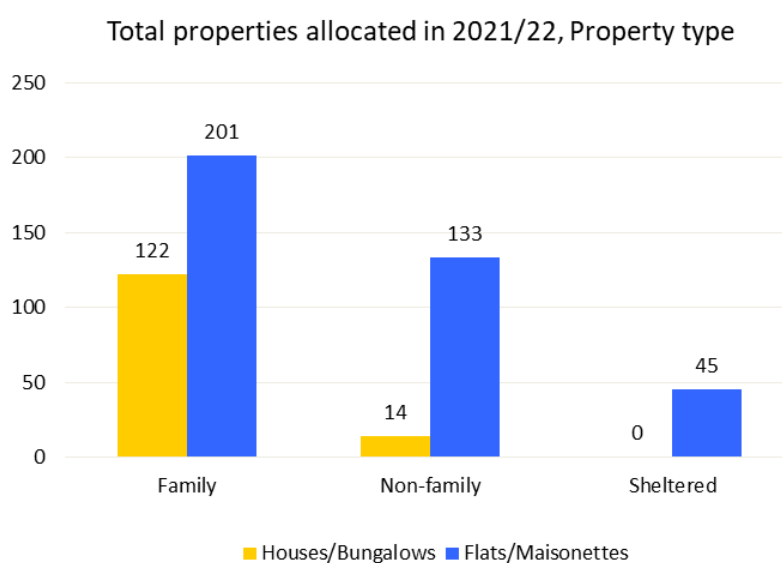
A Homeless List is also kept as part of the wider General Register. This list is specifically for households that the Council has accepted a statutory homelessness duty towards and who have been placed in temporary accommodation, and does not include other homeless households who are included on the wider General Register and therefore the homeless list only provides a partial picture of homelessness on the full housing register since the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act.

There are certain eligibility criteria that need to be met before a household is included on the register, for example a household need to have a local connection to Oxford, demonstrate that behaviour is acceptable and that the household is financially responsible. Depending on a household's needs and circumstances, they are placed in priority system – Band 1-5 – where those in most need are placed in Band 1, and those considered in lowest need, in Band 5, in accordance with our Allocations Scheme. Due to the acute need for social housing in the city, the majority of households included on the register will never receive an offer of social housing unless they are in one of the top priority bands. Even then, the wait for an available property can take a long time.

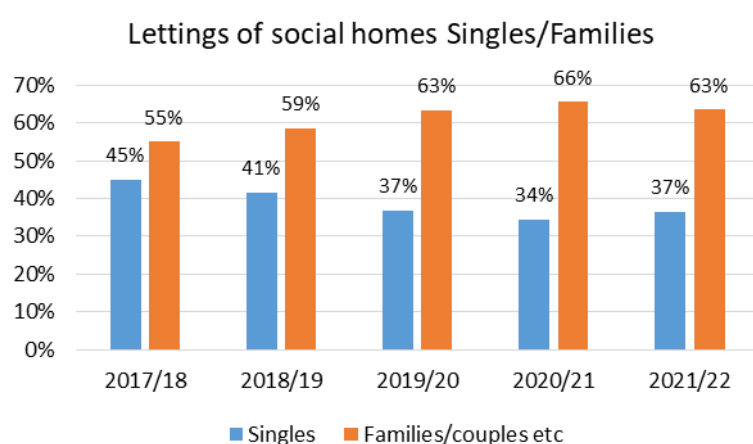
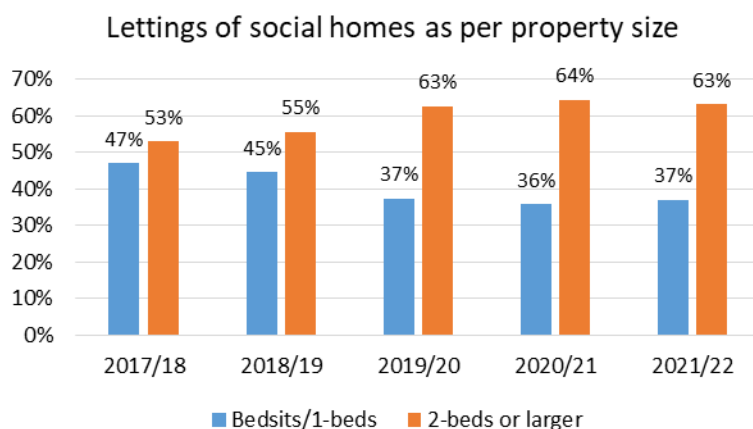
The Council allocates social housing to applicants on the housing register through its choice based lettings system, which includes council owned and registered provider owned properties. We allocate around 500 properties per year across the lists.



The majority of the properties allocated each year are flats and maisonettes - 74% in 2021/22 – as opposed to houses or bungalows. In 2021/22 around 63% of lettings were on family-sized properties, the rest being non-family and sheltered.

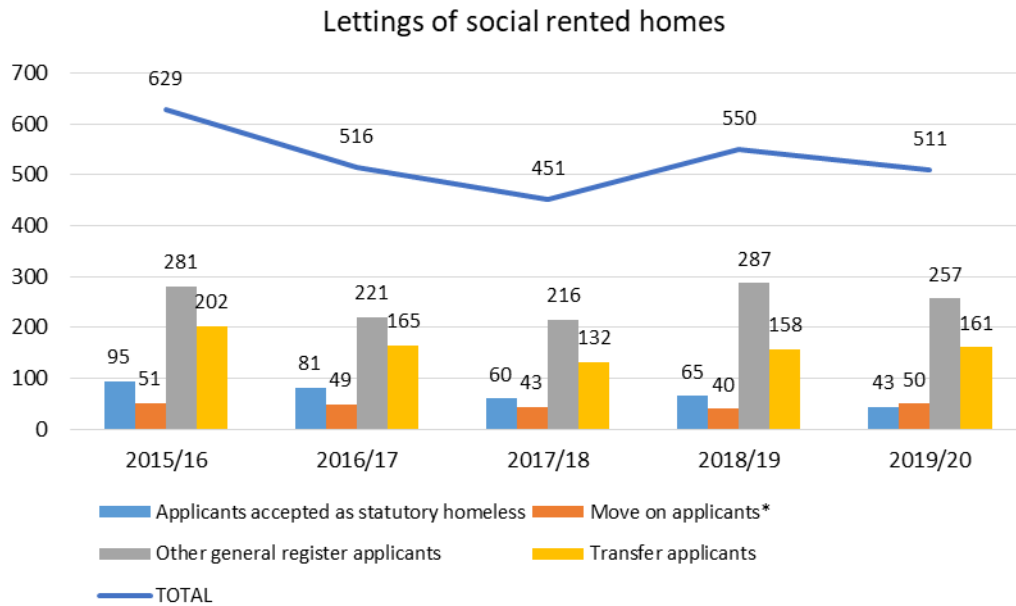


The two charts below show lettings to singles follows fairly closely the availability of bedsits and 1-beds, and demonstrate how much of the ratio of lettings between singles and families is determined by the supply of stock in each given year.



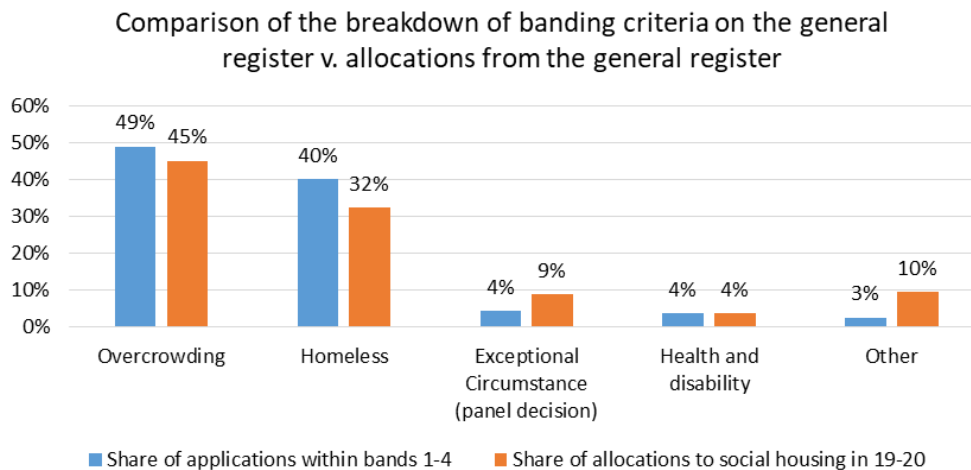
The proportion of lettings to singles/families is mainly dependent on what properties come available for letting. Letting in the past decade have largely been determined by churn within the current social housing stock, due to low levels of new development, a position that is forecast to change in the coming years (see chapter 11).

We can break down allocations to see how many properties are allocated to different lists on the register, such as homeless, transfer, etc., in order to give us a view on how the allocations policy is prioritising different groups in need. The number of lettings to applicants accepted as statutory homeless has gone down in the last five years in line with the number of homelessness Main Duty acceptances going down from 141 in 2015/16 to 56 in 2019/20 as explained in a chapter 5 with the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act.



However this only paints a partial picture as the Homelessness Reduction Act has changed the nature of how homelessness cases are supported, with more upfront prevention support, which in turn impacts how we treat them on the housing register.

By breaking down the reasons for why people have received their relevant band we get additional insight into what circumstances are causing households to be in housing need on the register, and then compare this housing need to who then actually gets allocated properties from the register.



This comparison excludes the transfer register (due to homelessness applications not being included in the group), and band 5 where there isn't a defined housing need, to allow us to compare the causes of housing need on the general register, and how this corresponds to the percentage of allocations.

It can be observed that overcrowding has both the highest number of cases on the register, and in turn gets the most allocations, with homelessness (incl non-statutory homeless) second for both. It can also be seen that while need and eventual allocations do seem to influence each other strongly, there is not a total correlation. We proportionally allocate far greater numbers of properties to smaller categories such as those who are deemed as greater need by the exceptional circumstances

panel, and in the “other” category (made up of cases such as succession cases and those who fit into multiple groups). Of particular note is that while homeless cases make up 40% of applications in bands 1-4, they only receive 32.4% of allocations.

Considering the full picture, once you add back in those allocations that went to those on the transfer register, and those in band 5 (no defined housing need), only 20.4% of lets went to homeless households in 19/20.

The Crisis commissioned [housing led feasibility study for Oxfordshire](#) considered the current allocations schemes in the county, including the City’s, and highlighted some key issues with the schemes and how they are working for homeless households. One example the report provides is looking at the number of allocations that are made to those who are either currently rough sleeping or leaving supported accommodation (such as hostel accommodation), only 4.5% of allocations went to this group in Oxford, while other local authorities that promote access for this group achieve much higher numbers, such as Hull who allocates 21.4% or Coventry at 18.3%.

The report raises a number of areas the City and Districts should consider to improve access to homeless households, and suggests we are inadvertently restricting access to some homeless people at present. These measures include reviewing eligibility rules for the social register, managing the risk of placements better, making better use of reasonable preference groups, and more use of direct matches.

These findings will need to inform our future approach to social housing allocations for the next strategic period, as increasing access to social housing for homeless households will be essential for our wider goals to relieve homelessness more rapidly, and to bring down the prevalence of rough sleeping.

## 8.6 - Supported accommodation for homeless people and those vulnerably housed

As seen above, we can assist households to access independent accommodation in the city through a number of means. However, some people are not able to live independently for different reasons, and when this is the case, there are different forms of supported accommodation that people can access and that are available in the city. Where people are homeless but not able to live in independently, there are a number of different supported accommodation projects available in the city which we can help persons to access.

The majority of these are commissioned by statutory organisations such as the City Council, County Council and the Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Integrated Care System (previously known as the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group), that provide accommodation for persons who are vulnerably housed, have different support needs and who are not able to live in independent accommodation.

## 8.7 - Supported Accommodation Services

For single adult rough sleepers and those at imminent risk of rough sleeping, a range of supported accommodation services provides 236 units of supported accommodation across the County. These units are jointly commissioned in partnership between the City and District Councils, Oxfordshire County Council and the Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Integrated Care System.

In addition, the City Council commissions 98 further spaces, which means 334 bed spaces are potentially available for use by those linked to Oxford.

The current pooled budget arrangements are due to end in March 2022, and a re-commissioning process that started in spring 2021, concluded in autumn 2021, with an Alliance of services successfully winning the contract. County partners are committed to working together and in line with the new County-wide Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, and informed by the key findings of the housing-led feasibility study for Oxfordshire, to ensure that the new arrangements are as effective as possible. Details of the new commissioning proposals are outlined at the end of this section.

The accommodation available consists of hostel accommodation (Matilda House and O'Hanlon House), shared accommodation in the community and self-contained accommodation in the community with intensive support.

Over the lifetime of the new service, the provision of accommodation will be transformed. The services currently commissioned are a Pathway model. People are allocated into accommodation which provides a certain type of support for a fixed period of time. Different types of accommodation provide different levels of support. When someone's support needs reduce they move into accommodation which caters for people with lower needs. Eventually they are able to move into independent accommodation, although this can be a challenge due to a lack of affordable accommodation. Almost all of the supported accommodation in the current pathway is shared accommodation. Many people thrive in these settings, but we also know that many do not.

The new service will change the mix of accommodation with more units being provided as self-contained social tenancies. Support will be provided in accordance with an individual's changing needs. At different times these needs may reduce, but may also increase. The nature of the tenancy means there is no need to try and secure a move on into independent living. As such the new service is not a Pathway model, and will not be referred to in this manner. Commitment has been secured from social landlords across the county (including the City Council) to provide 50 social units a year to the new service.

During the cold winter months, when temperatures are forecast to be zero or below, we also trigger an emergency protocol – SWEP – that means that we offer all those who are rough sleeping a place in accommodation.

We have increased our spending on tackling rough sleeping significantly over the last few years, enabled by successful bids to DLUHC to funding pots such as Rapid Rehousing Pathway, Rough Sleeping Initiative and most recently the Next Steps Accommodation Programme and Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme. Further detail on the funds we have received and successfully bid for are included in chapter 12.

Despite the increase in services available for single homeless people in the city – both accommodation and 'wrap-around' services, we are still seeing rough sleeping numbers in the double digits, and as seen above in chapter 5, while numbers of rough sleepers decreased during the pandemic, numbers are now at a similar level to just before the pandemic. Preventing people from ending up on the streets in the first place, therefore needs to be a priority going forward.

We have also seen that a large proportion of rough sleepers have been known to services in the past and many have been in the supported accommodation provided before, some multiple times. We can also see the level of people we accept a statutory duty towards that have been evicted from supported accommodation is high, a further sign that the provisions we have in place, do not work



for some of the most vulnerable people in society. For different reasons the supported accommodation on offer does not work for all and people return to rough sleeping, or avoid entering into this kind of accommodation at all. Ensuring good and effective supported accommodation services, meeting a range of different needs, is another priority that need to be tackled if we are to prevent people from returning to the streets. This is further backed up when looking at the multitude of support needs that the majority of rough sleepers face in the city. Support in both supported accommodation and in more independent accommodation, needs to be holistic, and include a substantial offer from mental health and health services and not only be focussed at providing a housing solution. This needs to include good and timely move on options, with necessary support put in place in order for the individual to sustain their move.

Although the pooled budget arrangements have been in place for several years now and has created some form of stability for the parts of the system that it funds, the majority of the supported accommodation available in the city is funded either by the city Council's own funds or government funding, with no long term commitment. This creates uncertainty and a risk that funding for these project in the longer term will not be available.

The issues raised above are discussed in depth in the Housing-led feasibility study for Oxfordshire and new approaches and commitments to tackle these issues have been set out in the Oxfordshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy that will inform future commissioning of services for single people. Our own priorities and actions therefore need to be closely aligned with this work, only through this significant change in approach can we achieve further reductions in the numbers of rough sleepers, in line with local and national aims.

The recommissioning of services from the pooled budget arrangements seeks to deliver many of the aims of the Strategy referenced above. Key developments are the inclusion of a greater range of services than the current pooled arrangements with the majority of services currently commissioned by the city and District Councils, brought within the pool. The services will be procured using an alliance commissioning approach. An alliance of providers will be responsible for all services, rather than individual providers being responsible for each element. The new alliance governance structure will include a role for commissioners. This will help to ensure that services are delivered in partnership and managed at a systemic level, improving the outcomes for people accessing it.

## 8.8 - Mental Health Pathway

Funded by the Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Integrated Care System (previously known as the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group and Oxfordshire County Council, two organisations – Response and Oxfordshire Mind – provide supported accommodation for single people who suffer from mental health conditions, would struggle to live independently and who have no other accommodation options. Commissioners of this provision estimate that 75% of people living in this accommodation would be homeless if they did not have this accommodation.

A range of different accommodation options are available, including self-contained flats and shared houses, with varying level of support in place depending on the need of service users. Just under 500 units of accommodation across the County are available, with the majority of units in the City.

There are set eligibility criteria for this accommodation, and people can refer themselves, or be supported by someone else to apply for housing.

## 8.9 - Young people's supported accommodation service (YPSAS)

Young people's supported accommodation service (YPSA) is a countywide service that provides accommodation to young people aged 16-24 who have a support need and who meet the eligibility criteria, while supporting them to develop their independent living skills, find employment, education or training. The service is a short-term intervention which includes a plan to help young people meet their long-term needs. It accommodates care leavers as well as vulnerable young people at risk of homelessness due to family breakdown including those with complex needs. The YPSA service is co-commissioned by the City, District and County Councils with input from providers and young people using the service. It was launched on 1 October 2020, following funding commitments from all City and District authorities in Oxfordshire, with the City Council committing £128k in Year 2 (2021/22) rising to £135k in Year 5

There are a total of 288 beds in the new service and it is delivered via a number of different service packages and by a number of providers countywide – see table below.

The new service differs from the previous one in a number of key areas:

- The move away from larger foyer style properties to houses of no more than 4 young people living together.
- The separation of the 16-17 year olds from the older young people and bringing the service for them in house to the County Council.

Referrals into the service are received from Social Workers and from City and District Housing Officers. The service provides intensive, focussed support in order to help young people develop the independent living skills they need to move into independent accommodation after approximately 18 months. Increased mental health support is available via two clinical psychologists who work with and advise support providers in their support of individuals using the service. In addition young people in the service can be referred to the Mental Wealth Academy.

<b>Service Package (SP)</b>	<b>Locality</b>	<b>Total Number of beds including Emergency beds</b>	<b>Organisation delivering the service</b>
SP1 – 16-17 year olds.  Shared accommodation with up to four young people living together	All	68	OCC in house  Response commissioned to deliver accommodation
SP2 – 16-17 year old newly arrived unaccompanied young people. Up to four young people living together for up to four months. (after this they move to SP1)	Banbury  Oxford City	12	OCC in house  Response commissioned to deliver accommodation
SP3 16-17 year olds. Move on homes providing intensive	South and West Oxfordshire	8*	OCC in house

<b>Service Package (SP)</b>	<b>Locality</b>	<b>Total Number of beds including Emergency beds</b>	<b>Organisation delivering the service</b>
support for up to nine months			
SP4 -16-24 year olds. Supported Lodgings – Support offered in a family environment	Various depending on location of hosts	25*	OCC in house working with Supported Lodging hosts
SP5 18-24 year olds  Shared Accommodation with up to four young people living together	All locations	130	Response in conjunction with Oxfordshire Youth
SP6 18-24 year olds.  Single self-contained properties for young people not able to live safely with others	Bicester and Banbury  Oxford City  South Oxfordshire  Vale or White Horse  West Oxfordshire	28	Key 2 Futures  Key 2 Futures  Connection Support  Stonewater  Stonewater
SP7 16-24 parents. Shared accommodation for a parent/s to live with their children	Banbury  Oxford City  South Oxfordshire  Vale of White Horse  West Oxfordshire	40	Sanctuary Housing  A2Dominion  A2Dominion  Stonewater  A2Dominion
SP8 -16-24 year olds  Out of County due to risk of exploitation (self-contained or shared accommodation for young people who cannot live safely in Oxon	Out of county	10	Connection Support

\*These are not included in the total of 288

### 8.10 - Other supported accommodation

In addition to the three large 'pathways', there is good provision of other supported accommodation in the City (not funded by the City) and include:

- Accommodation tied to employment

- Approved premises that provide accommodation for offenders under the supervision of probation services.
- Residential detox and rehabilitation for those experiencing substance misuse
- Abstinence based accommodation for those in recovery from addiction
- A range of supported accommodation projects for those who are homeless or vulnerably housed that are not funded by the City, Districts or County Councils.

### 8.11 - Other support available in the City

Oxford has a large number of non-statutory organisations that provide help and guidance for those who are threatened with homelessness. These include three advice centres that can provide support with everything from benefits, finances, debt, housing and employment.

For single homeless people and rough sleepers, we commission a breadth of services aimed at preventing and tackling rough sleeping in addition to providing the supported accommodation described above. We fund these services through the Council's own funds and we have also secured additional funds from successful bids to the DLUHC for these services.

In addition to the services commissioned by us, there are a range of services that provide good support to single homeless people and those experiencing rough sleeping. The Oxfordshire Homeless Movement, established in 2018, is a partnership of organisations that are working together to prevent and tackle rough sleeping in the city. They have developed a directory of services across the County and City that provide support and assistance.

## 9.0 - What are we doing to build more new homes?

### Key Findings – What are we doing to build more new homes?

- The last three years has seen an increase in the annual number of affordable homes delivered in the city, after low rates of development seen during most years in the middle of the last decade.
- The pipeline of sites from the City Council, OX Place and Housing Associations indicates a significant increase in delivery over the next four years (2022/23 – 2025/26), projecting the delivery of over 1,600 affordable homes.
- Agreements have been reached with the surrounding districts to Oxford, to ensure city residents in housing need can access affordable homes developed in the wider county.
- The greatest need for affordable housing now comes from those who need one bedroom accommodation, linked to the increasing number of single homeless people seeking help from the Council. In 2018, those in housing need with one bedroom need made up 33% of the general register, they now make up 44%. This needs to inform the profile of future affordable housing developed.
- A number of innovative housing development solutions are being taken forward in Oxford, such as community housing and an Oxford Living Rent.

Oxford City Council has an ambitious agenda to increase the rate of delivery of affordable housing in the city, in order to tackle the issues of affordability residents face, in particular those on low incomes, to ensure the city continues to be a home for those on lower incomes.

This aim was a centre piece of the previous housing and homelessness strategy, and is now enshrined as a key priority in the Council strategy and annual business plan.

However the context of development, and in particular affordable development, in the city is a challenging one. Land in the city suitable for development is limited, with little remaining for easy development, with what land remains often brown field that can bring with it a variety of issues, and increase the cost of development and decrease the affordable housing element. This is compounded by the fact land is already at a premium price, and the labour market for construction workers competitive, further increasing cost. When viable sites are found, the city's historic nature limits the size of developments, and adds additional considerations on design. The city also has a tight boundary, not taking in much of the rural areas surrounding the urban core, causing challenges for urban extension. These long term factors when combined with Brexit, the pandemic and the resulting economic uncertainty over the past few years has had the impact of disrupting the housing market, and increased risk for developers. This full picture combines to make significant affordable development in the city a significant challenge, but one the City Council has sought to overcome.

The [Housing and Economic Needs Assessment 2022 \(Cherwell District and Oxford City councils\)](#) provides an assessment of the need for affordable housing in Oxfordshire and the five constituent local authorities following the methodology set out in Planning Practice Guidance. It indicates a net need of 740 social rent/affordable rent homes per year in Oxford if all households who are not able to meet their needs in the housing market were to be allocated an affordable home (i.e. households needing to spend more than 30% of income on housing). The number of affordable homes developed each year has come nowhere near this in recent years, averaging 91 a year over the previous twelve years.

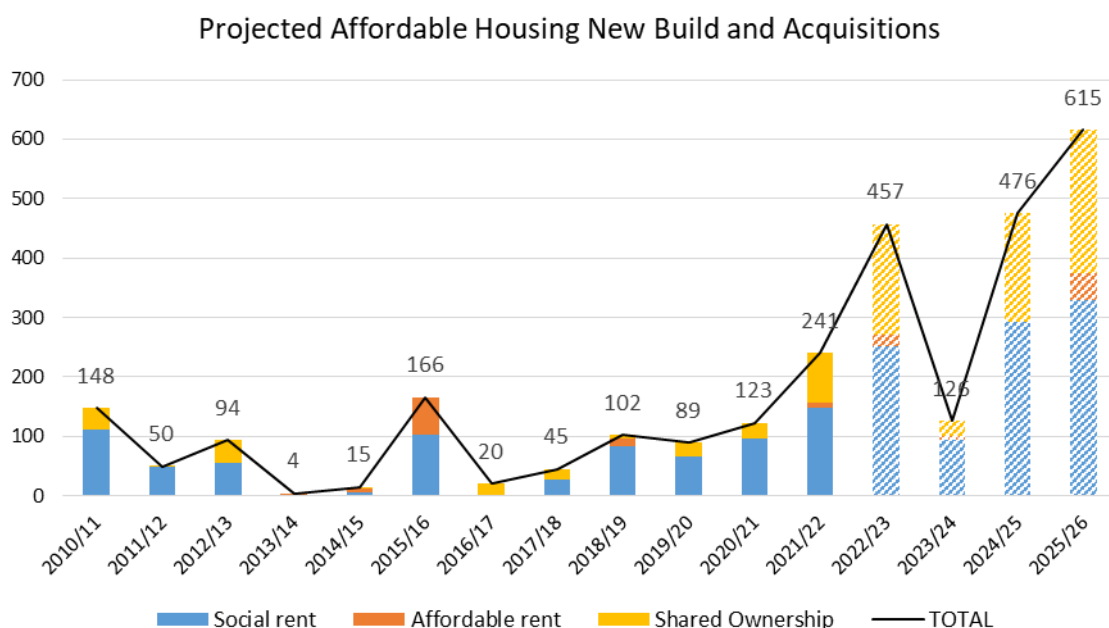
While the pandemic has been another challenge for the delivery of affordable housing, it may open new sites for the development of affordable housing in the future as the city changes in the conditions of the post pandemic world. There may be new opportunities for redevelopment on previously unavailable sites as the economy adjusts, with a potential drop in demand for retail and office space, including in the city centre.

## 9.1 - New builds and acquisitions

The previous housing and homelessness strategy was developed over 2017-18, and followed the middle part of the last decade which saw a low rate of social housing development in the city. In the 5 years from 2013, the best year that was achieved was in 2015/16 when 166 units were delivered, but the other 4 years saw between 45 and 4 units being delivered. This was in a context of limited borrowing powers given to local authorities for the development of new social homes due to the cap imposed by central government, strict rules on use of right to buy receipts, rent rise restrictions on all social landlords, and reduced grant funding for affordable housing development from central government.

The years following the implementation of the new strategy have been more positive, with 102 delivered in 18/19, 89 delivered in 19/20, 123 in 20/21 and 241 in 2021/22. This is partially a result of a slightly more favourable national policy context with some changes brought in by central government such as on the borrowing cap and rents policy, but also through the growing capability and capacity of the Council's housing company OX Place with the gradual establishment and progression of a pipeline of new builds being delivered by them.

This success in increasing development over the last few years is set to be built on in future years, as the combination of the Council, its housing company OX Place and registered providers in the city move forward with their ambitious pipelines of sites and delivery. The delivery of 123 homes in 2020/21 and 241 in 2021/22 within the context of the pandemic and lockdowns was a significant achievement. Over 1,600 affordable homes are now planned for the period 2022-2026 on identifiable sites, far exceeding the yearly averages seen in the previous decade, and taking the city closer to the level required to meet need. These identified sites are at different stages of delivery, with dates subject to change due to considerations such as planning and site preparation.



Please note: data for future planned schemes is provisional and liable to change.

## 9.2 – OX Place

OX Place is one of the main factors in increasing supply of affordable homes in the city over recent years, and crucial to the significant increase projected for the next four years. Oxford City Council set up the housing company in 2016 (then known as Oxford City Housing Ltd., or OCHL) to deliver new affordable homes for a range of tenures to help address the city's acute housing need.

The three main purposes of the company are:

- To increase the supply, quality and range of housing and particularly new affordable housing in Oxford
- To provide financial returns to the Council
- To deliver on the Council's accelerated carbon reduction agenda moving towards net Zero carbon by 2030

The company has to date completed 121 affordable rented homes at Barton Park. A total of 354 homes will be owned by the company at Barton Park when completed. Building is also currently taking place at two sites in Rose Hill, Bracegirdle Road, Between Towns Road, Mortimer Drive and Broad Oak, Elsfeld Way and Cumberledge Close.

Over the next 10 years, OX Place aims to build around 2,200 new homes, the majority of these to be let at social rents, in addition to the 354 homes being built at Barton Park, with around 1,100 homes for social rent and a further 300 for shared ownership and other intermediate tenures.

### 9.3 - Oxford City Council's Housing Revenue Account

The City Council will also continue to develop new homes directly through the housing revenue account (HRA) over this period. Sites that the Council is developing include East Oxford Community Centre, Lanham Way and Northfield Hostel.

The HRA has been able to make more significant investments into things such as new development in recent years due to the lifting of the borrowing cap previously imposed on it, as explored in section 4.6.

The government is currently in the process of changing the rules on Right to Buy receipts which will make it easier to invest into new affordable development in the future, while limiting their use for purchase of existing properties, section 4.7 explores this further.

An important consideration for the next strategy will be the prioritisation of long term investment made by the HRA, in areas such as new affordable development, investment in regeneration and current stock condition, and decarbonising the housing stock. Section 12.3 later in the document explores more widely these considerations on the housing revenue account.

### 9.4 - Registered Providers

The Council will continue to work with Registered Providers (housing associations) to facilitate the development of new affordable housing in Oxford. We recognise that while the Council and its housing company play a critical role in leading on and delivering more affordable housing, we alone will never deliver the number of affordable homes the city needs, and therefore it is essential that we work with housing associations to encourage their investment in the city, and support their development activities.

Registered Providers are currently building new homes at Wolvercote Paper Mill, Littlemore Park and William Morris Close.

We recognise that while we have built up our enabling function in recent years to work with register providers, we need to go further, and we will continue to develop our enabling work in the coming years to increase joint work and support to Housing Associations to increase their activity further, through proactive engagement, support through better coordination between Council teams such as housing, planning and regeneration, and providing assistance such as with local data and information on sites.

Housing associations have in particular a significant amount of sheltered and designated elderly stock in the city, as outlined in the table below, which as the needs and wishes of the elderly population change may mean changing demand. The City Council will want to work alongside these housing associations to explore any regeneration or remodelling opportunities on these sites to best meet the current housing need in the city.

**HA nomination properties 1 April 2022**

	Bedsit	1-bed	2-bed	3-bed	4-bed	5-bed+	TOTAL
<b>General needs - Flat / Maisonette</b>	156	795	581	39	1	0	<b>1572</b>
<b>General needs - House / Bungalow</b>	0	35	571	789	155	25	<b>1575</b>
<b>Sheltered</b>	203	473	50	2	0	0	<b>728</b>
<b>Sum:</b>	<b>359</b>	<b>1303</b>	<b>1202</b>	<b>830</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>3875</b>



While working in partnership with housing associations to encourage affordable development, we will continue to help ensure housing association tenants enjoy well maintained and managed homes through engagement with tenants and their associations.

## 9.5 - Oxfordshire Growth Board

The [Oxfordshire Growth Board](#) is a joint committee of the six councils of Oxfordshire together with key strategic partners. It has been set up to facilitate and enable joint working on economic development, strategic planning and growth. This cooperation has helped Oxfordshire to secure over £500m of additional investment, such as through the City Deal, Housing and Growth Deal, Housing Infrastructure Fund and the Oxfordshire Rail Connectivity Study.

The Housing and Growth Deal helps support Oxfordshire's ambition to plan and support the delivery of new homes – including additional affordable housing – across the county between 2011 and 2031 to address the severe housing shortage and expected economic growth. The Housing and Growth Deal also includes forward funding for infrastructure improvement schemes to benefit existing communities and unlock new development sites. It will also unlock funding from developers for community infrastructure such as schools, health centres and community centres.

As part of the Growth Deal agreement with the Government, all local authorities in Oxfordshire have committed to producing a joint statutory spatial plan (JSSP), known as the Oxfordshire Plan 2050. The aim of the plan is to collectively consider the needs of the county and align its strategies so that future housing and infrastructure is more joined up.

The Plan will not allocate sites for housing or employment. Instead, it will identify key areas for sustainable growth with associated housing / employment numbers, while considering how to help tackle climate change, improve water efficiency and mitigate flood risk. Districts will then use this to produce future Local Plans which will provide a detailed view of how housing and infrastructure will be delivered, and how they will address the climate emergency.

## 9.6 - Oxford Local Plan 2036

Oxford City Council adopted its Oxford Local Plan 2036 in June 2020. The 2036 Local Plan sets out a new framework underpinning all planning applications in Oxford over the next 16 years.

Oxford Local Plan 2036 includes:

- Defining where nearly 11,000 new homes will be built within Oxford's boundaries.
- Ambitious carbon reduction policies that, using incremental increases, will see all new residential developments constructed in Oxford be zero carbon by 2030.
- Focus of town centre uses on the city centre, district and local centres – including Cowley Centre, Summertown, Headington, East Oxford (Cowley Road) and Blackbird Leys – to both increase the density and height of buildings, and strengthen neighbourhoods by encouraging new community, leisure and cultural assets.
- Protecting and enhancing both Oxford's heritage, particularly the historic buildings within Oxford city centre, and the city's vital network of parks, open space and waterways.
- Supporting business by encouraging the modernisation and intensification of Oxford's existing science and business parks.

## 9.7 - Oxford's unmet housing need

As previously mentioned, Oxford is unable to meet its assessed housing needs within the administrative boundary of the city, so for the past five years, the City and District Councils in Oxfordshire have been developing proposals whereby these needs – indeed the needs of Oxfordshire – can be best met through a distribution across local authority boundaries.

The following table breaks down the agreed allocations across the local authority areas of Oxfordshire, followed by the sites earmarked for delivery of the homes. These homes will be delivered over a 2021-31 timeframe, and regularly reviewed over the period to ensure delivery and to inform onward plans.

So far the additional requirements to meet Oxford's unmet housing need have been incorporated in each District Council's local plan. The City Council is currently working with each District Council to reach agreements on how the proportion of affordable homes for rent will be allocated to make sure residents with a local connection to Oxford have priority to these homes.

The only development currently on site is the South of Kennington site in the Vale of the White Horse.

### **Oxford Unmet Need**

<b>District Apportionment (2011-2031)</b>	<b>All Homes</b>	<b>Affordable Homes</b>	<b>Affordable Rented</b>	<b>Shared Ownership</b>
Cherwell	4400	2200	1760	440
Oxford	550	275	220	55
South Oxfordshire	4950	2475	1980	495
Vale of White Horse	2200	1100	880	220
West Oxfordshire	2750	1375	1100	275
<b>Total</b>	<b>14850</b>	<b>7425</b>	<b>5940</b>	<b>1485</b>

## 9.8 - Community-led housing

Community-led housing is where people and communities play a leading role in addressing their own housing needs, and provides an additional option for some in need of housing. It encompasses a range of approaches, including Community Land Trusts (CLTs), cooperatives, cohousing, self-help housing and group self-build, and can involve new build, regeneration or the use of existing buildings.

The core principles include a requirement that meaningful community engagement and consent occurs throughout the process, that the local community group or organisation owns, manages or stewards the homes and a requirement that the benefits of the scheme to the local area and/or specified community group are clearly defined and legally protected in perpetuity.

In Oxford there are two examples of housing co-operatives taking over existing homes: Dragonfly Housing Co-op in East Oxford, which was formed in 2001, and Kindling Housing Co-op in Cowley, which was formed in 2016.

Research commissioned by the Council concludes that delivering community-led housing schemes in Oxford is challenging and Oxford land prices and competition for sites makes it very difficult for local groups.

Enabling activity that would particularly help Oxford groups and potential future schemes are strategic leadership, access to land and access to finance.

Some of the priority actions recommended for the Council are:

- Unlocking sites for community-led housing.
- Liaising with landlords of empty properties and poorly managed houses of multiple occupation to promote and facilitate opportunities for community-led housing groups to bring the properties back into occupation.
- Setting up a revolving loan fund that community-led housing groups can access for cheaper finance.
- Developing practical responses to help support and encourage community-led housing including providing support and guidance for the identification of appropriate sites and working with landowners.

The viable delivery routes identified in the research are:

- Fully mutual housing co-operatives, accommodating groups of sharers in large houses;
- Small units for single people, developed across a number of small sites;
- Cohousing on a single site;
- Community land trust as part of a large site.

The City Council supports community-led housing in its local plan, and is exploring ways of making community-led housing work in Oxford, looking at support, funding and what sites would be suitable. A pilot scheme is under way with the Council working in partnership with local architecture practice Transition by Design and Oxfordshire Community Land Trust to develop a small unused garage site in Littlemore.

Discussions are underway between Oxford City Council and Oxford Co-housing to develop an area of the Redbridge site for a community led scheme including a potential area for new residential moorings.

Oxford City Council have received a grant for £19,994 from the LGA Housing Advisors Programme (HAP) fund to work in partnership with Transition by Design and Oxford Community Land trust on a blue print for the development of affordable housing on disused or brown field sites in the city. The funding will be used to map a pipeline of sites within the City with 5 sites being shortlisted for further design and community engagement work to provide much needed accommodation.

## 9.9 - Employer-linked affordable housing

Employers in Oxford are facing significant challenges in recruiting and retaining staff as a result of the lack of availability and affordability of housing. To meet this need the Local Plan 2036 includes a

policy that allows employers to address their recruitment and retention issues by providing housing for their employees at a rent affordable to them on employer owned sites listed in the policy.

By exempting these developments from the normal requirements for affordable homes, the City Council is offering a significant opportunity for those employers to provide for their own needs and address the sector of society between those able to access traditional affordable housing and those able to access market housing for sale or rent.

## 9.10 - Regeneration

Oxford City Council and Catalyst Housing are working in partnership to redevelop [Blackbird Leys](#) by building 294 new homes, including 174 homes for social rent. The redevelopment also includes a new community centre and shops, together with improvements to green and public spaces.

There are also plans for regeneration in Barton and the Oxpens area. Oxford City Council has formed a joint venture with Nuffield College – OxWED - to redevelop the Oxpens site. The site is a 15-acre site off Oxpens Road, on the opposite side to the new Westgate Centre. Oxpens is part of wider plans for the Oxford West End Innovation District and the Council ran [an initial consultation](#) on a new West End and Osney Mead Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in spring 2021. The plans have been updated following the initial consultation and the updated masterplan was [consulted upon during summer 2022](#), with a [planning application](#) for the area due for submission in late autumn 2022. Oxpens will deliver both homes and new employment/business space for the city – potentially supporting over 3,000 jobs and the provision of around 450 residential dwellings.

## 9.11 - Housing for the elderly

In 2016, the City Council undertook a review of accommodation supply and needs of older residents in Oxford which identified that there is an oversupply of sheltered accommodation in some locations in Oxford and there is a limited need for Extra Care and Specialist Housing (dementia care) for older people in the City. The County Council has outlined the need for care services in Oxfordshire in their [Market Position Statement 2019-22](#). However, the County Council will now be reviewing the future need, over the next 10 years, for housing and supported accommodation for people who are living with disability and/or social care/support needs, including housing for the elderly.

The review also confirmed that as people get older they would prefer to live in locations familiar to them with access to existing support networks, as well as good access to shops, health services and public transport. Those ‘under-occupying’, regardless of tenure, indicated that they would be reluctant to move unless it was to the right property (i.e. well designed, with sufficient outdoor space and storage) and would still want a minimum of 2 bedrooms to allow visitors or carers to stay as needed.

Changes in demand as highlighted through our own review of housing need and supply for older people, as well as the County Council’s Market Position Statement that sets out demand, capacity, future requirements and commissioning intentions for care and support, and accommodation based services for adults, will need to inform strategy development. The views of people living across these tenures will also be a key to inform strategy development.

## 9.12 - Accessible and adaptable homes

According to the Family Resources Survey 2018/19, 44% of state pension age adults, 19% of working-age adults and 8% of children in the UK reported a disability. Mobility was the most prevalent impairment with 48% of disabled people reporting mobility issues. ([Government report family resources survey 2018 – 2019](#))

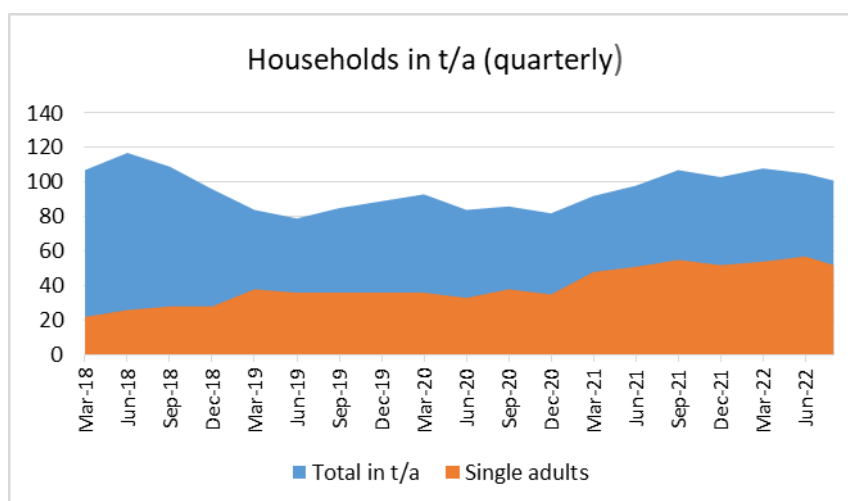
The Census 2011 shows that 12.4% of the population in Oxford have a long-term health problem or disability, with half of those over 65 having a long-term health problem or disability,

Oxford has a relatively young population, but the older age groups are projected to increase and hence the need for adapted properties. Providing accessible and adaptable homes will help people with disabilities maintain their independence and help alleviate pressure on health and social care.

The City Council's planning policies require that all affordable dwellings and 15% of general market dwellings on sites of 10 or more dwellings are constructed to the Category 2 standard (accessible and adaptable dwellings). 5% of all dwellings for which the City Council is responsible for allocations or nominations on sites of more than 20 dwellings should be provided to Category 3 (wheelchair user) standards.

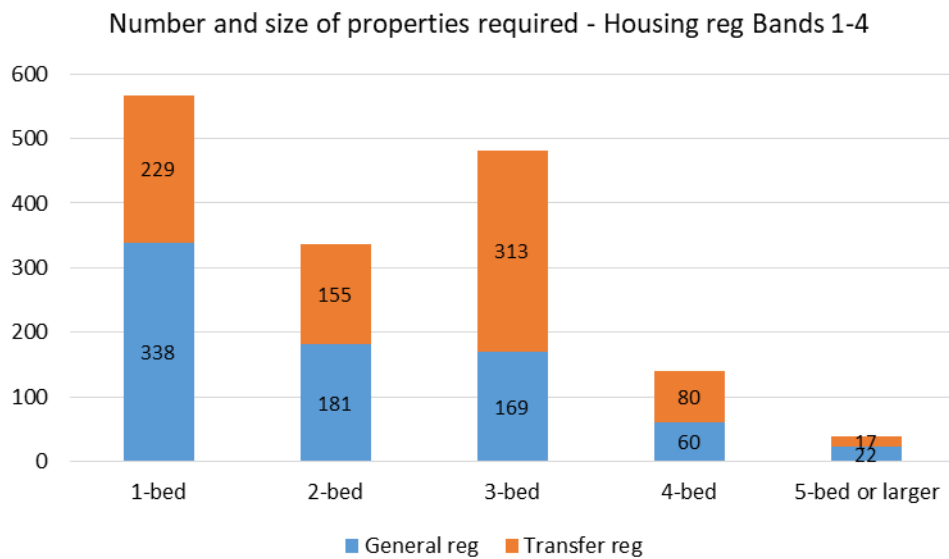
## 9.13 - Property sizes

Another changing dynamic that needs to inform our housing strategy is that there is an increasing demand for affordable housing for single people, indicating a need to look at increasing the supply of 1-bed properties. 44% of applicants currently (2022) on the general housing register in bands 1-4 need a 1-bed property. In 2018 the corresponding figure was 33%. Since the introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act we've seen an increase in single person households in our temporary accommodation as well. Around 50% of households in temporary accommodation are now single person households.



The Crisis Housing-led Feasibility Study for Oxfordshire also highlights the need for better access to social housing for single homeless people.

There is also a need for large family homes (5-bed properties or larger), as there are few large social housing properties in the city, and the turnover is low, which leads to families being severely overcrowded and having to wait a very long time for a suitable property to come available.



For applicants on the housing register in bands 1-4 the highest need is for 1-beds, followed by 3-beds. For general register applicants the highest need is for 1-beds, and for transfer applicants the highest need is for 3-beds. The majority of transfer applicants requiring a 3-bed are currently living in a 2-bed and are overcrowded. Overall, the most common band reason for applicants in bands 1-4 is overcrowding.

Policy 4 in the Local Plan has the following mix of dwellings as a requirement for affordable housing element of new developments.

1 bedroom homes . . . . .	20-30%
2 bedroom homes . . . . .	30-40%
3 bedroom homes . . . . .	20-40%
4+ bedroom homes . . . . .	8-15%

## 10.0 - Oxford City Council as a social landlord

### Key Findings – Oxford City Council as a social landlord

- Oxford City Council is the largest landlord in the city, owning and letting 7,791 homes at affordable rents to those in need.
- The 2013 increase of the Right to Buy discount saw a significant increase in losses of affordable housing, but the 1.9% of the stock lost to it in the past 5 years is the lowest of our comparator group of urban, stock owning authorities.
- 34% of our 2+ bedroom stock is under-occupied, down from 40% in 2015.
- The new Social Housing white paper will require a number of changes within the Council's landlord function in order to bring us into full compliance, similar to the vast majority of the sector.
- The challenge of the pandemic led to a more locality based way of working, bringing services closer to the community. This improved way of working now needs to be consolidated and used to inform our ongoing service offer post-pandemic.

Oxford City Council is the largest provider of social housing in the city, and uses its homes to house those locally in greatest need, offering principally secure lifetime tenancies, charging rents at an affordable level, significantly lower than the market rate.

As of April 2022 the Council has 7,791 properties in its Housing Revenue Account.

The majority of Council properties are charged at social rent. This is set using a formula taking into account such things as local earnings, property valuations and the number of bedrooms. Social rents are typically around 40% of market rents in Oxford. A few Council properties are charged 'affordable rent', which is set at up to 80% of market rent.

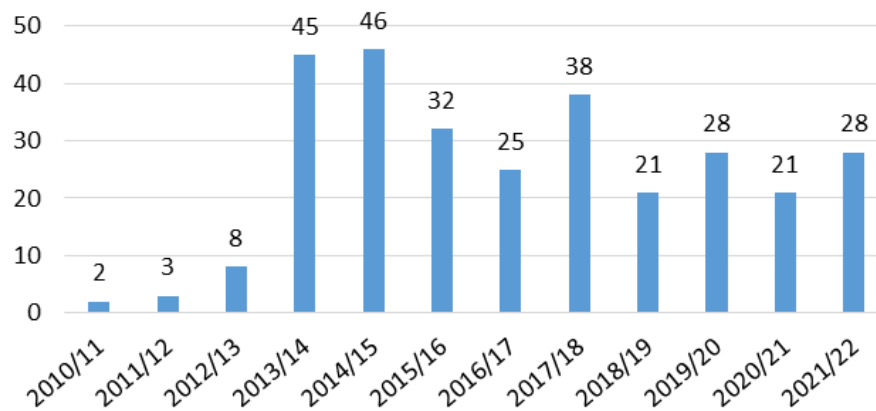
The housing stock is diverse, and includes flats, houses, maisonettes and bungalows, and includes a significant amount of sheltered/ older peoples housing.

	Bedsit	1-bed	2-bed	3-bed	4-bed	5-bed+	Sum:
<b>General needs - Flat / Maisonette</b>	149	1229	1725	156	5		<b>3264</b>
<b>General needs - House / Bungalow</b>		271	830	2803	255	35	<b>4194</b>
<b>Sheltered</b>	15	251	26				<b>292</b>
<b>Shared ownership</b>		13	12		1		<b>26</b>
<b>Sum:</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>1764</b>	<b>2593</b>	<b>2959</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>7776</b>

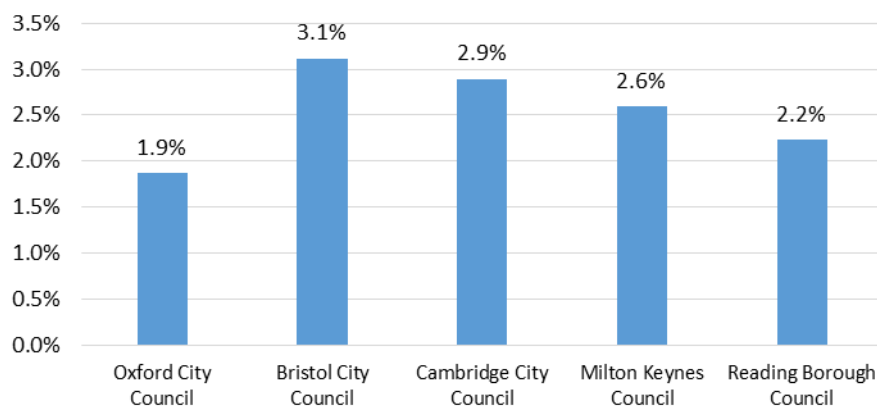
Excludes properties leased to external organisations

The City Council loses a number of properties every year through Right to Buy which has put a significant downward pressure on the overall number of homes the Council owns since the 1980's, with us struggling to develop enough homes to replace the losses most years. A large increase in the rate of Right to Buy was recorded in 2013/14 which can be observed across stock owning councils and was a result of central government increasing discounts. Relatively speaking our Right to Buy impact has not been as severe in recent years as other councils have faced, most likely because of Oxford's high house prices making homeownership unachievable for many tenants even with the large discount.

### Number of Oxford City Council properties sold under Right to Buy



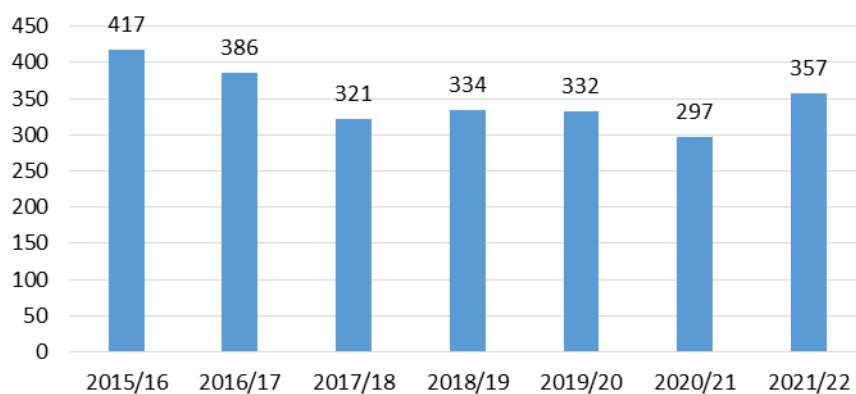
### RTB sales from 2015/16 to 2019/20 as a percentage of stock



Total RTB sales during the years 2015/16 - 2019/20 as a percentage of stock owned (excl shared ownership) in 2014/15 (LAHS return)

We let around 300-400 Council (Housing Revenue Account) properties per year.

### Lettings of OCC properties





In addition, we let 22 OX Place (the Council's housing company) properties in 2018/19, 46 in 2019/20, 28 in 2020/21 and 17 in 2021/22.

26% of Council properties are under-occupied using the same criteria as the Allocations Scheme when calculating the number of bedrooms required for a household. If we only look at family-sized properties (2-beds and larger) 34% are under-occupied. This is less than in 2015 when the corresponding figures were 30% and 40% respectively.

Two thirds are under-occupying by one bedroom and one third by two or more bedrooms. 65% of under-occupiers are aged 60 or over.

The majority of those under-occupying require only a 1-bed.

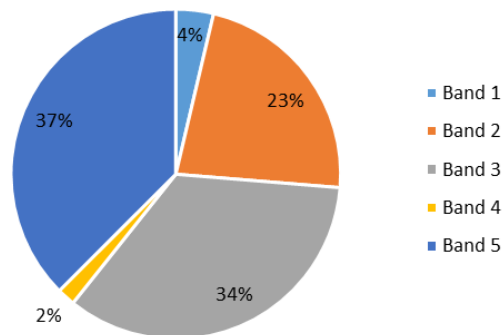
Size of under-occupied property	Number of bedrooms required			
	1-bed	2-bed	3-bed	4-bed
2-bed	712			
3-bed	592	575		
4-bed	17	26	36	
5-bed	2	1	2	3
	<b>1323</b>	<b>602</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>3</b>

134 of 1,966 tenants who are under-occupying are on the transfer register looking to downsize.

One of the things we are doing to help address under-occupation is the offer of the 'Removal Expenses and Mobility Scheme (REMS). The scheme is for council tenants who are under-occupying their properties and who want to move to a smaller property that is easier to manage and afford. Tenants accepted on the scheme are given a higher housing priority to facilitate a quicker move and are placed in band 1 on the housing register if they are giving up two or more bedrooms or in band 2 if they are giving up one bedroom. They may also be eligible for compensation plus certain other expenses.

In January 2021 there were 787 council tenants on the transfer register. This is 10% of all tenants. The majority are in bands 1-3, indicating a fairly high housing need.

Council tenants on transfer register as per band



One third (261) of council tenants on the transfer register are overcrowded, and 17% are under-occupying.

The Council has an award winning tenant involvement service that achieved TPAS (Tenant Participation Advisory Service) re-accreditation in 2020 for a further 3 years. The Council wants all tenants and leaseholders to be able to influence decisions about their homes and the Tenant Involvement team provides resources, support and training to facilitate for tenants and leaseholders to get involved and help shape our service. This can be through mystery shopping examining the quality of our service, through the Editorial Team producing the Tenants in Touch newsletter, as Champion Ambassadors representing tenants and leaseholders in meetings on issues and services that affect them, through the Tenants and Leaseholders' Forum which acts as a consultation group when developing housing policies, or as an inspector who will examine two service areas annually.

In 2020 tenants and leaseholders have been involved in satisfaction surveys and reviewing sites and works programme for the Great Estates scheme, been involved with recruitment to the housing service, reviewed the Corporate Strategy and tested the new Choice Based Lettings portal, among other things.

The Council also has an Energy Advice Team (EA) which is part of the Tenancy Management Team. The EA Officers conduct home visits and give phone advice to council tenants in order to assess their properties' energy efficiency and reduce costs to them and the council. These visits help to reduce fuel poverty, sustain tenancies, maintain council properties and reduce carbon emissions.

In 2021, the Council carried out a STAR survey for the first time since 2015. This is a periodic survey of tenants and leaseholders that provides invaluable information on satisfaction with the services we provide. Given the length of time since the previous survey, a census of all tenants and leaseholders took place, rather than just a sample as in past surveys. A total of 1,579 tenants (23% of the total number of tenants) and 84 leaseholders (12%) responded to the survey.

[The survey](#) provides the Council with important baseline data on how we are performing and what we can improve. We saw an improvement in many areas, such as rent being good value for money, and new questions such as customers being happy with our customer service and feeling safe in ones' home received a positive response from over 80% of respondents. However, we also saw a drop in satisfaction in a number of areas compared to the 2015 survey, including satisfaction with the Council as a landlord, satisfaction with the outcome of an antisocial behaviour complaint, and satisfaction with the overall quality of the home. An action plan to address some of the key issues identified has been developed and was presented to the [Council's Scrutiny Committee in April 2022](#).

In early 2022, an external review of our Landlord Service function was also carried out. This again highlighted the good work by the service, but also draw attention to areas where changes to how services are provided can lead to improvements.

These two important pieces of work, have informed a wider transformation programme of the services we provide to our tenants and leaseholders that will be a priority for delivery over the next few years. The transformation work will also take into account other significant national policy changes such as the Social Housing White paper and change to Building Regulation.

### 10.1 - What the Social Housing White paper means for Oxford City Council

As mentioned in chapter 4, the recently published Social Housing White paper will mean greater regulation in relation to building safety, performance, complaints, consumer standards, tenant involvement and engagement and the quality of homes and estate. Some of these measures are introduced through the Building Safety Bill.

The main changes that will affect the Council are:

- More stringent regime for the design, construction, day-to-day management and maintenance of higher-risk buildings.
- 'Accountable Person' for each higher risk building to produce and implement a resident engagement strategy.
- Proposal for smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms to be installed in all properties. (Consultation closed on 11 Jan 2021)
- The Council to provide a clear breakdown of how income is being spent, to be published alongside tenant satisfaction measures.
- New code of complaint handling.
- Stronger consumer standards and redress.
- 4 yearly inspections by the Regulator for Social Housing.
- Opportunities and empowerment programme open to all social housing residents, to support their effective engagement with the Council as a landlord.
- Review of Decent Homes Standard, including how it can better support the decarbonisation and energy efficiency of social homes, and improve communal and green spaces.

The Council welcomes these increased standards for the sector, and we will ensure we are fully compliant.

### 10.2 - The Council as a social landlord through the pandemic

The City Council was well placed at the outbreak of the pandemic and the start of lockdown to support our communities, with us already having good community relations, with staff experienced in working with residents in their homes and communities. At start of lockdown a decision was made to deliver our response through locality hubs, centres manned by officers and volunteers in the local community, distributing food, providing support, and collecting local information through networks. The City Council's Housing Services in particular was key in this local response, with its staff already established in the community and aware of local needs, so critically able to support this work. Staff supported this work throughout the first lockdown, and again in subsequent lockdowns.

As we look to the future the learning from this experience will help us shape services in a better way, based in our communities and more responsive to their needs. Following a review carried out to

ensure the learning is embedded and changes to working practices and structures are now permanently embedded to consolidate the improved community working, the Council has integrated a number of different services to ensure we continue to help the people in our communities that need it the most. Services have been integrated internally, and we are collaborating more with external partners and developing multidisciplinary teams in order to focus Council resources on tackling inequalities in the city.

## 11.0 - Reducing carbon emissions and improving energy efficiency in the housing stock

### Key Findings – Reducing carbon emissions and improving energy efficiency in the housing stock

- The City Council has declared a climate emergency, and last year Oxford achieved a 40% reduction in carbon emissions across the city on a 2005 baseline.
- Improving the housing stock is crucial to achieving a net zero carbon future, this includes raising the standards to ensure new builds are significantly more energy efficient, and that the energy efficiency standards of the existing housing stock are improved.
- OX Place will have to meet building standards of a minimum of 70% more energy efficient than the existing 2013 Building Regulations, with the aim of implementing net zero carbon build as far and fast as practicable.
- The Council is developing an investment plan to retrofit the existing stock, including looking at insulation and heat pumps, with the aim of an average EPC rating of C or above for 95% of our stock by 2030.

In January 2019, Oxford City Council unanimously declared a climate emergency in Oxford and held a Citizens' Assembly to consider new carbon targets and additional measures to reduce emissions. The response to climate change is a key priority for the City Council and is a critical consideration for our future housing plans, both in terms of development of new low and zero carbon homes, and decarbonisation of the existing housing stock.

A lot has already been achieved, [last year Oxford achieved a 40% reduction in carbon emissions across the city on a 2005 baseline](#). In February 2021 the Council held a Zero Carbon Summit where leaders of Oxford's major businesses and organisations gave their support to the aspiration of achieving net zero carbon emissions as a city by 2040, and a new [Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership](#) was formed.

The Council has set out a vision to reach net zero carbon across its own operations by 2030 and has published a Carbon Management Plan to help achieve this.

To support the city achieving net zero by 2040, the Council has ambitions to bring down carbon emissions in its housing stock by ensuring all new builds are significantly more energy efficient, moving towards near-zero or zero carbon standards, and by making energy efficiency improvements to existing housing stock.

2018 Baseline emissions in Oxford by sector (excluding land use). Source: ZCOP Roadmap



There is a need for an interconnected approach to decreasing emissions from housing while simultaneously working to resolve the current affordable housing and homelessness crisis in Oxford.

We are clear that the new Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for Oxford will need to address the housing challenges the climate emergency possess.

### 11.1 - Decarbonisation of the Council housing stock

The City Council has invested heavily over the last 10 years in its housing stock to increase energy efficiency and tackle fuel poverty. [Investment programmes have included:](#)

- 270 Cavity wall, 57 external wall and 2013 loft insulations benefiting a total of circa 2340 homes.
- Carried out a programme of solar PV installs in Rose Hill and Barton including the ERIC project which piloted battery storage benefitting circa 80 units.
- Scoped whether a heat network utilising waste heat from Heyford Hill Sainsbury's was possible with Bioregional.

In order to inform a future targeted investment programme to secure carbon reduction we have used a carbon asset management programme, CROHM, alongside an extensive EPC and building survey approach in order to:

- Check and update existing data to improve accuracy to the required standard
- Set confidence levels for data
- This enables us to work out what energy efficiency measures can be applied to different properties, such as through cavity and loft insulation, and low carbon heating options.
- Target the worst performing homes (E, F and G in EPCs)
- Establish an investment programme to meet a target of an average EPC rating of C or above for 95% of our stock by 2030

The stock modelling exercise indicates that overall the bulk of the housing stock is performing well with 93.6% returning an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of D or above, which demonstrates that the vast majority of our stock performs at current average or above with regard to energy efficiency.

#### Energy ratings of Council owned homes (2019)

EPC	Properties
A	18
B	109
C	4306
D	3016
E	251
F	36
G	2

However the report also highlights the significant challenge the Council faces trying to decarbonise its housing stock, and in particular to reach a net zero carbon position. The report highlighted that considerable investment would be required to bring all those properties to zero carbon where it is possible, and this would still leave 3,720 properties short of being zero carbon. The Council recognises therefore that not all of its stock is appropriate for retrofit, as it may not be economically viable, with replacement the preferred option.

In order to achieve decarbonisation of the council housing stock, significant investment will be required over a long period of time, with further funding from central government anticipated to come in time to support this. It should be noted that in the absence of substantial external investment the current legislation requires that the costs of the retrofit and replacement programme will be borne by the tenants of the Councils' stock. Reflecting concerns expressed by both councillors and Citizen Assembly Members, any plans must not place an intolerable burden on tenants, who are often those on the lowest incomes in our society.

A significant next step following the report is the ongoing validation of the EPC ratings contained in the report to confirm the actual state on the ground in many of our properties through surveying, and consideration of feasibility of different measures, first concentrating on the worst buildings which will deliver the greatest improvements quickly.

Further future actions that have already been identified and committed to include:

- Developing an investment plan and a targeted programme of retrofitting existing council stock. Retrofitting council housing will include a range of innovative insulation solutions and fitting ground/air source heat pumps as we make the transition away from gas boilers.
- Target of 95% of our stock having an average EPC rating of C or above by 2030.
- Investing funds into retrofitting and improving our council stock, with funding coming from a mixture of Council borrowing and government funding. The Council is consulting tenants on their views of retrofitting of council homes during spring 2021.

In addition this work will mean the Council is well placed to access central Government funding programmes as they come on stream. The Council will continue to explore all avenues that could lever in additional funds.

The new strategy will need to consider the need for ongoing investment into our council owned housing to improve energy efficiency, alongside competing requirements for investment in regeneration and new affordable development, and consider the right balance is struck in investment plans between these priorities.

## 11.2 - Decarbonisation of the Council's housing development

Alongside the condition of the existing housing stock, another important area for decarbonisation is ensuring new properties the Council is delivering are part of the solution to the climate crisis.

The Council's wholly owned housing company, OX Place (previously Oxford City Housing Ltd, or OCHL), already follows ambitious low carbon goals in its development program and is bound by the Oxford City Council local plan, which requires new developments to go 40% further than government building regulation targets on carbon emissions.

The City Council and OX Place have made the following commitments in regards to their developments:

- All new house building commissioned by OX Place will have to meet building standards of a minimum of 40% beyond current 2021 Building Regulations.
- Establishing a modular construction framework for new housing schemes.
- Implement net zero carbon build as far and fast as practicable.

In practice this means OX Place's business plan includes provision for developing all new build to above Part L of Building Regulation standard and without gas heating in the future, which vitally means that as the grid decarbonises, so will the new dwellings. It will also take a fabric first approach, and incorporate appropriate renewable sources of energy where viable, to ensure reduced carbon emissions. As the company moves to electric only development, this will be done with clear objectives focused on keeping tenant energy costs low, and done in a way that works for tenants.

In addition, the Council will seek to bring forward some demonstration net zero or low carbon homes, to build capability and generate local interest. OX Place will continue to improve energy performance and will in time develop our understanding of this journey and potential timetable.

OX Place has commissioned some exemplar sites, being delivered by Oxford Direct Services (ODS). These will be used as learning and stretch projects to speed up the transition to higher standards. ODS has commenced work on building eight zero carbon council homes across three sites in Oxford. The new homes are zero carbon for regulated energy use, lighting, space and hot water heating. Two one bedroom and two two-bedroom retirement homes have been built on a site between existing homes in Bracegirdle Road and Chillingworth Crescent. Garages behind Mortimer Drive were replaced with two one-bedroom and one two-bedroom single-storey retirement homes. A further two-bedroom single-storey retirement home is in Broad Oak.

While seeking to deliver the highest standard of energy efficiency possible, the Council also has to reflect that Oxford is regularly listed as being the least affordable place to buy a house in the country



and the number of families on the waiting list for social housing. So the Council and OX Place have a difficult task to optimise both environmental standards, financial return to the Council and maximising the availability of housing, particularly housing that is truly affordable.

Evidence is that there is currently no premium in value terms to low carbon homes built for private sale but societal behaviours could well change going forward. The Council is looking to review the business case as to the value of properties purchased by the HRA when whole life costing is taken into account which has the potential to help the viability of schemes built to the equivalent of a passivhaus standard.

In the meantime trade-offs will need to be made by elected members on behalf of the Council and in acting as the client and Shareholder of OX Place.

### 11.3 - Decarbonisation of the wider Oxford housing market

Decarbonizing the housing stock held in private ownership in the city will also be key to meeting the challenge of the climate crisis. Much of the city's older housing stock is within the private rented sector or in private owner occupiers, where retro-fitting will be more complex and costly.

Following a successful bid to central government the Council undertook a project in relation to enforcement of the regulations in relation to Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards in the private rented sector. This work has continued on a reactive basis in the private rented sector, with enforcement action taken to improve cold homes following complaints from occupiers. In the period 2016-22 there were 494 excess cold hazards assessed following complaints and licensing inspections with 363 being category 1 ( the most serious home hazard).

The Home Improvement Agency can also provide help to people who are elderly, vulnerable or have long-term illnesses and are finding it hard to heat and insulate their homes, as well as providing funding for owner occupiers to help pay for free boiler servicing, the replacement of boilers and repairing heating systems for owner occupiers. Funding is available to older, disabled and vulnerable residents from all tenures from the agency for energy efficiency advice and free measures such as insulation, draught proofing, radiator panels, and letterbox/keyhole covers. This helps improve energy efficiency standards for existing homes in the city across all tenures.

We know that much of the current housing stock in the city has low rates of energy efficiency that is both contributing to emissions, but also puts a higher cost of heating and electricity on tenants, including some on low incomes who live in the lowest standard accommodation in the city, leading to fuel poverty.

## 12.0 - How are housing and homelessness services funded?

### Key Findings – How are housing and homelessness services funded?

- The amount of funds the Council has spent on homelessness and rough sleeping in the City has increased significantly over the last few years. The increase in the overall spend has been possible due to government grants received following successful bids for funding by the Council.
- The Council's Housing Revenue Account is making a significant investment in order to develop new affordable housing over the next 10 years.
- The Council, like other local authorities, is under financial pressure due to the impact from the Covid-19 pandemic, high inflation rates and the cost of living crisis, with the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) identifying savings through transformation, while seeking to maintain service levels.

### 12.1 - Overview of resources for housing, homelessness and rough sleeping in the city

Funds for the provision of housing, homelessness and rough sleeping services come from different sources and are all vital to meet demand on our services. The Covid-19 emergency, and now the wider cost of living crisis, with high rates of inflation and rapidly increasing interest rates, has put considerable financial pressure on local authorities in the country and these pressures are very real for Oxford City Council too. These pressures are likely to have effects on the Council for many years to come. It was highlighted in the Cabinet paper outlining the [Council's Medium Term Financial Plan \(MTFP\) and budget consultation for 2020/21](#), that following the introduction of the first nation-wide 'lock down' as an emergency response to Covid-19, the period since then 'has seen great disruption to the country's health, economy and social interaction, and has also seen a major impact on the finances of Oxford City Council.' The [Council budget consulted upon during winter 2022/23](#) again highlights the financial impact by the pandemic on the Council, as well as the impact on the Council and households in Oxford of high inflation and energy prices, which has forced the Council to implement efficiencies across all services over the next few years and as detailed in the Medium Term Financial Plan. Significant savings from homelessness services have already been achieved in the last 2 years, and going forward, these services are therefore not significantly impacted.

### 12.2 - Funding for homelessness and rough sleeping

The amount of funds the Council has spent on preventing and relieving homelessness and rough sleeping in the City has increased significantly over the last few years. The increase in the overall spend has been possible due to government grants received following successful bids for funding by the Council. Most of these grants have been awarded for the purpose of preventing and reducing rough sleeping. Other grants we receive from the government, and based on set formulas, are grants such as New Burdens Funding and the Flexible Homelessness Grant.

Although we have received significant amounts of funding from DLUHC in the last few years, and in particular in relation to tackling rough sleeping, these funding streams are short-term (one or two years) and often for specific projects. This causes uncertainty and an inability to plan long-term interventions.

Funding from grants we have received from the government over the last few years include the following.

<b>Name of Grant</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Award notice</b>
Oxfordshire Homelessness Trailblazer Programme	£790,000	January 2017
Rapid Rehousing Pathway	£857,700	Spring 2019
Rough Sleeping Initiative 1	£503,000	June 2018
Rough Sleeping Initiative 2	£511,000	September 2018
Rough Sleeping Initiative 3	£1,315,826	January 2020
Rough Sleeping Initiative 4	£2,099,067	May 2021
Next Steps Accommodation Programme (short-term funding allocation)	£1,064,545.00	July 2020
Next Steps Accommodation Programme (long-term accommodation and support allocations, includes some capital funding)	£967,901	July 2020
Covid-19 Rough Sleeping Contingency Fund	£32,250	Summer 2020
Contain Outbreak Management Funds	£463,934	2020/21
Protect and Vaccinate	£335,592	Dec 2021
Cold Weather Funds	£40,000 £120,000	2019/20 2020/21
Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme 1	£416,650	June 2021
Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme 2	£2m (capital) £542,850 (revenue)	August 2021
Discretionary Housing Payment contributions	£405,010 £336,825 £459,192 £357,862 £253,488	2018/19 2019/20 2020/21 2021/22 2022/23
Flexible Homelessness Support Grant	£541,000 £622,565 £755,936 £755,936	2017/18 2018/19 2019/20 2020/21
New Burdens Funding (Homelessness Reduction Grant)	£74,103 £67,878 £71,752 £171,327	2017/18 2018/19 2019/20 2020/21
Homelessness Prevention Grant ( <a href="#">combines and replaces the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant and the Homelessness Reduction Grant/New Burdens Funding</a> )	£1,067,016 £1,084,226 (includes Domestic Abuse Act new burdens)	2021/22 2022/23

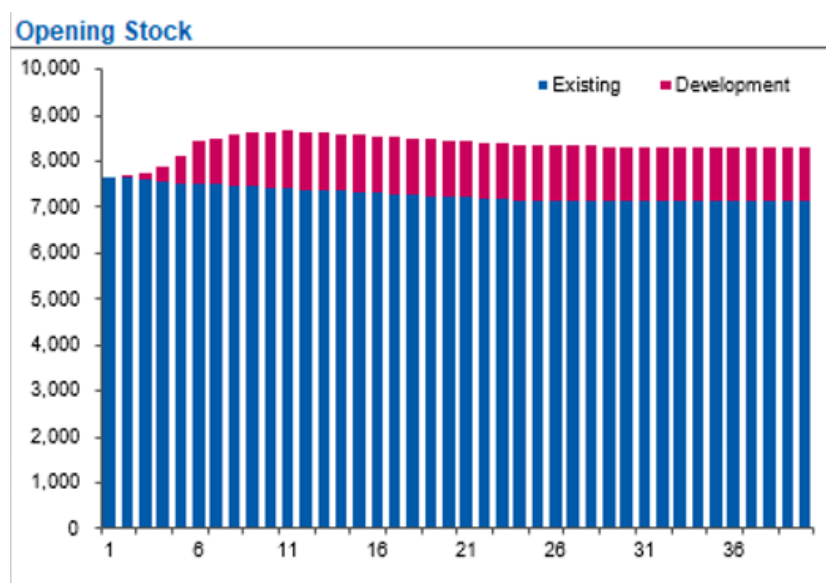
*Note: Funds received for Rough Sleeping Initiative 3 for projects delivered through neighbouring District Councils have been deducted from the total amount received. This figure shows funds received for projects/services commissioned by the City Council.*

In addition to the funds detailed below, our spend to deliver the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme is reimbursed in full by the Home Office.

Homelessness is a priority area for the Council, but we are in a difficult financial position due to impacts due to Covid and the cost of living crisis. As stated above, we rely heavily on grant funding from government to deliver our services and to commission services to tackle rough sleeping. Government funding this far for such grants have been short term, which has made it difficult to fund long-term provision. However, with the new rough sleeping strategy – [‘End rough sleeping for good’](#) – and the funding commitment of £2billion that comes with this, we are hoping to continue to see good investment into services, and which will be for longer periods than previously.

### 12.3 - Funding for housing and affordable development

As a local authority that owns and manages social housing the Council also has a Housing Revenue Account (HRA) which is a ring-fenced account held within a local authority’s General Fund. The HRA is primarily a landlord account containing the income and expenditure arising from a housing authority’s landlord functions. The HRA is able to use borrowing to fund investment in new homes and to refurbish or improve existing housing stock. New homes in the HRA may be for social rent, affordable rent, or shared ownership.



Current HRA stock modelling. Horizontal axis indicates years, with year one starting in 2020/21

Current modelling on the number of homes held in HRA stock presumes a gradual loss of existing homes due to ongoing sales through the Right to Buy. However, despite the losses through Right to Buy, the number of dwellings within the HRA is expected to significantly increase over the next 10 years. This is due to the significant house building plans of OX Place, currently factored in for the next 10 years, many of which will be affordable homes purchased into the HRA, alongside the wider programme of purchases planned to be made directly by the HRA. Currently, the HRA plans to include the acquisition for 1,265 homes over the next 10 years.

The forecasting within the HRA presumes gradual rent increases in line with the government's national rent policy, which is currently CPI +1%. However, due to the high levels of inflation in 2022 and the cost of living crisis, the government launched a [consultation in autumn 2022 on capping rent rise levels](#) for the social housing sector. Following this consultation, a temporary cap on increase to social housing rents of 7% will be introduced for the financial year 2023-24. This cap means that the HRA will need to restrict the increase in budget for certain HRA service areas.

Significant costs charged to the HRA include responsive repairs and planned maintenance. Approximately £165m has been allocated for responsive repairs and planned maintenance over the next decade. This planned maintenance budget has been increased, due to increasing investment needs including additional spending for health and safety following Grenfell and the current building safety legislation going through Parliament. The HRA business plan does not currently make any allowance for additional investment that may be required following a Government review of the 'Decent Homes' standard that is currently underway as a part of the changes proposed under the Social Housing White Paper

In addition to the financial provision for new housing supply the business plan has made a £50m capital provision over the next 10 years for investment in carbon reduction measures for the existing housing stock. Although a significant figure, it is unlikely to be sufficient in light of the pressing need to decarbonise the housing stock. The level of additional investment that will be required to be accommodated within the business plan will also be dependent upon the level of Government support from the 'social housing decarbonisation fund'

The HRA is currently accessing borrowing to fund its ambitious investment programme, in particular the investment into developing new affordable housing stock. Currently peak debt is forecast to be reached in year 6 of the HRA business plan (year 2028-29) at an amount of £594m.

The new housing strategy will need to consider the balance of different priorities for investment within the financial context of the housing revenue account, and assess what levels of future investment are required for different areas such as development of new affordable homes, regeneration of our estates, and our move to decarbonise our housing stock, alongside considering the amounts of future borrowing the HRA can maintain.

The Council as a whole is facing difficult financial times, and so does the Council's Housing Revenue Account. The agreed rent cap of 7% is several percentage points below current inflation, whilst the cost to the Council for providing services are rising with inflation at circa 11%. This creates a shortfall within the HRA, and as many parts of the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-28 are dependent on significant investment into the Council's stock, or into new homes from the HRA, many parts of the strategy will require prioritisation. This prioritisation will form a key part of the annual review of the strategy action plan over the strategy period.

## 13.0 – Conclusion, our vision and priorities

This review and evidence base includes comprehensive data and information on the housing and homelessness situation in Oxford and how it has developed over recent years. A combination of wealth disparity, a strong labour market and undersupply of housing – and in particular affordable housing – has over the last decade resulted in Oxford having one of the least affordable housing markets in the country.

This has had an impact on homelessness in the city through the last decade, that we have had success in tackling through good homelessness prevention activities across the Council, as well as good partnership with other agencies. The number of households that we need to place in temporary accommodation to relieve homelessness has reduced, whilst trends in many local authorities across the country have seen an increase to the number of households in such accommodation. After an increase to the number of people experiencing rough sleeping in the city from 2011 to 2017, numbers have declined over the last three years, much due to the Council successfully bidding for funds from the government to increase the provision of services for single homeless people and those experiencing rough sleeping. We are relying heavily on the private rented sector when working with households to prevent and relieve their homelessness, and whilst we are achieving good outcomes here, the increasingly high levels of rent presents future challenges.

The development of social and affordable housing has not kept pace with demand over the last decade and we are therefore presented with challenges to assist households that need affordable accommodation. We are not able to offer social housing to all those who need it in the city and we need to look carefully at how we decide who can be offered such properties in the future. Our development programme increased in the last few years and plans are in place to accelerate development even further in coming years. To help meet Oxford's acute need for housing, our neighbouring District authorities have also agreed to help meet this need.

The Council declared a climate emergency in 2019, and we have committed to making new domestic developments as close to net carbon zero as possible. The Council's existing stock needs significant investment to become more energy efficient.

Across all work areas, the Council has faced and continue to face challenges due to the effects of the pandemic. The Council faces significant financial pressures. We do not yet know the full effects of the pandemic, or what future trends will look like.

The Council is committed to continue to do what it takes to prevent and relieve all forms of homelessness in the city, and through creating this review and evidence base, will help us make important decisions on how and where we put interventions and services in place to do so. Based on what the information contained in this document tells us, and the key findings, we drafted a vision and emerging priorities for the new strategy

We carried out a consultation on the contents of this review and strategy evidence base, as well as the draft vision and emerging priorities during summer 2021. Following the consultation, this document has been updated based on feedback, and this document underpins and informs the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-28. We consulted on the draft strategy during late autumn 2022, where our vision, priorities and what we had set out to do to achieve our priorities was endorsed, and there was broad agreement of our strategic direction. The draft strategy has been amended based on the feedback from the consultation and subject to Cabinet

approval in March 2023, the strategy and accompanying action plan will be implemented in April 2023.

Our vision for Oxford City's Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023 – 28 is:

*'By 2028, addressing Oxford's need for more affordable housing, improving the standard of housing in the city while lowering its carbon impact, with services and partnerships that are focussed on preventing people losing their homes, rapidly rehouse those who become homeless, and ending the need to sleep rough.'*

Our 5 priorities are:

- Providing more, affordable homes
- Great homes for all
- Housing for a net zero carbon future
- Preventing homelessness and adopting a rapid rehousing response
- Ending rough sleeping

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## Appendix 2 – Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-28 Action Plan

Priority 1 – Providing more affordable homes		
What do we want to achieve?	What are we going to do to achieve this?	Actions in 2023/24 (Y1)
213 Increase the rate of affordable housing development, including Council homes through the affordable housing supply programme.	Build over 1,600 affordable, high quality and energy efficient homes through OX Place, the Council and housing association partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to make good progress towards the target of 1,600 by delivering high quality, energy efficient homes.</li> </ul>
	Deliver over 850 affordable homes available at a social rent, delivered by OX Place, the Council and housing association partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to deliver affordable homes at social rent to meet target of 850 by March 2026</li> </ul>
	Ensure significant investment from the Council's Housing Revenues Account goes into the development of new affordable homes during the strategy period.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure the investment of Housing Revenue Account (HRA) funds are in line with the HRA Business Plan and contributes towards the number of affordable homes that become available in the city.</li> </ul>
	Take available steps to secure and deploy public investment where this is available to make further affordable housing development viable in Oxford and Oxfordshire, including Homes England funding and wider infrastructure funds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bid for relevant funding when available, including estimated 9 bids where funding has already been announced.</li> </ul>
	Offer support and partnership to developers, landowners, social landlords and community-led housing groups to encourage delivery of new affordable homes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance our partnerships with housing associations by establishing regular meetings to discuss feasibility of development.</li> <li>Proactively engage with landowners about potential developments on sites.</li> <li>Continue to review land supply for affordable housing development as part of the Local Plan</li> </ul>
	Explore options and feasibility of developing small and adjoining sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initial feasibility assessment carried out for a number of small sites across the city.</li> <li>Develop an approach for the development of small and adjoining sites.</li> </ul>
	Support and encourage the use of factory-built housing and modular construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Start on-site with a modular contractor for at least one OX Place development</li> </ul>
	Work to ensure that new affordable homes delivered meet established and projected housing need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor and update housing need in relation to affordable housing in the city, e.g. size, tenure, location, number of units etc.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish new internal governance arrangement for determining how housing needs influences affordable housing supply, ensuring demand and the Council's priorities inform the supply of affordable accommodation, including the accommodation delivered by OX Place and our partners.</li> <li>Using need for affordable housing to drive development in the city and spend of Housing Revenue Account funds.</li> <li>Ensure that steps are taken to meet high demand of certain affordable housing types, such as 1-bedroom properties</li> <li>Monitor the effects of First Homes requirements as per national legislation in new developments on the local development of 1-bed social rented properties</li> <li>Consider effects and potential mitigations</li> <li>Review outstanding actions from the Older Persons Review, and make progress to complete relevant actions.</li> </ul>
214 Provide homes for those struggling in the Oxford housing market	Deliver shared ownership programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver shared ownership properties as part of our commitment to deliver 1,600 affordable homes by the end of March 2026.</li> </ul>
	Continue to bring empty homes back into occupancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to work with and support property owners to bring properties back into domestic use.</li> <li>Where possible and appropriate, take stronger enforcement action on property owners.</li> <li>Establish a Council wide approach and system, including feasibility and prioritisation, to bring properties back into use.</li> <li>Prepare to implement changes to Council Tax charges in relation to empty homes and second homes, as per the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill (when enacted).</li> </ul>
	Review and refresh the Council's Tenancy Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and develop a new Tenancy Strategy to replace our 2018-23 strategy.</li> </ul>
	Use Right to Buy receipts and borrowing in the Housing Revenue Account to purchase properties for social rent for people on the Housing Register	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor Right to Buy sales and develop plans for spending receipts. Once plans have been developed purchase properties in line with these plan.</li> </ul>
	Lobby central government to introduce controls around the short term let market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to respond to relevant government consultations and use opportunities to influence in order to openly share</li> </ul>

215		the council's position so that we can help guide policy making.
	Take appropriate action where a house has changed into short term let/holiday accommodation without the correct planning permission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to investigate alleged breaches of planning permission on short let use</li> <li>• Where breaches are identified, take appropriate action to resolve the breach.</li> </ul>
	Work better with our housing delivery partners and neighbouring Councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreements and arrangements for allocation of social housing in Districts made with all Oxfordshire District Councils.</li> <li>• First allocations of social housing in District councils to Oxford City Council housing register applicants.</li> </ul>
	Support and identify opportunities for community-led housing developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue our engagement with community groups and community land trusts</li> <li>• Progress community-led housing projects on garage sites identified through work funded by the Housing Advisers Programme</li> <li>• Through our work to develop an approach to develop small sites, identify suitable sites for community-led housing</li> <li>• Identify and secure suitable funding to progress feasibility stages for community-led housing on identified small sites.</li> </ul>
	Work with our partner Peabody with the aim of delivering the regeneration scheme in Blackbird Leys.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to investigate the feasibility of the Blackbird Leys regeneration scheme.</li> <li>• Complete the planning application process for the scheme.</li> </ul>

Priority 2 – Great homes for all		
What do we want to achieve?	What are we going to do to achieve this?	Actions in 2023/24 (Y1)
Improve the quality of accommodation in the Private Rented Sector	Continue to deliver the selective licensing schemes (HMO & selective) across the private rented sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the majority of applications for selective licences are processed and issued.</li> <li>• Continue the work of investigating unlicensed properties incorporating the selective licensing scheme.</li> <li>• Progress the enforcement of non-compliance with the selective licensing scheme.</li> </ul>
	Reduce the number of privately rented homes that contain serious home hazards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue inspections of properties where we have been notified of hazards.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue with our proactive inspection programme of HMO properties and introduce proactive inspections for properties with a selective licence.</li> <li>Ensure compliance using education and enforcement of all appropriate legislation in accordance with the Council's Enforcement Policy.</li> </ul>
Continue to deliver investment into our council homes	Develop a programme of rolling annual stock condition surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Start rolling stock condition surveys that incorporate Building Surveys, Structural/Concrete surveys, Energy &amp; Sustainability (Energy Performance Certificate, EPC) Building compliance &amp; Safety (Fire, Water, Asbestos) to ensure all aspects of Property Management is included in investment programmes or major works projects.</li> </ul>
	Use stock condition survey to ensure a consistent and updated asset management strategy is in place and provides coordinated plan for maintenance, investment, regeneration and carbon reduction work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developed programmes of works for external, internal, communal and block refurbishments for onsite delivery from 2024/25.</li> </ul>
	Invest £51m into council homes in line with our asset management strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver investment programmes year on year from 2024 onwards to ensure decency across all homes.</li> </ul>
Provide quality, timely and responsive services to council tenants, with high level of tenants satisfaction	Establish a transformation programme of our Landlord Services leading to improved services for our tenants, including ensuring all our tenant and leaseholder related activities are resourced sufficiently to comply with the Social Housing White Paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure team of officers to oversee and coordinate transformation work are in place</li> <li>Review of structures and processes completed and informing next steps of transformation work</li> <li>Transformation of landlord services developed and implemented</li> </ul>
	Deliver a new integrated and locality-based way of working to deliver services to our communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to build our locality based approach, including bringing in new council teams and working better across other statutory bodies.</li> </ul>
	Repair services delivered are excellent and informed by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- making repairs at our tenant's convenience;</li> <li>- make the fix first time;</li> <li>- staying fixed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make sure transactional surveys are in place and used, and feedback used to improve service where necessary</li> <li>Continue to embed and evaluate new ways of working, e.g. the use of new software for tenants to book/re-schedule appointments</li> </ul>
	Provide effective and timely response to tenants impacted by anti-social behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure complaints in relation to anti-social behaviour are responded to within 3 working days.</li> <li>Support complainants and perpetrators to resolve the anti-social behaviour</li> </ul>

	Use a combination of annual tenants and leaseholder surveys and transactional surveys to gain feedback on our services to inform service development and improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop facilities that allow us to get feedback digitally as soon as residents have received a service, so that we can use this to make changes in how we deliver our services in real time.</li> </ul>
217	Improve tenant engagement and tenants involvement to enhance accountability and put tenant's view at the heart of decision making and service development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Tenants and Leaseholder Strategy developed and implemented</li> </ul>
	As part of the Tenant and Leaseholder Strategy, establish a scrutiny function that allows tenants to better hold the Council and Oxford Direct Services to account and to influence outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Tenants and Leaseholder Strategy developed and implemented</li> </ul>
	Ensure that tenants and leaseholders involved in engagement and involvement activities better reflect the geographic spread and demographic makeup of our Council tenant's as a whole	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Tenants and Leaseholder Strategy developed and implemented, incorporating this and in line with the Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy</li> </ul>
	Release and publish results against the new national tenants consumer standards under the Social Housing White Paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respond and develop process for publishing results, in line with statutory requirements.</li> <li>Appoint senior person within the organisation to be responsible for new consumer standards.</li> </ul>

Priority 3 – Housing for a net zero carbon future		
What do we want to achieve?	What are we going to do to achieve this?	Actions in 2023/24 (Y1)
Improve standards for new council homes built in the city	New homes built by OX Place are net zero carbon for energy use in the properties (regulated operational energy) by 2030.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>OX Place to produce a plan to meet this deadline date</li> </ul>
	Homes built by OX Place have carbon emissions levels for new homes that are 40% below national standards (Building Regulations 2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>OX Place designing and building homes to meet or exceed the level stated</li> </ul>
	Homes built by OX Place use electricity only and heated through low carbon means such as air source heat pumps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>OX Place designing and building homes with air source heat pumps</li> </ul>

	Build as far as possible using a 'fabric-first' approach (as per Zero Carbon Action Plan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define 'fabric first'; design/ build homes with fabric first approach</li> </ul>
	Tackling the performance gap (the disparity between energy consumption predicted in design stage of a building and the energy use when in actual operation) and preventing any performance issues with new technologies by using an innovative energy quality assurance service. This provides checking, training and testing throughout the full design and construction phases of development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using Energy Quality Assurance service on all/ majority of dwellings</li> </ul>
	Deliver new homes using a new procurement framework aimed at off-site manufacture (OSM) of new homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to utilise the OSM Framework</li> </ul>
218	Invest to decarbonise our council homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a plan for delivering Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) C and Net Zero Carbon across the Council's existing housing stock</li> </ul>
	Tie energy efficiency works into other planned maintenance programmes to ensure a co-ordinated and less disruptive approach to delivery, improving tenant experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and implement plan for how we will deliver works to properties</li> </ul>
	Work with tenants to agree and implement a programme of energy efficiency measures that will see tenants' energy use reduced, with the aim of reducing the number of tenants refusing energy efficiency improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As part of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) wave 2.1 bid, work with tenants to develop an approach.</li> <li>A full handover and demonstration will be carried out with tenants on completion of works.</li> <li>Engagement Strategy in place.</li> </ul>
	Continue to bid for central government funding to fund our work to increase energy efficiency for our housing stock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bids for SHDF and other sources submitted, and will continue to bid for other opportunities</li> </ul>
	Work with other landlords, such as property developed, Registered Providers and Private Rented Sector landlords to increase energy efficiency, both in existing buildings and new developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progress work on new Local Plan 2040 including updated policies addressing carbon reduction in new and existing development.</li> </ul>
	Work with partners to apply for funding and signpost home owners, tenants and landlords	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bid for any other government funding made available to support landlords to fund energy efficiency measures.</li> </ul>

219	in the private rented sector to funding for energy efficiency and decarbonisation measures to increase efficiency standards for properties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actively promote available funding and direct those eligible to apply for such funding</li> </ul>
	Bring improvements to energy efficiency to the private rented sector by other means.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lobby government for further funding to raise energy efficiency standards</li> <li>Continue to encourage landlords to be accredited landlords under the City Council's Landlord Accreditation Scheme, which includes promoting and encouraging landlords to let properties with good EPC ratings.</li> <li>Work with landlords to meet Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES)</li> </ul>
	Ensure residents in the city can access consistent and quality energy advice in relation to both property improvements and energy usage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to fund the Better Housing, Better Health service</li> <li>Have an Energy Advice Office in place with a remit to support owner occupiers and those renting in the PRS, to coordinate and support delivery of energy efficiency projects, support compliance on EPC, and support community engagement and outreach work</li> <li>Continue our outreach work via events and partnerships to promote advice and funding opportunities</li> </ul>
	Work in partnership with the Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership to trial innovative approaches to different retrofit measures, scale delivery, share good practise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue feasibility work in Oxford to scale retrofit approaches across different building and tenure types</li> </ul>

Priority 4 – Preventing homelessness and adopting a rapid rehousing response		
What do we want to achieve?	What are we going to do to achieve this?	Actions in 2023/24 (Y1)
Transform council services to better prevent and relieve homelessness	Complete a transformation of our Housing Needs team (covering homelessness service and the housing register) to focus more on prevention and rapid rehousing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure new teams, new procedures and new ways of working implemented.</li> </ul>
	Ensure a continuous culture of change and service improvement is embedded into Housing Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to embed transformation work across Housing Needs, roll out new team structures and ensure continued culture change within Housing Needs. Review progress after 6 months.</li> </ul>

	Embed a Corporate approach to the prevention of homelessness in Oxford City Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and implement training programme for staff across the organisation</li> <li>• Review our corporate governance mechanism for homeless prevention.</li> </ul>
	Create a 'One Gateway' to Council Homelessness services to ensure people seeking our assistance find it easier to navigate Council services and get the assistance they need.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and implement online housing applications (including homeless applications and applications to join the Council's Housing Register).</li> <li>• Establish work flows and processes, including referrals to Housing Needs and statutory homelessness services.</li> <li>• Review our current face-to-face offer of housing and homelessness services to ensure that we have an offer in place there is conducive with the aims of this strategy.</li> </ul>
	Make better use of the council's data to inform the prevention and relief of homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular review of Homeless Case Level Information Collection (H-CLIC) data and other internal key data with teams.</li> <li>• Using data and information, including reasons for rough sleeping, to better understand why households become homeless or threatened with homelessness and use this to focus and improve our service delivery.</li> </ul>
Focus on tackling homelessness from the Private Rented Sector	Establish a dedicated provision to provide upstream homelessness prevention for the private rented sector, which will work with both tenants and landlords, providing mediation and working in close partnership with statutory and support services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure new teams, new procedures and new ways of working implemented.</li> </ul>
	Complete a review of the Council's Private Rented Sector access schemes, developing and implementing changes needed to ensure that the schemes remain effective and attractive to landlords	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete a review of the Council's private rented sector schemes.</li> <li>• Recommendations presented and considered for renewal of schemes to ensure schemes are attractive to landlords and offer good quality, and offer stable and affordable accommodation for households, particularly in the context of rising rents and frozen local housing allowance.</li> </ul>
	Continue to express our support for the abolition of section 21 notices, and when and if the Government Bill is implemented, we will ensure that the Council supports the new rules, landlord obligations and tenants' rights.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When introduced, we will put together an information campaign and work closely with landlords and agents in the city to support them to understand and operate within the new legislation</li> </ul>



221	Work in partnership to prevent homelessness	Prevent homelessness for those being discharged from hospitals by progressing our joint work with health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to work with and support health services in Oxford to enable persons to be discharged from hospital setting and into accommodation without delay.</li> <li>• Work with health and social care colleagues to seek and secure long term funding.</li> </ul>
		Prevent homelessness for those being released from prison and probation services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance partnership working with prison and probation services, including the provision of new temporary accommodation arrangements and access to accommodation in the private rented sector</li> </ul>
		Work in partnership with supported accommodation providers and housing associations to establish working pre-eviction protocols	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure pre-eviction protocols updated and implemented</li> </ul>
		Support and deliver refugee schemes, review current schemes and be ready to implement changes with any future government schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of all schemes delivered and supported in the city completed.</li> <li>• Draw up recommendations for future work to support refugees.</li> </ul>
		Work with partner organisations to create better customer journeys between council services and non-statutory services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete mapping of key partnerships and processes to ensure that homelessness prevention work is focussed and effective</li> </ul>
		Work with County Council and providers to help those leaving the Young Persons Supported Accommodation Service secure appropriate accommodation and make necessary changes to policy and processes to support care leavers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to work in close partnership with the County Council and support providers to ensure young persons, including care leavers, have access to supported accommodation services when needed and that there are good and sustainable move on options when leaving supported accommodation.</li> </ul>
		Improve support to survivors of domestic abuse and deliver good housing outcomes by fully conforming to the requirements of the new Domestic Abuse Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work towards the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance Accreditation</li> <li>• Through Domestic Abuse Housing Link Workers, identify good practise, gaps in service provision and improvements to processes to ensure good housing outcomes for survivors of domestic abuse</li> <li>• Continue to deliver the Sanctuary Scheme</li> </ul>
		Reduce health, housing and care inequalities for people with multiple and complex needs through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hosting a Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) coordinator who will facilitate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruit a MEAM coordinator; support integration of the MEAM approach across services Contribute to a countywide workforce development programme; develop an offer of training and reflective spaces</li> </ul>

	<p>and gather an evidence base, and embed recommendations and learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Engage in shared training and reflective practise across services</li><li>- Smart us of data to provide more targeted services</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Work with Kings College London to analyse project evaluation and data; and design services based on evidence</li></ul>	
222	Adopt a rapid rehousing response to homelessness	<p>Bring together within the Council structure, move-on from temporary and supported accommodation with placements into social and private rented accommodation to ensure a coordinated approach to rehousing homeless households.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• New teams, new procedures and new ways of working implemented.</li><li>• Rollout a new approach to support planning and move-on for households in our temporary accommodation.</li><li>• All households accommodated in temporary accommodation have a support and move on plan.</li></ul>
		<p>Make changes to current policy and process to support more rapid move-on from temporary and supported accommodation, and provide support in the new permanent accommodation when possible</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of the Council's private rented sector schemes completed to ensure there are no barriers for people moving on from temporary and supported accommodation to access these schemes</li><li>• Review of Allocation policies to ensure there are no barriers for people moving on from temporary and supported accommodation to access social housing</li></ul>
		<p>Review our use of temporary accommodation stock to make sure it is of good quality, and that the stock we have is the right amount and matches the need of households; and consider adopting a new temporary accommodation standard.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continue to review need and use of temporary accommodation, and in particular any impacts of the housing needs transformation work and the effects of the cost of living crisis.</li><li>• Use the review and analysis to inform our provision of temporary accommodation in the future, including type and amount of units required.</li></ul>
		<p>Complete review of our allocation schemes and update our allocations policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Complete review of the current Allocations Scheme, using data and best practise on the allocation of social housing</li><li>• Use the review to start inform options and direction for changes to our scheme and policies in the future.</li></ul>
		<p>Work in partnership with other commissioning bodies and registered providers to ensure there is sufficient suitable accommodation options available to meet the need for people moving on from supported accommodation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continue to deliver Housing First units across Oxford.</li><li>• Work with housing associations and other partners to ensure there is a sufficient availability of suitable housing</li></ul>

#### Priority 5 – Ending rough sleeping

What do we want to achieve?	What are we going to do to achieve this?	Actions in 2023/24 (Y1)
223 Implement the Countywide Oxfordshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy	Work with and support the Oxfordshire Homelessness Alliance and commissioning partners to ensure that service provision and access to accommodation is transformed in line with the countywide strategy, including moving to a housing-led and more person centered approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with the Alliance to support the further development and delivery of their transformation plans</li> </ul>
	Aligned to the Countywide Strategy, together with partners, review commissioning and contract management of supported services ensuring choice and variety is maximised, both in terms of accommodation and support provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For all services commissioned by Oxford City Council outside of Alliance arrangements, services will be regularly reviewed to ensure they are aligned and deliver a housing-led approach.</li> <li>For all service commissioned under the Alliance, work with partners to set up and support contract management.</li> </ul>
	Work with Oxfordshire District Councils and registered providers to ensure that the commitment to provide 1-bed-room properties for those moving on from supported accommodation is met across the County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oxford City Council to provide the committed 11 units of Housing First as per the countywide Housing First charter.</li> </ul>
Maximise funding and raising profile	Continue to work closely with relevant government departments such as DLUHC to ensure that we have access to future funding opportunities, and have good working relationships so that we can lobby for change if necessary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make bid to Single Homeless Accommodation Programme.</li> <li>Where other funding becomes available, bids submitted to these as well.</li> </ul>
	Work with commissioners of supported accommodation operating in the city to ensure that as much as possible is provided through registered providers, who are subject to more regulation and impose less costs on the Council through reduced housing benefit subsidy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to work across Council departments and organisations providing supported housing in the city to support this aim.</li> </ul>
Provide the right service at the right time	Continue to deliver services based on the principles of Somewhere Safe to Stay in the city, to ensure that people do not have to sleep rough before they are offered assistance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review arrangements and services to ensure that the right level of provision is available.</li> </ul>
	Facilitate access to appropriate health and care services for those who are in need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct regular reviews/contract monitoring of services commissioned as part of the Oxfordshire Homelessness</li> </ul>

		Alliance to ensure that all persons using services are assisted and offered access to relevant services as needed, such as health, mental health, substance misuse and care services.
	Ensure that statutory and non-statutory services in Oxford develop a joint approach to support those experiencing rough sleeping, so people get access to statutory homelessness assistance, as well as other support as needed such as Care Act assessments and mental health support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All persons experiencing rough sleeping are offered an assessment under the Homelessness Reduction Act.</li> <li>• As part of an assessment, persons are also offered and linked in with other statutory services as relevant, as part of the Council's wider partnership work to prevent and relieve homelessness.</li> </ul>
224	Improve access to accommodation and provide a range of accommodation options for single persons and couples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring systems established and information used routinely to inform necessary changes to operational practises and policy direction.</li> </ul>
	Regularly monitor the number of single homeless people offered social housing as well as the number of single persons who have been excluded from the housing register, to ensure good access and inform service development.	
	Carry out a review of the Council's Allocations Policy, including the exclusion criteria based on learnings from case reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of the Allocations Policy completed.</li> <li>• Case reviews completed and informing recommendations for any amendments to the Allocations Policy as part of its review</li> </ul>
	Work with our District Council partners and Registered Providers to pursue options and solutions for 'hard to let' properties across the County with the view to increasing available stock for single people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue engagement with partners through Countywide Housing Supply group</li> </ul>
224	Enhance our private rented sector offer to singles and couples, with no or low support needs, who are looking to move on from supported accommodation or rough sleeping.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete a review of the Council's private rented sector schemes.</li> <li>• Recommendations presented and considered for renewal of schemes to ensure Council offered schemes meet the needs of single persons and couples.</li> </ul>
	Ensure sufficient provision of supported accommodation to meet a range of needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commission new services as per successful funding bids</li> </ul>
	Together with our County and District partners and working towards the goals of the Countywide strategy, commission a range of flexible accommodation for singles and couples.	
	Work with commissioning partners and providers to commission supported	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct and complete mapping of all existing supported accommodation provision in the city</li> </ul>

225		accommodation that is distributed and dispersed appropriately throughout the city, to ensure that persons living in supported accommodation feel supported and safe where they live.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuously update mapping and use this information to form part of decisions made when commissioning new provision</li> </ul>
		Support people experiencing rough sleeping in Oxford who do not have recourse to public funds to find appropriate solutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure there is a provision of legal support and advice that people can access in order to assist with regularising immigration status for affected individuals.</li> <li>Support a return to a home country where this is appropriate and wanted.</li> </ul>
		Work with services we commission to move to a strength-based approach to delivering housing support services where a person's individual needs are at the centre of the service provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement and monitor the commissioning and contract management arrangements of the provision of support, ensuring choice and variety is maximised, including support not linked to a housing offer.</li> <li>Continue to carry out effective contract monitoring for services commissioned directly and solely by the City Council in order to ensure that services are delivered according to this principle.</li> <li>Build in effective reviews/contract monitoring for services commissioned as part of the Oxfordshire Homelessness Alliance in order to ensure that services are delivered according to this principle</li> </ul>
	Introduce a housing-led approach to offer of accommodation	<p>Increase our offer of Housing First accommodation and provide the support individuals may need in order to sustain the accommodation.</p> <p>Work with the Alliance to continue to transform our approach to the provision of accommodation to single homeless persons, including reviewing our current accommodation offers as we move to a housing-led model and helping facilitate changes agreed as part of the Countywide transformation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue our work to bring more properties into use for Housing First, and bid for funding opportunities</li> <li>Work with the Alliance to support the further development and delivery of their transformation plans</li> </ul>

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion		
What do we want to achieve?	What are we going to do to achieve this?	Actions in 2023/24 (Y1)
226 Deliver the Council's housing related commitments in the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy	Ensuring that we understand and respond to issues that disproportionally impact specific groups in our community and lead to homelessness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve homelessness data collection and data quality, including on protected characteristics.</li> <li>• Analyse data regularly to determine if and when any groups are disproportionately affected by homelessness, use this to inform service development.</li> <li>• Seek feedback from service users from different backgrounds to develop response.</li> </ul>
	Work with communities to address any issues that disproportionally affects specific groups in order to better prevent homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek feedback from service users from different backgrounds to develop response.</li> </ul>
	Review and improve how we engage with our tenants and leaseholders and ensure that inclusion is at the heart of this	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure new Tenant and Leaseholder Strategy in place</li> </ul>
Data and information	Seek to improve our data collection so that we can better understand how our homelessness services work for the community, with the aim to ensure that services are accessible to all. Ensuring we improve our data we have on protected characteristics where we currently have a limited picture, such as for LGBTQIA+ people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve data collection and data quality.</li> <li>• Analyse data regularly to determine if and when any groups are disproportionately affected by homelessness.</li> <li>• Seek feedback from services users to develop response.</li> </ul>

	Routinely report and use data to understand shifts in the profiles of people that we support in relation to homelessness, such as a recent decrease in the proportion of women presenting, in order to make sure that any changes is not due to inaccessibility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve data collection and data quality.</li> <li>• Analyse data regularly and develop actions to inform how we deliver our homelessness services.</li> </ul>
	Take further steps to better understand our tenants, including better capture and analysis of data so that we can ensure that services are delivered well to all.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruit Customer Experience Team to engage with tenants directly in their homes, capturing protected characteristics, reasonable adjustments, preferences to inform individual service delivery requirements.</li> <li>• Introduction of mobile working forms solution to capture and record information directly into housing system.</li> </ul>
Partnership work	Continue to consider the needs of the travelling community, and seek to work in partnership with our neighbouring authorities to commission a new study of need for the period up to 2040	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with colleagues in County Council to contribute with data and information</li> </ul>
2027 Accessibility and information	Ensure information and communication is accessible, through using a range of mediums and accessible language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete review of information and advice given to customer by Housing Services.</li> </ul>
Staff and staff training	Provide training for all of our staff to ensure they are all skilled and confident in delivering services and work with Human Resources partners to have a workforce that as a whole reflects Oxford's diverse population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry out training needs analysis</li> <li>• Deliver training to staff specific to their role</li> </ul>

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## Appendix 3

### Form to be used for the Full Equalities Impact Assessment

<b>Service Area:</b> Housing Services		<b>Section:</b>	<b>Date of Initial assessment:</b> 11 <sup>th</sup> October 2022	<b>Key Person responsible for assessment:</b> Amie Rickatson	<b>Date assessment commenced:</b> 30 <sup>th</sup> January 2023
<b>Name of Policy to be assessed:</b>			Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-28		
<b>1. In what area are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact</b>			Race ✓	Disability ✓	Age ✓
			Gender reassignment ✓	Religion or Belief ✓	Sexual Orientation ✓
			Sex ✓	Pregnancy and Maternity ✓	Marriage & Civil Partnership ✓
<b>Other strategic/ equalities considerations</b>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oxford City Council Strategy</li> <li>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy</li> <li>Financial Inclusion Strategy</li> <li>Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership Action Plan</li> <li>Thriving Communities Strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Asset Management Strategy</li> <li>People Strategy</li> <li>Oxford Local Plan</li> <li>Oxfordshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy</li> <li>Oxford Economic Strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Medium Term Financial Plan</li> <li>HRA Business Plan</li> <li>Green Space Strategy</li> <li>Financial Inclusion Strategy</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City Centre Action Plan</li> </ul>	
<p><b>2. Background:</b></p> <p>Give the background information to the policy and the perceived problems with the policy which are the reason for the Impact Assessment.</p>	<p>Homelessness strategies set out how a council and its partners are to prevent homelessness, ensure that sufficient accommodation and support is available for people who are or may become homeless, and seek to prevent them becoming homeless again. There is a legal duty for councils to publish a homelessness strategy based on the results of a homelessness review at least every five years. The national Rough Sleeping Strategy further requires local authorities to include rough sleeping in their homelessness strategies. A housing strategy sets out a council's vision for housing in the local area, in particular affordable housing, but also covers our role as a social landlord, and the private rented sector. There is no legal obligation for a council to have a housing strategy in place, but it is good practice to have one, and in particular for Oxford which faces significant housing challenges.</p> <p>The development process for Oxford's new Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy started in early 2021, when we started working on a review of homelessness in Oxford and the wider evidence base. A homelessness review is a comprehensive examination of homelessness in a local authority area, which is carried out to inform the creation of homelessness strategy for that area. The purpose of the review is 'to determine the extent to which the population in the district is homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, assess the likely extent in the future, identify what is currently being done and by whom, and identify what resources are available to prevent and tackle homelessness' (Homelessness code of guidance for local authorities, Chapter 2, paragraph 2.15). Because our strategy will cover housing and homelessness, the homelessness review has been joined with information on housing to ensure a full strategy evidence base is created.</p> <p>The review and evidence base includes information about numbers of homeless people and families who are homeless, and how services have performed to support homeless people, as well as data on protected characteristics for the people we are providing services. It also includes wider housing issues, such as the Council's role as a social landlord, what's happening in the private rented sector, the plans to build more affordable housing in the future, and the need to tackle the role housing plays in carbon emissions.</p> <p>The comprehensive review and evidence base has underpinned and informed the of Oxford's Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy that sets out the Council's strategic response to prevent all forms of homelessness and tackle the housing challenges the city faces. Formulating a strategy affects all of the communities in Oxford and if we do not use enough or accurate data and information,</p>		

	<p>or interpret this in the correct way, our strategy, and policies and procedures developed under it, may have unintended negative effects on people with protected characteristics.</p> <p>As our strategy is based on research, data and information into the community needs for housing, including disability needs, gender, family housing needs and risk of homelessness, we have been able to use this understanding to ensure our housing strategy meets their needs.</p> <p>A 6 week public consultation on the draft strategy was launched in November 2022, to establish if we had set the right comments to achieve our priorities within the strategy. We also asked respondents if they had any feedback on the Equality Impact Assessment completed for the draft strategy. All feedback received from the consultation was carefully reviewed and amendments have been made to the Strategy where appropriate. Following the consultation, we have also developed an Action Plan which sets out how we will achieve our commitments and this document will be used to review our progress over the 5 year strategy period.</p> <p>This Equality Impact Assessment has been updated following the consultation and amendments to Strategy and accompanying action plan.</p>
<p><b>3. Methodology and Sources of Data:</b></p> <p>The methods used to collect data and what sources of data</p>	<p>The review and evidence base, which has informed the strategy, was initially conducted over a period of 6 months, from early 2021 to summer 2021. It has since been updated to incorporate more recent data, national and local developments as well as feedback from consultation on the review and evidence base carried out during summer 2021.</p> <p>We have used a large number of sources, including statutory homelessness statistics, internal data bases, Census data, data from the Office for National Statistics, research carried out by renowned national homelessness organisations and charities, and national policies to compile and then analyse the information.</p> <p>We have compared the findings of this homelessness review with older sets of data for Oxford, such as the evidence base for previous Housing and Homelessness Strategy. We have done this so that we see local and national trends.</p>

	All our sources are referenced in the review and evidence base.
<p><b>4. Consultation</b></p> <p>This section should outline all the consultation that has taken place on the EIA. It should include the following.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why you carried out the consultation.</li> <li>• Details about how you went about it.</li> <li>• A summary of the replies you received from people you consulted.</li> <li>• An assessment of your proposed policy (or policy options) in the light of the responses you received.</li> <li>• A statement of what you plan to do next</li> </ul>	<p>An important part of gathering additional information and making sure that we had not missed any vital data or information, or that we had interpreted information wrong, was to hold a public consultation on the review and evidence base.</p> <p><b>How we consulted</b></p> <p>Our approach to this statutory consultation was comprehensive and included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An online public survey</li> <li>• Launched a social media campaign to promote the consultation, advertised the consultation on our choice-based lettings website and included a recording on our telephone lines.</li> <li>• Held 3 in-person stakeholder events, focussing on different priorities within the draft Strategy</li> <li>• Held an online stakeholder event, covering all 5 priorities</li> <li>• We worked with colleagues across the communities' team and attended community events to discuss priorities within the draft strategy and encourage feedback from residents of Oxford.</li> <li>• Held a session with individuals who have lived experience of homelessness</li> <li>• Attended a meeting with Tenant Ambassadors</li> <li>• Held a Member's briefing</li> <li>• The Economic Development Team encouraged attendees of the Economic Growth Board to engage with the consultation</li> <li>• Details of the consultation were included in newsletters that are circulated to businesses and partners operating in the City Centre.</li> </ul> <p>In total, we had 103 responses to the online survey. Headlines from online survey responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 75% of responses were made by members of the public<sup>1</sup>. The majority – 73% whom were Oxford residents.</li> <li>• 46% of respondents described themselves as female; 44% as male; 7% preferred not to say; 4% did not answer.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Not all 103 respondents responded to all questions in the survey. The answer rate is therefore based on the total number of responses for the relevant question.

- 67% of those who responded to the survey were over the age of 45. The largest individual age group was 45-54, with 22% of respondents.
- Respondents overwhelmingly identified themselves as being 'White British' – 67%. In total 81% of respondents stated that they 'white' best described their ethnic group.
- 24% of respondents stated that their day-to-day activities are limited because of a health problem or disability.
- Four stakeholder workshops took place in November and December 2023. A total of 60 individuals attended the workshops from 27 different statutory and non-statutory organisations. This included Housing Associations, County Council, community groups, third sector organisations, mental health services, supported accommodation providers and many more.

Overall, the response to the draft vision and emerging priorities was positive, both through the online consultation and feedback at the stakeholder events. With between 74% and 85% of online respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with what we want to do.

We also asked if respondents had any comments or feedback on the Equality Impact Assessment for the draft strategy. Only 27 individuals responded to this question. We had a mixture of responses with some respondents saying they thought it was good and others saying they didn't, and equally conflicting opinions on whether the data was useful.

Following a comprehensive review of all responses to the consultation, along with a reflection on the demographics of those individuals who responded to the consultation, we made amendments to our Strategy and developed our action plan. The Action Plan sets out what we will do to achieve our commitments and will be reviewed on an annual basis.

We have a dedicated section within our Action Plan, focusing on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. This sets out our commitments over the next 5 years which are detailed in section 5.

Summary of key equalities related identified in the review and evidence base that we will introduce mitigations for include:

- Housing is unaffordable for many in the city
- We hold little data on people with certain characteristics, such as the LGBT community and we do therefore not know the full extent of how this group is affected by homelessness

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Black community is overrepresented in homelessness cases compared to the overall share of the population in Oxford</li><li>• Males are over represented in rough sleeping instances compared to the overall share of the population</li><li>• A large proportion of those we owe a duty towards as well as rough sleepers, have physical and/or mental health disabilities.</li><li>• A large proportion of those we owe a homelessness duty towards are in reception of benefits in relation to disability.</li></ul>						
<b>5. Assessment of Impact:</b> Provide details of the assessment of the policy on the six primary equality strands. There may have been other groups or individuals that you considered. Please also consider whether the policy, strategy or spending decisions could have an impact on safeguarding and / or the welfare of children and vulnerable adults							
	<table><tr><td><b>Race</b></td><td><b>Disability</b></td><td><b>Age</b></td></tr><tr><td>Positive</td><td>Positive</td><td>Positive</td></tr></table>	<b>Race</b>	<b>Disability</b>	<b>Age</b>	Positive	Positive	Positive
	<b>Race</b>	<b>Disability</b>	<b>Age</b>				
	Positive	Positive	Positive				
	<table><tr><td><b>Gender reassignment</b></td><td><b>Religion or Belief</b></td><td><b>Sexual Orientation</b></td></tr><tr><td>Positive</td><td>Positive</td><td>Positive</td></tr></table>	<b>Gender reassignment</b>	<b>Religion or Belief</b>	<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	Positive	Positive	Positive
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Positive	Positive	Positive					
<table><tr><td><b>Sex</b></td><td><b>Pregnancy and Maternity</b></td><td><b>Marriage &amp; Civil Partnership</b></td></tr><tr><td>Positive</td><td>Positive</td><td>Positive</td></tr></table>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Pregnancy and Maternity</b>	<b>Marriage &amp; Civil Partnership</b>	Positive	Positive	Positive	
<b>Sex</b>	<b>Pregnancy and Maternity</b>	<b>Marriage &amp; Civil Partnership</b>					
Positive	Positive	Positive					
<p>Following the consultation into our draft strategy and accompanying EIA we have developed the work streams detailed below. These will enhance our services and inform future service development, the strategy will therefore have a positive effect on the community as a whole including those persons with protected characteristics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Work with colleagues across the Council throughout the life of the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy to deliver the Council’s commitments set out in the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, including:</li></ul>							

- ensuring that we understand issues that disproportionately affect specific groups and may lead to homelessness;
- work with communities to address such issues to better prevent homelessness;
- review and improve how we engage with our tenants and leaseholders and ensure that inclusion is at the heart of this;
- use our programme of capital investment to set an example of high standards and inclusive design and planning for social housing.
- Conduct comprehensive equality impact assessment for new key policies and working practises, such as the Tenancy Strategy and the Allocation Policy, to ensure truly fair access to our services for those with protected characteristics
- Engage better with key community groups to address issues that disproportionately impact specific groups in our community and lead to homelessness. We will also help them provide feedback and help shape our services.
- Improve our data collection so that we can better understand the impact of homelessness on people with certain characteristics, such as the LGBT community; use this data to inform service development
- Seek to understand better why black people and their families living in Oxford are disproportionately made homeless, and engage with service users, in order to improve our services to combat this trend.
- Routinely report and use data to understand shifts in the profiles of persons that we support in relation to homelessness in order to make sure that any significant changes are not due to inaccessibility
- Ensure that we understand and respond to issues that disproportionately impact specific groups in our community and lead to homelessness, by improving the data that we collected and using this data to inform service delivery.
- Review and improve how we engage with our tenants and leaseholder, ensuring that inclusion is at the heart of this engagement.
- Consider the needs of the travelling community, and work in partnership with our neighbouring authorities to commission a new study of need for the period up to 2040.
- Complete a review of all current information and advice given to customers. To ensure that information and communication is accessible, through using a range of mediums and accessible language.
- Provide training for all Housing Services staff to ensure they are all skilled and confident in delivering services.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with Human Resources partners to have a workforce that as a whole reflects Oxford's diverse population.</li> </ul>
<b>6. Consideration of Measures:</b>  This section should explain in detail all the consideration of alternative approaches/mitigation of adverse impact of the policy	There are no known adverse equality impacts of the strategy or work streams coming out of this. The measures and work streams under the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy will have positive impacts on all groups of the community and therefore no mitigation measures have been put into place.
<b>6a. Monitoring Arrangements:</b>  Outline systems which will be put in place to monitor for adverse impact in the future and this should include all relevant timetables. In addition it could include a summary and assessment of your monitoring, making clear whether you found any evidence of discrimination.	<p>Progress against the action plan will be monitored quarterly, including qualitative commentary.</p> <p>The action plan will be reviewed and updated annually to ensure that it is still relevant, there is focus on yearly actions and progress, and actions can be amended if necessary. To help inform the annual review of the action plan, key sets of data will also be monitored throughout the year.</p> <p>We will keep monitoring the main homelessness data sets, and as stated above, introduce others where we do not have sufficient information at present, to see trends and put in place mitigations if we discover that any measures introduced under this strategy is adversely affecting certain groups in Oxford's communities.</p>
<b>7. Date reported and signed off by Cabinet:</b>	
<b>8. Conclusions:</b>	That we adopt and deliver the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy in order to address the inequality gaps that are created due to the unaffordability of housing in the city.



What are your conclusions drawn from the results in terms of the policy impact					
<b>9. Are there implications for the Service Plans?</b>	NO	<b>10. Date the Service Plans will be updated</b>	Spring 2023	<b>11. Date copy sent to Equalities Lead Officer</b>	31 <sup>st</sup> January 2023
<b>13. Date reported to Scrutiny and Executive Board:</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> March 2023	<b>14. Date reported to Cabinet:</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> March 2023	<b>12. The date the report on EqIA will be published</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2023



Signed

Signed (Lead Officer)

**Please list the team members and service areas that were involved in this process:**

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#### Appendix 4: Risk Register

Title	Risk description	Opp/ threat	Cause	Consequence	Date Raised	Owner	Risk Rating						Comments	Controls				
							Gross	Current	Medium	High	Very High	Extremely High		Control description	Due date	Status	Progress %	Action Owner
							I	P	I	P	I	P						
239	Sudden significant changes in local and national context  Strategy, or part of strategy, and review/evidence base, outdated before public consultation process starts.	T	The country faces significant challenges at present, in particular in relation to the economy, and there is uncertainty over the short and long term impacts to the housing market, and what impacts the wider economic circumstances and pressures will have on the level of homelessness in Oxford.	Strategy, or part of strategy, and review/evidence base becomes out of date, meaning changes have to be made to strategy and review/evidence base, and commitments under the strategy, to make it relevant to a new context.	09/09/2022	Richard Wood	3	3	2	2	2	2		The strategy development process allows for flexibility so that we can adapt and update the relevant documents if necessary. Cabinet has been asked to delegate the authority to the Executive Director of Communities and People, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, to make updates to the draft strategy and strategy evidence base ahead of the public consultation launch to facilitate relevant and necessary changes to be made.	ongoing	ongoing	80%	Amie Rickatson
	Delay to strategy development process  New strategy not in place as planned in early 2023.	T	The strategy is not approved by Cabinet or Full Council on the 15th & 20th March as planned. This will prevent the implementation of a new Strategy by April 2023.	There will be a prolonged period in 2023 when the Council will not have a Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy in place.	09/09/2022	Richard Wood	3	3	3	1	3	1		The strategy and action plan development process have been comprehensive are carefully designed. A thorough consultation into the Draft Strategy was undertaken and the feedback received was taking into account when amending strategy and developing the action plan. A member session was held as part of this consultation and feedback was taken on board as part of the amendments. The report writer will be present at Cabinet meeting to address any questions and concerns from Cabinet.	ongoing	Almost complete	90%	Amie Rickatson

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**To:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 15 March 2023  
**Report of:** Head of Corporate Property  
**Title of Report:** Write-off of Commercial Tenant Rent Arrears

Summary and recommendations	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To approve the write-off of commercial rent arrears above the limit which officers can approve under the Scheme of Delegation
<b>Key decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Ed Turner, Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	Inclusive economy
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	Council Strategy 2020-24

<b>Recommendations:</b>	That Cabinet resolves to:
1.	<b>Approve</b> the write-off of arrears relating to Edinburgh Woollen Mill (141 High Street) as detailed in this report;
2.	<b>Approve</b> the write-off of arrears relating to Nosebag Restaurants Limited (6 St Michaels Street & 6-8 St Michaels Street) as detailed in this report; and
3.	<b>Approve</b> the write-off of arrears relating to the properties identified in the Exempt Appendix 1.

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Exempt Appendix 1 – not for publication
Appendix 2	Risk Assessment

## Introduction and background

1. The council has a historic commercial property portfolio, which brings in much needed income to fund core services. As a major landlord in the city and the city centre, the portfolio allows the Council to provide a level of custodianship.
2. The pandemic had a significant impact on the Council's retail and food and beverage tenants, particularly the tenants located within the city centre. The

majority of the retail tenants were unable to trade from their premises during the Government imposed lockdowns over the periods 2020-21 and 2021-22.

3. The income from the property portfolio is important in terms of helping fund the delivery of core services. Whilst the Council works hard to support its tenants where it can, the Council needs to take a commercial approach to secure funds to support the public purse.
4. The Council has engaged with its tenants and provided some rent assistance, in specific circumstances, where tenants met set criteria. This support was particularly aimed towards supporting local, independent businesses who remained committed to the recovery of the city centre.
5. However, as a result of the pandemic, a number of tenants built up significant rent arrears. The Council was not able to take the normal actions Landlords can take to recover the rent arrears, such as the use of recovery agents, due to a Government moratorium preventing such action.
6. The Government moratorium was lifted in March 2022 and the usual options available to Landlords for pursuing rent arrears could then be actioned. However, the Commercial Rent (Coronavirus) Act 2022 ("the Act") imposed restrictions relating to actions concerning 'protected rent' i.e. rent covering the period of the Government imposed lockdowns. The policy aim underpinning the Act was to preserve otherwise viable businesses and the jobs that they support. The Act introduced a binding arbitration process, with the goal to encourage parties to resolve the claims for rent arrears informally, failing which a reference to arbitration could be made as a last resort solution. The option to refer to arbitration ended on 23 September 2022.
7. Council officers took various actions to reach agreements in respect of the rent arrears which included negotiating agreements informally; issuing forfeiture proceedings which resulted in agreements being reached with some tenants; forfeiting by peaceable re-entry and then negotiating terms for a new lease; and reaching agreements where an application for the appointment of an arbitrator had been made by a tenant. This was in order to avoid the uncertainty of the outcome of resolving via arbitration. The Council has also drawn down on rent deposits, and agreed monthly rather than quarterly payments where appropriate.
8. A number of tenants went in to administration or liquidation leaving substantial arrears. It was not therefore possible to negotiate agreements with these tenants.
9. In the cases where agreements have been negotiated with tenants, the details of the agreements are set out in Exempt Appendix 1.
10. It is important to note that each arrears case has been looked at individually with an assessment of the particular circumstances of each tenant. Corporate property has fully engaged with the Finance team to ensure that the suggested outcome is optimal for the Council.
11. As a result of the agreements reached with tenants, or the tenants going in to administration or liquidation, there are a number of arrears cases which involve the Council writing off, in each case, rent in excess of £100,000.
12. In accordance with the Constitution all write-offs up to and including £100,000 can be written off by the Head of Finance but a write-off above £100,000 needs Cabinet approval.

### **Cases where the tenant has gone in to administration or liquidation**

13. Edinburgh Woollen Mill (141 High Street) went into administration on 5 November 2020. The total write off of rent required is £272,708.33 plus VAT (£327,249.99 inclusive of VAT). A proof of debt form has been submitted to the administrator.
14. Nosebag Restaurants Limited (6 St Michaels Street & 6-8 St Michaels Street) was placed into voluntary liquidation on 10 May 2022 and the lease was disclaimed on 26 May 2022. The total write off of rent required £118,873.23 + VAT (£142,647.88 inclusive of VAT). A proof of debt form has been submitted to the liquidator.
15. Whilst there are significant rent arrears to write off in respect of these properties, Council Officers have been proactive in terms of making them income producing. No. 141 High Street has now been let and 6-8 St Michaels Street is on the market and an offer has been received.

### **Cases involving a lease re-structure or rent arrears agreement**

16. Refer to Exempt Appendix 1 detailing the agreements reached.

### **Financial implications**

17. There are no capital cost implications. On an overall basis the bad debt figures referred to in this report are catered for in the bad debt provision which totals £6.189M as at 31-3-2022. There are therefore no revenue implications.

### **Legal issues**

18. The Commercial Rent (Coronavirus) Act 2022 provided a six month window in which a referral to the statutory arbitration scheme could be made, which ended on 23 September 2022. During this period landlords were prevented from using certain remedies in relation to protected rent debts such as starting a debt claim, exercising right of re-entry or presenting a winding up petition etc.
19. Rent due under a tenancy is “protected rent” if both of the following applied: (i) the tenancy was adversely affected by coronavirus; and (ii) the rent is attributable to a period of occupation by the tenant for, or for a period within, the “protected period” applying to the tenancy. “Protected Period” means the period beginning on 21 March 2020 and in the case of non-essential retail, ending on 12 April 2021. In the case of hotels, restaurants, bars, nightclubs, gyms, theatres, cinemas and large event venues, it ended on 18 July 2021.
20. In respect of those tenants in administration or liquidation there are no legal implications.
21. In respect of the lease re-structure cases new leases or deeds of variation in respect of the leases will need to be agreed to formalize the agreements. Where forfeiture proceedings have been issued, Legal will need to arrange completion of a formal settlement agreement.

### **Level of risk**

22. Risk Register is attached as Appendix 2.

### **Equalities impact**

An Equalities Impact Assessment is not required.

## Carbon and Environmental Considerations

23. There are no Carbon and Environmental considerations in respect of the recommendations made in this report.

<b>Report author</b>	Christopher Wood
Job title	Corporate Asset manager
Service area or department	Corporate Property
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<b>Background Papers:</b>
None.



Appendix 2: Risk Register

Title	Risk description	Opp/ threat	Cause	Consequence	Date Raised	Owner	Gross		Current		Residual		Comments	Controls				
							I	P	I	P	I	P		Control description	Due date	Status	Progress %	Action Owner
Tenant rent arrears	The tenants do not comply with the terms of the agreements regarding rent payment and go in to arrears	Threat	Deterioration in tenants' business resulting in the tenants being unable to pay the rent even after the agreements reached	Council will have to consider and implement the most appropriate rent recovery options	N/A	Corporate Property	4	4	3	3	3	3	It is possible further negotiations will be necessary regarding the rent if market conditions deteriorate. The Council will need to consider the ongoing viability of the business	Work closely with Incomes Team and take prompt action for non payment including taking appropriate recovery action if necessary to obtain payment	Ongoing	Ongoing	100%	Chris Wood
Agreement does not complete	Where a lease re-structure has been agreed, the tenant decides not to complete.	Threat	Deterioration in tenant's business resulting in the tenant seeking more favourable terms	Council will have to either re-negotiate the agreement offering more favourable terms or implement the most appropriate rent recovery option	N/A	Corporate Property	3	3	3	2	3	2	Depending on the particular circumstances the Council may assess agreeing more favourable terms to be an appropriate course of action or seek to take more robust recovery action	Where forfeiture proceedings have been issued, reinstate proceedings and ask for a possession order; similarly reinstate debt recovery proceedings where instigated.	Ongoing	Ongoing	100%	Chris Wood
Administration / Liquidation	The tenant goes in to administration or liquidation with rent arrears and the lease is disclaimed by the administrator / liquidator and no payment is received in respect of a proof of debt claim	Threat	Market conditions detrimentally impact tenants' business	The Council will have to write off any arrears and then market the property to find a new tenant. There will likely be a significant void period before the property becomes income producing.	N/A	Corporate Property	4	3	3	3	3	3	Negotiations with the Administrator could result in a lease re-structure if there is a purchaser for the tenant business. The Council in all instances will submit a proof of debt claim but it is unlikely to see a substantial return	The Council cannot control this risk other than assess whether proving additional support to a local covenant tenant will help avoid administration / liquidation. Such additional assistance would be considered on a case by case basis. For larger corporate tenants the Council will monitor the financial press to understand as soon as possible if a tenant is in difficulty and thereby take any mitigating action as early as possible. This might involve use of recovery agents to recover arrears; and working closely with the lettings team to ensure all options and a marketing strategy for a property are considered as early as possible if we anticipate tenant failure and a void.	Ongoing	Ongoing	100%	Chris Wood

Assignment / Subletting	Assignment or sub-letting to a weaker covenant	Threat	The existing tenants will have alienation rights in their leases which permit assignment or sub letting with Landlord consent	The proposed assignee or sub-tenant may be a weak covenant and as such may not be able to pay the rent	N/A	Corporate Property	3	3	2	2	2	2	The Council can avoid this by assessing the covenant strength of the proposed assignee and ensuring a rent deposit or guarantor is provided or if appropriate by refusing consent	Ensure the alienation provisions within the lease are fully considered and that the proposed tenant covenant strength is fully assessed and where appropriate and permitted require an authorised guarantee agreement and a guarantor and / or a rent deposit.	Ongoing	Ongoing	100%	Chris Wood
Tenant breach of lease covenants	The tenant breaches lease covenants such as the repairs covenant or use covenant following completion of the agreement.	Threat	Potentially due to adverse market conditions and deterioration of tenant's business.	The Council would, potentially, have to take legal action for the breach and may incur costs in respect of dilapidations and also legal costs	N/A	Corporate Property	4	4	3	3	3	3	With any commercial tenancy there is always a risk of a tenant breaching the lease covenants so this risk a normal risk of a commercial letting that can be mitigated by the landlord through its day to day management of the property.	Carry out regular inspections and where necessary put the tenant on notice in respect of any repairs and take further action if necessary including legal action and potentially serving a schedule of dilapidations.	Ongoing	Ongoing	100%	Chris Wood
Disclosure of agreements	Agreements disclosed to other Council tenants encouraging other tenants to seek similar rent assistance	Threat	Negotiations with tenants are private but the Council cannot stop tenants from discussing the agreements and new leases overs 7 years will be available to view from the land registry	Other tenants may approach the Council for similar rent assistance.	N/A	Corporate Property	4	4	2	3	2	3	Where a new lease is being agreed it is not possible to prevent the terms of that lease becoming known if over 7 years in length. Two of the new leases agreed are for terms of 10 years. Once historic rent arrears have been written off the Council cannot prevent a tenant making other tenants aware.	Negotiations have been and remain private and confidential and the tenant is aware if made public the Council is unlikely to offer similar rent assistance in the future. The rent assistance offered reflects the particular circumstances of the tenant and the subject property so any request from other tenants would be evaluated on a similar basis with the Council acting commercially and having assessed all options for the property. If a financially sound corporate tenant sought similar rent assistance it would be entirely appropriate for the Council to refuse and if a local covenant sought rent assistance the Council would not be obliged to offer rent assistance.	Ongoing	Ongoing	100%	Chris Wood

**To:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 15 March 2023  
**Report of:** Head of Corporate Strategy  
**Title of Report:** Integrated Care System Draft Strategy Update

Summary and recommendations	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To present information on the production of a new Integrated Care Strategy by the Integrated Care Board for Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West
<b>Key decision:</b>	No
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Cllr Louise Upton, Cabinet Member for Health and Transport
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	All Council strategy priorities
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	Council Strategy 2020-2024

## Recommendation: That Cabinet resolves to:

1. **Note** the contents of this report for information.

## Appendices

Appendix 1	Integrated Care Strategy Draft
Appendix 2	Integrated Care Strategy Draft easy read

## Introduction and background

1. This has been a year of significant change in the Health system. From July 2022 new organisations and partnerships were created and the Clinical Commissioning Group ("the CCG") ceased to exist.
2. The Integrated Care Board ("the ICB") was formulated. This is the new NHS body that receives funds from NHS England and plans and buys services for Berkshire, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire ("BOB"). The Health and Care Act 2022 documented new statutory requirements for the ICB, one of which is to produce an Integrated Care Strategy at ("BOB") level, as explained in [guidance published by the DHSC](#) in July 2022.

3. The purpose of the strategy is to set the direction for the system, outlining how local authorities and the ICB, working with other partners, will meet the needs of our population and deliver more joined-up, preventative and person-centred care for people across the course of their lives
4. The vision for the BOB ICB is:  
*Our vision is for everyone who lives in Buckinghamshire Oxfordshire and Berkshire West to have the best possible start in life, to live happier, healthier, longer lives, and to be able to access the right support when it is needed.*
5. Beneath the ICB - The Integrated Care Partnerships (“the ICP”) are currently being developed. The ICPs are joint committees of the local authorities and the NHS, represented by the ICB, coming together with other partners to set the direction of travel to improve health and wellbeing for people living and working across the Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire area at place level, i.e. each county will have an ICP.
6. The ICP will be responsible for the implementation of the Integrated Care Strategy.
7. Oxfordshire ICP Director is Dan Leveson.
8. Oxford City and Districts have one seat for a Chief Executive and one seat for a Leader of Council on the ICP. These will be taken up by Mark Stone Chief Executive of South and Vale and Cllr David Roaune, Leader of the Council South and Vale. These seats will be subject to a rotation agreement.

### **Development of the Integrated Care Strategy**

9. The BOB ICB have been developing the Integrated Care Strategy Draft.
10. The aim is to have the draft document approved at the ICP on February 27<sup>th</sup> 2023.
11. The Integrated Care Strategy Draft had a 7 week period of engagement from December 19<sup>th</sup> 2022 - January 27<sup>th</sup> 2023.
12. The strategy is proposing the following five key principles:
  - Preventing ill Health
  - Tackling Health Inequalities
  - Providing person centred care
  - Supporting local delivery
  - Improving join-up between our services
13. The strategy will be delivered through five key themes:
  - Promote and protect health
  - Start well
  - Live well
  - Age well
  - Improve quality and access to services
14. Eighteen priorities have been identified across the five themes:  
The full draft Integrated Care Strategy can be found at Appendix 1.

The easy read version can be found at Appendix 2.

### **Oxford City Council's engagement in the strategy development**

15. Oxford City Council has been keen to engage and actively participate in the discussion and shaping of the BOB ICS draft. We recognise that to enable the system as a whole to have an impact on local health issues, in particular in the areas of deprivation and health inequalities across the city, it's critical that key work strands connect and align to tackle the wider determinants of health (such as housing, education, deprivation, active lifestyles). The Districts' role in the prevention agenda is key and has proven to have a considerable impact.
16. We have encouraged an extended engagement period, more conversations between partners through system leader meetings, the established community hub groups and joint workshop sessions on the draft strategy to really ensure this narrative is captured and reflected before approval at the ICP.
17. Oxford City Council has delivered a number of internal Workshop sessions with colleagues and portfolio holders to explore their views and thoughts on the draft strategy.
18. Oxford City Council will be collating all the information and feedback and providing a written response to the ICB as part of the formal engagement process.
19. This is an opportunity to ensure that the ICS has an evidence-based strategy for primary care services that can be used by planning authorities for their emerging Local Plans (noting that the Oxford Local Plan 2040 will be going out for Regulation 19 consultation at the end of this year).

### **Financial Implications**

20. There are no financial implications.

### **Legal Implications**

21. There are no legal issues associated with the Integrated Care Strategy Draft.

### **Equalities Impact**

22. The Integrated Care Strategy is concerned with high level priorities at system level across the "BOB".
23. Inequality is a key focus for the ICS and is reflected within the Strategy.
24. Oxford City Council has used data and insight gained through our policy and strategy work on the Thriving Communities Strategy to inform our feedback into the Integrated Care Strategy, to ensure the areas of deprivation and Health Inequalities are recognised at local level.

### **Conclusion**

25. Oxford City Council recognises the importance of engagement, influence, shaping and support of this new Integrated Care Strategy, to enable us to deliver on some of our key corporate priorities over the next year and beyond. We have resourced

focused officer time to fully engage and input into this work strand across the partnership and have actively engaged in all aspects of the work.

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**Background Papers:** None



# Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Partnership

## Strategic Priorities

December 2022



# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Welcome .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Who are we? .....</b>	<b>5</b>
	3.1 Our health and care system .....	5
	3.2 Our population and our health and wellbeing.....	7
	3.3 Our vision and principles.....	10
<b>4</b>	<b>Our priorities for 2022/23 .....</b>	<b>11</b>
	4.1 Promoting and Protecting Health .....	12
	4.2 Start Well .....	18
	4.3 Live Well .....	22
	4.4 Age Well.....	26
	4.5 Improving quality and access to services.....	29
<b>5</b>	<b>Have your say .....</b>	<b>32</b>



# 1 Welcome

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There is little doubt we are living through a time where pre-existing assumptions about health outcomes are being challenged. From the shock of the pandemic to a cost of living crisis likely to widen health inequalities rather than reduce them, the task of setting a course for the years ahead is not easy.

We already know that the places and circumstances where people are born, grow up, live and learn influence how happy and healthy they are, which makes it particularly difficult to set a strategy for catchment areas as large as ours. Many strategies cross over county lines, others do not.

The pandemic shone a bright light on the health inequalities in our societies. We always knew they existed, but we maybe don't talk about them enough. As always, the biggest impact was felt by deprived communities and the same will apply to the economic conditions in the year ahead.

My own patch of Reading ranks as the third most unequal town or city nationally for wealth distribution. Looking at the wider area of Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West – which covers nearly 2 million individuals – life expectancy can vary between areas by up to a decade. And people in less affluent areas experience poor health 10-15 years earlier than their more affluent neighbours (the so-called 'healthy life expectancy gap').

The pandemic also taught us the importance of partnership. The work of one organisation can be quickly undermined if other bodies are pulling in a different direction. This consultation is about finding common ground on broad strategies which can help give people the best possible start in life, to be happier and healthier and to ensure they have access to support they need it.

Partner organisations and local communities know best what the challenges are in their own areas. It's why we have worked with a range of people and organisations to pull together this draft document which is intended to promote thought and discussion. The detail, of course, comes later on, in particular how the NHS and all partners can direct limited resources so as to have the biggest positive impact on people's lives. In the meantime, it's important we identify the strategies which will help us achieve that.

Thank you for taking the time to take part in this important process.



**Cllr Jason Brock**

Chairperson, Integrated Care Partnership  
Leader of Reading Borough Council.

## 2 Introduction

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Our integrated care partnership (ICP) is a group of organisations which plan and provide health and care services for nearly two million people who live and work in the local authority areas of Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire's three westerly local authority areas of West Berkshire, Reading and Wokingham (known as 'Berkshire West').

Members include local NHS organisations and GPs, local authorities, public health, Healthwatch, care providers, voluntary sector, the Oxford Academic Health Science Network and other research partners.

**Our vision is for everyone who lives in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and the Berkshire West ('BOB') area, to have the best possible start in life, to live happier, healthier lives for longer, and to get the right support when they need it.**

We recognise the places and circumstances in which people live and work influence their health – our housing, our local environment, the cost of living, our employment and our communities - which is why we need to work together to address this.

If we are to achieve the vision for our population, we must develop a strategy, with clear priorities we will take forward across our partnership. **This document introduces our strategic priorities.** They are based on a commitment from our partner organisations to work together to improve people's health and wellbeing and reduce the inequalities in health experienced by people across our populations.

We are developing a strategy that builds on our current joint local health and wellbeing strategies. These have been developed between NHS, local authority and other partners at local authority level. We have worked with members of our partner organisations, the voluntary sector, and others to understand their areas of focus and ambitions. The BOB ICP strategy will set the direction for our health and care system, linking with local plans, to meet the health and wellbeing needs of people who live in the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West area.

We want to work with local people and partner organisations to shape the future of health and social care in response to local needs. We want people, communities and partner organisations to get involved in the development of this strategy, as it will inform plans and proposals for the future of our health and care.

Our draft principles will guide everything we do. Our draft priorities outline the areas where we expect to do more together, locally and across the health and care system, to improve health and wellbeing in a manner that is fair and inclusive.

**We want feedback on these proposals so are sharing these with our wider partners and with people who live or work in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West.**

## 3 Who are we?

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### 3.1 Our health and care system

Our health and care system is made up of many organisations who all play a part in helping people to be as healthy as possible, for as much of their lives as possible. These include local councils, social care support, hospitals, emergency services, GP practices, dentists, mental health providers, care homes, and many voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations.

In addition to these organisations who directly provide health and care services, we have links with schools, universities, businesses and research partners working in health or care in our area.

There are well over 8,000 registered charities in our geography and there may be as many as 5,000 more informal community groups.

Most of the registered charities are very small and volunteer-run.

Some of the people and organisations playing a part in the health and wellbeing of BOB's population include:





## 3.2 Our population and our health and wellbeing

### Our population

Nearly two million people live in the five local authorities that make up Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West.

The overall age profile of people living in our area is similar to the national average, with a slightly higher proportion of people aged under 18 and a slightly lower proportion of people aged over 65 years. Just over 1 in 5 people are under 18 years and just under 1 in 5 people are over 65 years of age.

This profile is likely to change over time. We anticipate a 5% growth in the overall size of the population by 2042 (an extra 89,000 people). This figure, however, masks significant changes for different age groups. The number of people aged over 65 is predicted to increase by 37% (increasing by 122,000 people) while the number of children and young people (those aged under 18 years) will reduce by 7% (26,000 people) over the same 20-year period.

According to the 2021 census the combined data from our five local authorities shows a very similar ethnic profile to the national average, however this masks individual differences at local authority level. People who responded that they were White British make up 73% of residents overall which is similar to the national average but this ranges from 53% in Reading to 85% in West Berkshire. People from many different ethnic groups live in our area including 3.5% of the population who describe themselves as Indian, 3.1% as Pakistani, 1.6% as Black African and 0.8% as Black Caribbean. These relative proportions vary between local authorities and ethnic diversity tends to be higher in our major towns and cities.

### Our health

#### Living long lives in good health

People living in our area are generally healthier and live longer lives in good health than the national average. This is true for all our local authorities except for Reading where women do not live as long as the national average and men live as long as the national average. Within each local authority, how long people live varies between wards by up to 10 years, with people living shorter lives in more deprived wards.

Across our local authorities, both men and women spend more years in good health than the national average apart from women in Reading who spend fewer years in good health. The gap in years spent in good health is even wider than the gap in how long people live. People in more deprived areas develop poor health 10-15 years earlier than people living in less deprived areas.

#### A good start in life

The early years are a crucial time for the health and wellbeing of children and their development with far reaching impacts throughout their school years and adult life. A mother's physical and mental health during pregnancy can affect the health and development of her baby before it is born. Children undergo rapid physical, mental and emotional development in the first five years of life and the circumstances in which they live and early life experiences have a profound effect on their development and subsequent mental and physical health as teenagers and adults.

The proportion of babies born at term who were a low birthweight was similar to the national average of 2.9% except in Oxfordshire where 2.3% of babies born at term were low birthweight.



A higher percentage of children in our area achieve a good level of development compared to the national average, except in Reading which is slightly lower. However, this average overlooks the experience of some of our most vulnerable children. Children in receipt of free school meals have lower levels of good development, especially in Oxfordshire and West Berkshire.

Young people aged 16-17 who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) are at increased risk of poor physical and mental health. In 2020, Buckinghamshire had a higher proportion of 16-17 years who were NEET than the national average, Reading had a similar percentage to the national average, while rates were lower in other parts of our area.

### **Healthy behaviours**

The four main health behaviours – smoking, physical inactivity, an unhealthy diet and alcohol misuse account for 40% of all years lived with ill health and disability. These behaviours are major risk factors for long-term conditions such as heart disease and cancer. People with all four unhealthy behaviours are four times more likely to die prematurely than people with no unhealthy behaviours and the risk increases with each behaviour.

13% of residents in our area smoke according to GP data but this varies significantly between our least and most deprived areas.

1 in 4 residents in Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire and 1 in 5 residents in Berkshire West (Wokingham, Reading and West Berkshire) are estimated to drink alcohol at levels that increase their risk of health problems.

Around 3 in 10 children aged 10-11 years across our area are overweight or obese and around 6 in 10 adults are overweight or obese.

Around 1 in 5 adults do less than 30 minutes moderate intensity activity a week.

The circumstances in which people live affect their health behaviours and on average people living in more deprived circumstances tend to have lower levels of healthy behaviours.

### **Long term conditions**

Levels of long term conditions such as heart disease or diabetes are generally lower than the national average. Long term conditions tend to increase with age and it is estimated that 3 in 5 people over 60 years have a long term condition. However, many long term conditions are preventable. For example, up to 70% of heart disease and stroke, up to 50% of type 2 diabetes and 38% of cancer cases could be prevented. Smoking causes 15% of all cancers and obesity and being overweight is the second most common cause of cancer in the UK.

People living in deprived areas develop more long-term conditions and at an earlier age than people living in less deprived areas.

### **Mental health and wellbeing**

Good mental wellbeing supports people to get the most out of life. However mental health problems are common and can be worsened by adverse social and economic circumstances. Approximately 12% of adults across Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West have a recorded diagnosis of depression which is similar to the national average and 0.8% have a severe mental illness such as schizophrenia.

### **The determinants of health**

The places and circumstances in which people are born, grow up, live learn and work profoundly influence their health. Although the health of the population across Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West is generally better than or similar to the national average this masks many differences between different groups of people. These

differences are often the result of the different social, economic and environmental conditions in which they live.

## **Deprivation**

From birth to old age people living in more deprived circumstances tend to have worse physical or mental health.

Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, West Berkshire and Wokingham are in the 10 least deprived local authorities in the country. Levels of deprivation in Reading are slightly better than the national average. However, within each local authority, levels of deprivation vary between wards and 3% of our population (57,000 people) live in a ward that is one of the 20% of the most deprived wards in England.

The percentage of children living in poverty, and the percentage of households living in fuel poverty are all below the national average and unemployment levels are lower than the national average, except in Reading.

The proportion of people who are defined as homeless is below the national average, apart from Reading where rates are higher.

Recorded rates of domestic abuse and hospital admission rates due to violence are lower than the national average. However, we know there is significant under reporting of domestic abuse.

## **Poorer health outcomes for some groups**

We know that some people living in deprived areas tend to have poorer health. There are several other groups that also tend to have poorer health.

People from different ethnic groups are at higher risk of some diseases. For example, people from Black and South Asian ethnic groups are at a higher risk of diabetes and cardiovascular disease (which causes heart disease and stroke). Mothers from Black and South Asian ethnic groups are at greater risk of complications and death during pregnancy and child birth.

Other groups with poorer health include people with a physical or learning disability, people suffering severe mental illness and those who are homeless.

These differences in health are due to a complex mix of societal, economic, environmental and biological factors. However, health problems can also be compounded by people's knowledge of, or ability to access services. Services may not be accessible or acceptable or appear welcoming to some groups of people. Some groups of people also report having worse experiences or poorer outcomes from services.

Inequalities are often multiple and overlapping – for example, a study by the Race and Health Observatory highlighted for example - that people from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups are disproportionately affected by socioeconomic deprivation – a key determinant of health status.

### 3.3 Our vision and principles

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***Our vision is for everyone who lives in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and the Berkshire West area, to have the best possible start in life, to live happier, healthier lives for longer, and to be able to access the right support when it is needed.***

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Five principles will guide everything we do

#### PREVENTING ILL-HEALTH

We will help people stay well and independent, enjoying better health for longer. We will help develop healthy places and thriving communities to protect and improve people's health.

#### TACKLING HEALTH INEQUALITIES

We will seek to improve the physical and mental health of those at risk of the poorest health. This will include making sure people can access health and care services, whatever their background.

#### PROVIDING PERSON CENTRED CARE

We will work together to provide help in a way that meets people's needs and helps them to make informed decisions and be involved in their own health and care.

#### SUPPORTING LOCAL DELIVERY

We will plan and design support and services with local people and provide support as close as possible to where people live, learn and work.

#### IMPROVING THE JOIN UP BETWEEN OUR SERVICES:

We will improve the way our services work together to ensure people get support when they need it and residents have a better experience of health and care services.



## 4 Our priorities for 2022/23

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This Integrated Care Strategy builds on our local authorities' health and wellbeing strategies and seeks to provide a clear direction for our health and care system and the people who live in the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West area.

We have identified five areas where we expect to do more together to improve people's health and wellbeing. These are:

- **Promoting and protecting health** – to support people to stay healthy, protect people from health hazards and prevent ill-health
- **Start Well** – to help all children achieve the best start in life
- **Live Well** – to support people and communities to stay healthy for as long as possible
- **Age Well** – to support older people to live healthier, independent lives for longer
- **Improving quality of and access to services** – to help people access our services at the right place and right time.

In this section we explain why we have selected each priority, what our areas of focus will be, and what we hope to achieve.

There is little detail included in this document about 'how' the strategy will be delivered. This detail will be worked up with partner organisations once the priorities have been agreed. They will be published as more formal plans for delivery in due course.

Additionally, we know there are several essential supporting plans that will need to be developed to make delivery possible. Notably these relate to:

- Our staff - ensuring we have a realistic plan for recruiting, developing and retaining a workforce that can sustainably support our people's health and wellbeing
- How we use our data – Our plans to make the data professionals need to plan support or treat their patients available at the time of need or treatment

**We are keen to hear what people who live or work in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West think about our priorities.**

There are instructions how to have your say at the end of this document. We will use your feedback to refine and finalise our plans.

## 4.1 Promoting and Protecting Health

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### *To support people to stay healthy*

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Although people in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West are generally healthier than the national average, many people suffer poor health from conditions that could be prevented or delayed. Behaviours such as smoking, drinking too much alcohol, having an unhealthy diet, not being physically active or being overweight can lead to a wide range of conditions including diabetes, cancer, heart disease, stroke, lung disease and dementia.

The choices we make are shaped by our circumstances – the people we see around us, the places we live, and other influences such as the availability and pricing of unhealthy foods, alcohol or cigarettes. This leads to differences in the opportunity for healthy lives across our area.

By working better together and focusing on prevention in everything we do, we can help people stay healthy for longer and help reduce inequalities in health. We plan to do this by:

- 1) Improving the conditions in which people live and addressing the wider social, economic and environmental issues that affect our health.
- 2) Supporting people to live healthier lives by addressing some key health behaviours that lead to many long-term conditions.
- 3) Ensuring our staff are trained and supported to help people who want to adopt healthier behaviours

### **Priority 1: Reduce the proportion of people smoking across Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West.**

#### **Why this matters:**

Smoking is one of the biggest causes of preventable disease and early death in our area, accounting for over 4,000 premature deaths each year. It is also the biggest factor behind the gap in life expectancy between people living in the most and least deprived areas.

According to GP data, 13% of people in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West smoke (154,000 people), but rates are higher in more deprived areas. An estimated 22% of people working in routine and manual occupations and 36% of people with a severe mental illness smoke.

Smoking and tobacco consumption rates are high in some ethnic minority communities and among immigrants from countries where tobacco regulations and cultural approaches to its use are different from UK.

Smoking causes a very wide range of ill health from the earliest years to older age.

Smoking while pregnant can harm the unborn baby and result in babies being born too early and having a low birthweight. Parental smoking harms children's health.

Smoking increases the risk of cancer, heart disease, stroke and lung disease and the need for social care occurs 10 years earlier in smokers.

Smoking is estimated to cost health and care organisations in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West £94 million each year (£69 million for health and £25 million for social care).

1 in 6 Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender people are found smoke every day, the prevalence being higher among younger LGBT people.

#### **Our areas of focus:**

- Partners work together in effective tobacco control partnerships at a place based/local authority level to help reduce the numbers of people smoking.
- Partners provide or proactively refer people to services to help them stop smoking.
- More people in deprived areas are referred to smoking cessation services by their primary care team.
- Providing culturally appropriate services, where necessary, to encourage giving up of smoking or tobacco consumption in other forms
- More people in contact with the NHS are supported to stop smoking. This includes helping people to stop smoking before planned operations to help their recovery, helping people admitted to hospital, pregnant women and their partners, and people with severe mental illness to stop smoking.

#### **What we want to achieve:**

- The overall number of smokers in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West will reduce, especially in our most deprived areas.
- Fewer young people will take up smoking.
- More people will stop smoking, especially in deprived areas.
- A reduction in conditions made worse by smoking, including fewer people developing cancer and lung disease
- A reduction in the gap in life expectancy between the most and least deprived areas

## **Priority 2: Reduce the proportion of people who are overweight or obese, especially in our most deprived areas and in younger people.**

#### **Why this matters:**

Across Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West, approximately 6 in 10 adults are overweight or obese and approximately 3 in 10 children aged 10-11 are overweight or obese.

Obesity increases the risk of many long-term conditions including cancer, diabetes, heart disease and dementia. Obese people die up to 10 years earlier than people with a healthy weight.

Adults and children living in more deprived areas are more likely to be obese.

The risks of many illnesses could be reduced by increased physical activity. Indeed, 1 in 3 deaths are from illnesses where being physically active is an important protective factor against becoming ill. Approximately 1 in 5 adults are inactive.

#### **Our areas of focus:**

- Partners work together in place based multi-agency partnerships to improve physical activity levels and reduce obesity.
- Promote active travel and increasing access to green spaces

- Work together with school aged children to increase physical activity and promote healthy lives
- Support changes that help people to eat healthily and improve access to affordable healthy food. This includes promoting healthy schools and hospitals, and healthy weight in hospital initiatives.
- Support more people to lose weight.

#### **What we want to achieve:**

- A reduction in the proportion of people who are overweight or obese
- More children and young people will be physically active, especially in our most deprived areas.
- More children and young people will have access to healthy food and are a healthy weight, especially in our most deprived areas.
- More adults are physically active.
- More adults have access to healthy food and are a healthy weight.
- A reduction in the proportion of people who have type 2 diabetes

### **Priority 3: Reduce the proportion of people drinking alcohol at levels that are harmful to their health and wellbeing.**

#### **Why this matters:**

1 in 4 Buckinghamshire residents, 1 in 4 Oxfordshire residents and 1 in 5 Berkshire West adults drink alcohol at levels that are harmful to their health and wellbeing. This is higher than the national average.

Alcohol is one of the most common causes of disability and of death in adults aged 15-49. Alcohol increases the risk of several cancers (including breast cancer), heart disease and stroke as well as liver damage.

Alcohol can lead to family breakdown and increases the risk of domestic violence and child abuse or neglect. It also increases the risk of accidents and violence.

7 out of 10 people with an alcohol disorder have mental health problems.

While drinking at levels that increase risk of harm is most common in the wealthiest fifth of the population, both alcohol-related admissions and alcohol-related deaths are most common in the most deprived areas nationally.

#### **Our areas of focus:**

- Partners work together in effective multi-agency drug and alcohol partnerships at place level
- More people are identified and supported to reduce their harmful drinking particularly in higher risk groups such as people living in more deprived areas, people with mental health conditions, veterans of our armed forces, and ex-offenders.
- Hospitals and other care providers have clear pathways for identifying and supporting people who misuse alcohol.
- Develop more coordinated help for people who have substance misuse and mental health problems.

#### **What we want to achieve:**

- A reduction in the proportion of people drinking alcohol at levels that are harmful to their health and wellbeing.
- Increase in the number of people receiving support to tackle their alcohol misuse.

- A reduction in conditions caused by alcohol including high blood pressure, cancer and liver disease
- A reduction in the numbers of violent incidents, accidents and domestic violence triggered by alcohol and a reduction in children being taken into care because of parental alcohol abuse.
- A reduction in the number of people with mental illness who also are regularly drinking at levels that increase the risks of harm

## **Priority 4: Take action to address the social, economic and environmental factors that influence our health.**

### **Why this matters:**

Tackling health inequalities requires action across the social, economic and environmental determinants of health. It is essential that we provide an equitable and sustainable approach to improving health outcomes for our communities. For this we need a place-based approach and coordinated action across many sectors and organisations, working with our communities. Health and economic prosperity are interlinked, while wealth and income are a major determinant of health, health is a major determinant of economic performance.

The first wave of the Covid 19 pandemic highlighted the stark differences in health outcomes for different population groups – with the risk of poor outcomes including deaths being higher in more deprived areas and certain ethnic groups. The pandemic highlighted the need to build trust and confidence among diverse healthcare staff communities to improve outcomes and reduce serious infections and deaths.

The places and communities we live in have a significant impact on how healthy we are. The world around us influences the choices we make and the quality and length of our lives.

Feeling safe in our local area, with safe places to play and exercise makes it easier to stay healthy and active. Similarly, safe travel routes to school, shops or work make it easier to build physical activity into our day for example, by choosing to walk or cycle.

Secure employment is important. The rising cost of living may damage people's health, especially those already experiencing financial hardship. National figures from 2020 found more than 1 in 7 households were affected by fuel poverty, with single parent households most likely to be fuel poor (1 in 4) and couples aged over 60 making the largest average reduction in fuel usage to avoid fuel poverty. The price rises in 2022 mean more households are struggling. It is harder to stay healthy and well if food and heating are unaffordable.

The quality of our housing and the air we breathe also has a direct impact on our health and wellbeing. Poor air quality, contaminated land and water pollution can lead to serious acute and chronic disease.

Air pollution is responsible for a range of respiratory conditions, cardiovascular disease, cancers and birth defects. Approximately 29,000 people in the UK die of illnesses caused by air pollution every year and air pollution is currently estimated to reduce the life expectancy of every person in the UK by an average of seven to eight months.

Organisations across Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West have committed to reduce their carbon footprints. The NHS target is to achieve net zero by 2040. This will require significant changes to how we live and work but will ultimately improve and protect the health of the people who live or work across our area.

### **Our areas of focus:**

- Seek to support the local economy and develop job opportunities and routes into employment for people who live in our area.

- Improve public and staff awareness of services tackling income, fuel and food insecurity, and help staff to refer people to appropriate services.
- Help our most vulnerable people and communities access information and local offers of help, including community food projects, benefits entitlements and debt advice.
- Ensure safe and accessible options for exercise and active travel.
- Encourage a public health approach to planning and development, to ensure our built environments supports healthy lives
- Ensure schemes and services are in place so people are helped to live in warm homes.
- Work together to ensure people accessing social housing have safe, warm, damp free homes.
- Ensure that new housing developments adequately reflect the needs of older people and those with disabilities and are resilient to the impact of climate change.

#### **What we want to achieve:**

- The adoption of local planning principles that have health at the heart of the built environment
- Greater community connectedness through a consideration of community in the structures and services we provide
- A physical environment that supports people to live independently through thoughtful design
- That all our communities have green space within their locality
- More sustainable road travel, particularly for staff members who use their cars often as part of their work.
- Reduced carbon emissions across all our providers to deliver the commitments each organisation has made to achieving net zero.

## **Priority 5: Protect people from infectious disease by preventing infections in all our health and care settings and delivering national and local immunisation programmes.**

#### **Why this matters:**

The prevention of infectious disease requires an integrated effort across health and social care and direct action by the people and communities affected. It is only this collective effort that can stem or prevent the acceleration of transmissible infection.

We need a shared understanding of the threats and the possible and probable infections. We need to be able to take preventative measures and intervene early. This will require an understanding of the different requirements affecting the varying populations and settings in which we live, work and learn. We must work as a system to; prevent and protect, detect and control, prepare and respond, collaborate, and reflect and learn

Vaccinations are important to protect against ill health. However, since 2013 there has been a decline in the uptake of childhood vaccines in England. In Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West, we estimate only 8-25% of 15-16 year-old children have had all the recommended adolescent immunisations. There are also noticeable differences in the uptake of immunisations across our area, leaving some communities vulnerable to infectious diseases.

#### **Our areas of focus:**

- Protect more people by immunising them against serious diseases.
- Raise the public's awareness of anti-microbial (antibiotic) resistance and continue to work with professionals to reduce it

- Ensure robust infection control measures amongst our staff and in all health and care settings.
- Develop linked data that gives early indication of local outbreak risks through closer working with UK Health Security Agency that means effective prevention and earlier intervention
- Stimulate local action to prioritise tackling blood born virus' and reduce transmission through earlier diagnosis and treatment.
- Continue to work together across our area to prepare robust responses to future pandemics and other environmental or public health emergencies
- Use local public health expertise to understand global health activities to protect our populations.

**What we want to achieve:**

- A reduced number of adults and children catching or becoming ill from serious infectious diseases.
- A reduction in the inequality of vaccine uptake across our communities
- A reduced impact of outbreaks and spread of disease by achieving herd immunity thresholds for a range of diseases such as measles.
- Stronger protection for those whose immune systems are compromised, are too young, or otherwise unable to receive certain live vaccinations.
- A population that is free from Hepatitis B and C, HIV, Tuberculosis and a halt in the rise in sexually transmitted infections
- An intelligence platform which provides the evidence to address infectious diseases linked to health inequalities
- A robust Public Health led Health Protection and Resilience Partnership to establish a gold standard system to protect our populations



## 4.2 Start Well

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### *To help all children achieve the best start in life.*

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The foundations for a person's future health and wellbeing are set in the early years of life. We need to give every child in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West the best possible start. This begins with supporting mothers during and after their pregnancy and then working together to ensure children achieve their early development milestones so they are ready to get the most out of life, their education and future opportunities.

We want to promote communities and environments that support children to make healthier choices and which will ensure our children thrive and achieve. However, we recognise that some children, young people and their families will need additional support and we are committed to working together to provide joined up services to enable these children and young people to reach their full potential.

### **Priority 6: Improve early years outcomes for all children, particularly working with communities experiencing the poorest outcomes.**

#### **Why this matters:**

The first five years of a child's life are crucial to their healthy development and these years can have a lasting impact on the rest of their life.

The best start for a child begins with a healthy pregnancy. The mental and physical wellbeing of the mother and their home environment is important for the baby's healthy development. Proactively supporting mothers during and after pregnancy, therefore, improves outcomes for both mothers and their children. Some mothers and babies have a higher risk of complications during pregnancy and this includes women living in more deprived circumstances and those from Black and Asian ethnic groups. This can result in a range of poorer outcomes including babies being born too early or with low birthweight. Although deaths in pregnancy are rare, national research finds that mothers from some minority ethnic groups are more likely to die during pregnancy than their White British counterparts.

The Covid-19 pandemic lockdowns have impacted on the development of many younger children, who lost time in school and nursery and missed out on common social and developmental opportunities. This has led to more children who are not as ready to learn at two years old and not ready for school at five years old.

Families have told us that they sometimes experience difficulty interacting with the complex service landscape and have to 're-tell their story' to different services and professionals. This is often the case for disadvantaged and vulnerable families

#### **Our areas of focus:**

- Support is offered to women to ensure a healthy pregnancy with targeted actions focused on women from deprived communities and from minority ethnic groups who have historically experienced more problems during pregnancy and poorer outcomes.
- Support women experiencing mental health difficulties during pregnancy and after their baby is born.
- Improve the help we offer to pregnant women and their partners to stop smoking.



- Strengthen and simplify the links between services for under fives and simplify access for family services to help families navigate and receive the support they need without stigma.
- Work together to provide support to children under five to enable them to fulfil their full potential.

#### **What we want to achieve:**

- An increased proportion of mothers will have a healthy pregnancy, including those living in more deprived areas and those from targeted minority ethnic groups.
- Fewer babies will be born prematurely or with a low birthweight.
- Fewer mothers will smoke during pregnancy.
- The number of women who receive effective support for their mental health during pregnancy and after their baby is born will increase.
- The number of children achieving their early development milestones on the way to school readiness will increase, especially in our most deprived communities, so that they can get the greatest benefit from their education.

## **Priority 7: Improve emotional, mental health and wellbeing for children and young people**

### **Why this matters:**

Mental health problems are a leading cause of disability in children and young people. Problems experienced as a child can have long-lasting effects. Indeed, half of those with lifelong mental illness experience symptoms by age 14.

The number of children suffering from mental health problems in our area has increased over the past five years with more children admitted to hospital for mental health conditions including more cases of self-harm.

Measures of positive mental wellbeing have also reduced. The pressures children have faced as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic have made this situation worse.

We need to help our children by identifying mental health problems as early as possible and providing treatment before their condition worsens. Unfortunately, it takes too long for children and young people to access mental health and wellbeing services in our area.

We need to do more. We will work with the many active voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations who tell us that they could do more to help us support our children and young people.

### **Our areas of focus:**

- At every opportunity across our system (health, care, and education), support children to get the right mental health and wellbeing advice at the right time at a place near to where they live and learn.
- Improve access to mental health support teams for more pupils, prioritising schools with higher numbers of students eligible for free school meals, a high proportion of students with special education needs or high proportion of students who live in the most deprived neighbourhoods.
- Reduce the waiting times and improve the experience for children and young people accessing mental health services, particularly NHS Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

### **What we want to achieve:**

- Better mental health for children living and learning in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West, through earlier intervention and support.
- More children have easier access to support when they need it, including reduced waiting times for formal mental health services.
- Reduced rates of hospital admissions for self-harm among people aged 10-24 years.

## **Priority 8: Improve the support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, and for their families and carers.**

### **Why this matters:**

The number of children and young people who have special educational needs or disability (known as SEND) has been increasing since 2016 and there are currently 1.5 million in England. This includes children and young people with speech, language and communication needs, social emotional and mental health needs, moderate learning difficulties, autism spectrum disorder and other neurodevelopmental disorders or specific learning difficulties.

In Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West, we need to improve the identification of children and young people with SEND and ensure they get appropriate and timely support. This will help them to take as full and active part in their daily lives as they can and enable them to reach their full potential.

Effective support at the right time and in the right place can improve educational attainment, employment, social mobility and mental health, which in turn impacts on longer-term health and wellbeing. Timely support for the child or young person also helps to support the broader resilience of the family.

### **Our areas of focus:**

- Children and young people with special educational needs and disability are identified early, and are able to access right level of support, with their families, at the earliest opportunity.
- Support is provided for these groups in a broad range of settings based on their presenting needs rather than whether they have a diagnosis.
- Children and young people with special education needs and disabilities, and their families, have opportunities to shape their support with their clinical and professional teams, who work together to meet these needs.

### **What we want to achieve:**

- Children, young people and their families report that they know where and how to access available support and services and report positively on their experience.

## **Priority 9: Support young adults to move from child centred to adult services.**

### **Why this matters:**

Services designed for children will not be appropriate for young adults as they get older. There comes a point where the young person's care needs to move from a team focussed on supporting children to professionals who provide services for adults. This varies from individual to individual and usually happens between the ages of 16 and 25.

Young adults, particularly those with more complex needs, can find this change difficult. It is important the process is as clear and supportive as possible, meeting the young person's needs while building their resilience to look after their own health as much as possible.

We can work better together to support young adults through this process, understanding the needs and wishes of the individual and their carer(s) to ensure the right support remains available.

**What we will do:**

- Build the confidence of young adults, their independence and resilience as they transition so that they and their families and carers are actively involved in the changes in support.
- Work together across our services to provide more holistic support, recognising the needs to the individual and supporting them through the move to adult services

**What we want to achieve:**

- An increased number of young adults who contribute to the development their personalised plan that addresses their specific needs as they move to adult health or social care services
- An increased number of young adults who meet and actively engage with the adult services team that will be working with them after their transition.
- A sustained and personalised support for individuals in preparation for, during and after the transition phase to adult services

## 4.3 Live Well

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### *To support people and communities to stay healthy for as long as possible.*

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We want everyone in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West to have the opportunity to live a healthy life. To do this we need to focus more on keeping people well and strengthening the things that contribute to a person's health and wellbeing.

We also want to help people to understand how they can stay healthy and support them to look after themselves.

#### **Priority 10: Reduce the number of people developing cardiovascular disease (heart disease and stroke) by reducing the risk factors, particularly for groups at higher risk.**

##### **Why this matters:**

Cardiovascular disease is one of the most common causes of death in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West and a major contributor to the gap in life expectancy between people living in our most and our least deprived areas.

Certain groups of people are more likely to develop and die from cardiovascular disease. This includes people living in more deprived areas, people from Black and South Asian communities and people with serious mental illnesses such as schizophrenia.

Up to 70% - 80% of cardiovascular disease is preventable and we know what works to help prevent it, including behaviours we can change and clinical conditions we can treat. These include smoking, drinking too much alcohol, lack of physical activity, unhealthy eating and being overweight, having high blood pressure, diabetes or high cholesterol. We need to ensure that people at higher risk can access the support they need to reduce their risk.

Many people who have diabetes or high blood pressure have not yet been identified and so people are not receiving the treatment they need to prevent cardiovascular disease.

##### **Our areas of focus:**

- Identify more people with risk factors and support them to take action.
- Increase the number of people receiving NHS health checks that detect cardiovascular risk factors, especially in deprived areas and in people at higher risk of heart disease and stroke.
- Increase the number of people with high blood pressure detected and well controlled
- Increase the numbers of people helped to stop smoking.
- Undertake community engagement and use a tailored approach to improve people's health with communities at higher risk of heart disease with a particular focus on Black and South Asian groups.
- Increase capacity and infrastructure for prevention and cardiovascular support in the most deprived areas to improve access to and experience of services and improve health outcomes.
- Ensure people are supported to increase physical activity and achieve a healthy weight and diet, as these are key factors in cardiovascular health.

- Help people understand how to stay healthy and know where to access the support to do it.

#### **What we want to achieve:**

- Fewer people will develop heart disease, stroke and vascular dementia particularly in the communities at higher risk.
- More people will know their blood pressure and be supported to manage it effectively, via lifestyle changes or clinical treatment.
- The gap in life expectancy between people living in deprived areas and the rest of the population will narrow as cardiovascular disease is a major driver of that gap.
- The gap in life expectancy between people living with severe mental illness and the rest of the population will narrow as cardiovascular disease is a major driver of that gap.
- The death rates from cardiovascular disease in Black and South Asian groups will reduce towards the levels experienced in the rest of the population.

## **Priority 11: Improve mental health by improving access to and experience of relevant services, especially for those at higher risk of poor mental health.**

#### **Why this matters:**

Mental illness is common – every week around 1 in 6 adults will experience a common mental health disorder such as anxiety.

Mental health problems are the biggest single cause of disability in the UK, and suicide is one of the leading causes of death in England in people aged between 20 and 64 in England.

People with a severe mental illness (schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and major depressive disorder) have more than a 50% higher risk of having cardiovascular disease and an 85% higher chance of dying from cardiovascular disease.

Mental health problems can affect anyone, but some groups are at higher risk of poor mental health than others due to social and environmental factors. People living in the most deprived areas in England are twice as likely to be in contact with mental health services as those in the least deprived. Emergency mental health admissions are also higher in our more deprived areas

People from some groups in society find it harder to access mental health services and have a poorer experience of services when they do. This includes people from certain ethnic minority groups

We expect the cost of living increase to have a significant impact on the mental wellbeing of people who live in our area and we know the risk of deaths by suicide increases in times of economic crisis. People living in the most deprived areas, and with known risk factors for poorer mental health, are most likely to be most vulnerable to the health consequences of the cost-of-living crisis.

#### **Our areas of focus:**

- Join up support for people with mental health problems including access to employment support, health care, psychological support and services led by the voluntary community and social enterprise sector.
- Listen to ethnic minority groups on how to best provide mental health support relevant for their communities.

- Provide services that are culturally sensitive that improve access, experience and outcomes for people from ethnic minorities at highest risk of deteriorating mental health.
- Ensure that people living in our more deprived areas have better access to a wider range of support and information to improve their mental health at an early stage.
- Improve the physical health of people with severe mental illness by increasing the number of people with severe mental illness who stop smoking and increasing the uptake of regular physical health checks, with appropriate advice and treatment.
- Ensure mental health treatment and support is tailored to individuals' needs to ensure improved accessibility for all people, including people who are neuro diverse.
- Provide better community-based support for adults and older adults with mental illness.

#### **What we want to achieve:**

- Improved mental health of everyone who lives in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West, with particular improvements for those at highest risk of poor mental health.
- Improved mental health of people from ethnic minorities and those living in our more deprived areas
- Improved access to, experience of and outcomes from services that support mental health.

## **Priority 12: Increase cancer screening and early diagnosis rates with a particular focus on addressing inequalities in access and outcomes.**

#### **Why this matters:**

The number of people being diagnosed with cancer is increasing. However, only half of these cancers are diagnosed in the early stages when there is a greater chance of successful treatment. Although there is variation across different types of cancer, early detection rates are lower in more deprived areas.

There are three national screening programmes which are important in detecting cancer early and starting treatment sooner. These are for breast, bowel and cervical cancer. Screening rates across Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West vary depending on which part of the area they live, the GP practice they are registered with, and population characteristics such as ethnicity, level of deprivation, people with severe mental illness or with a learning disability.

Cervical and breast screening uptake has declined over the last five years. National data show some ethnic minority groups are less likely to attend cervical screening. We are currently analysing our data to understand the uptake of cervical screening from ethnic minorities in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West.

Overall cancer screening uptake is also lower in people with learning disabilities compared to those without a learning disability. Nationally, it is recognised that cancer screening rates are also lower in people with severe mental illness and among Trans people.

We already have projects that target work with specific communities to increase screening and early detection rates but we know we need to do more. We plan to support community-based teams, who know and understand their local communities best, to spread the importance of cancer awareness and screening and increase uptake rates.

### **Our areas of focus:**

- Improve understanding of, and accessibility to, all screening services for those from diverse communities and backgrounds through better community engagement and ensuring services are culturally competent
- Use the data we have available to improve identification and support for communities that have low uptake of screening and detection services.
- Increase uptake of screening where rates are low. This includes:
  - increasing uptake of cervical screening in younger women and people with a cervix
  - increasing the uptake of cervical screening in women from ethnic minority groups who are less likely to attend cervical screening compared to White British women
  - ensuring discussion of screening is embedded into the health check for those with learning disabilities and severe mental illness
  - recognising the screening needs of different people will vary and therefore make reasonable adjustments to ensure screening and detection services are tailored and accessible to all people.

### **What we want to achieve:**

- Deliver the national ambition of ensuring 75% of cancers are diagnosed early (at stage 1 or stage 2) by 2028.
- Reduce the variation and inequality in cancer screening, access and uptake.

## 4.4 Age Well

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### *To support people to live healthier, independent lives for longer.*

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Approximately a quarter of people in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West are aged over 60. This number will grow by around 11% over the next five years. As people get older, they generally need and expect more support in their communities and from formal health and care services.

We want people to stay as healthy and independent in their homes and communities for as long as possible. We also want people to be able to get the help and support they need at the right time.

#### **Priority 13: Support older people to remain healthy, independent, and connected within their communities.**

##### **Why this matters:**

Positive relationships and social interactions contribute to our quality of life and wellbeing in many ways. Staying as physically active as possible enables people to get out and about to meet friends, enjoy a wide range of activities and access services and shops as well as maintaining health and independence. Isolation and loneliness increase the risk of poor health in older people, including increasing the risk of anxiety and depression.

Six per cent of people aged 75 and over say they often or always feel lonely. People with a limiting long-term illness or disability are more likely to say they often feel lonely.

Working together to help older residents to stay active and connected within their communities, will help them be healthier and independent for longer and, reduce social isolation and loneliness.

##### **Our areas of focus:**

- Work with our communities and older residents to co-design support and services to encourage activity and positive community connections
- GPs, community connector/social prescribers, community services, social care and the voluntary community social enterprise sector will work together to increase opportunities for people to connect socially with others and remain physically active.
- Ensure health and care staff are more aware of opportunities available in the local community so they can direct older people to appropriate activities.
- Consider opportunities for assistive technology and telecare for people to help more people stay independent for longer
- Support older people access relevant technologies and increase their technology skills and confidence so they can remain virtually connected.

##### **What we want to achieve:**

- Older people will be more aware of opportunities to connect with others in the community and be physically active.
- More older people will have the social contact they want.



## **Priority 14: Provide joined up care for people as they grow older, and as their long-term conditions advance and care needs become more complex.**

### **Why this matters:**

We want people to remain as healthy and independent for as long as possible and be able to access the right support to manage their health and care needs well when they need it. However, some people will require more support as they age.

As people get older, they are more likely to develop a long-term health condition such as arthritis, heart disease or dementia and may recover less quickly from illness or health setbacks. Living with long term conditions can also impact on people's mental health.

Social factors directly affect people's resilience. These can include help from informal support networks such as family and communities, access to carers, appropriate housing, the ability to eat well and stay warm. A rapid change in social situation can lead to poorer health and the need for more formal care. This need for more formal care could often be avoided if the right support is available.

We aim to improve support for older people with long term conditions. We want to ensure that everyone's support is well planned, joined up, and developed with the person, their family and carers, health, social care and the voluntary and community sector when appropriate. This will be underpinned by personalised care and support plans that are visible to all professionals involved in the person's care.

### **Our areas of focus:**

- Support people to prevent or delay the development of long-term conditions by increasing our focus on prevention as outlined in the Live Well section.
- Identify people with long term conditions earlier
- Help people learn about their condition(s), providing advice and support so they are empowered to better manage their condition(s) and improve their wellbeing.
- Ensure that more people with multiple long-term conditions, or who are frail, have personalised care and support plans.
- Ensure people's care plans are accessible to all relevant health and social care professionals so they can provide effective and coordinated care.

### **What we want to achieve:**

- Improved management of long-term health conditions as a result of earlier identification and support.
- Older people, and people with long term conditions, are less impacted by poor mental health.
- A reduction in the number of people aged 65+ or with multiple long-term conditions being admitted to hospital unnecessarily.

## **Priority 15: Improve support for carers.**

### **Why this matters:**

Around 3 in 5 people will be unpaid carers at some point in their lives. In 2011, there were nearly 27,000 unpaid carers across the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West area and this number is likely to have increased since then.

Unpaid carers perform vital work to keep people safe and well. In doing this they also significantly reduce the demand for formal health and care services. However, many carers

do not get the support they need to help them with their caring role and to help them look after their own health and wellbeing.

Being a carer can have a significant impact on an individual's physical and mental health. Many carers are juggling employment and other commitments alongside their caring responsibilities, with some facing significant financial difficulties.

Nationally nearly half of carers are more than 55 years old and nearly a third of carers are disabled themselves. In 2018, Carers UK reported that people providing high levels of care are twice as likely to be permanently sick or disabled. 7 out of 10 carers said they had suffered mental ill health as a result of caring, and 6 out of 10 said they had suffered physical ill health as a result of caring. 8 in 10 people say they have felt lonely or socially isolated.

Carers have reported that they are finding it harder to access adequate advice and support, and satisfaction with carer support services is declining.

People of all ages are providing this vital contribution, including younger carers. Their needs are different but will need to access support and advice that is similar. We will agree how to provide better and more consistent support to younger carers across Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West.

#### **Our areas of focus:**

- Help carers understand the support available to assist them with their caring role.
- Help carers access support including ways to look after their own health and wellbeing.
- Empower carers to be an active participant in shaping the personalised care and support plans that are developed for the people they care for.
- Working across our system to share best practice and promote a consistent level of support for carers.

#### **What we want to achieve:**

- Carers experience a consistent level of support that is seamless and consistent, including better access to support in a crisis.
- The health and wellbeing of carers is improved.

## 4.5 Improving quality and access to services

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### *To help people access our service at the right place and right time.*

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In a national survey conducted in 2021, respondents said that the two most important priorities for the NHS were:

1. making it easier to get a GP appointment
2. improving waiting times for planned operations.

In Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West these are priorities we share across all our services.

It is important that people can access the support they need at the right time, in a place they can get to. Unfortunately, accessing the support or services we need can sometimes be difficult or slow. We are determined to make this experience better.

We know there are some communities across our system whose access to services and outcomes is worse others (including some minority ethnic groups, people living with learning disabilities or people with physical disabilities) and we want to address these disparities.

More investment is being made available to help teams identify and support people who find it harder to access services or are part of communities that often feel socially excluded or have poorer outcomes. Across different local areas, our teams have experience of working with some of these communities, including with people who are homeless, sex workers, and people who are part of gypsy, Roma and traveller communities. We have provided support that has been adjusted to meet their needs in a personalised and holistic way.

It is important that we continue to understand how we can work more closely and sensitively with these and other communities to encourage good health and ensure access to services and support when they are needed. This will require adjustments to how some of our services are planned and delivered, taking into account the needs, social and cultural expectations of individuals and communities. Most of this activity will be done through local partnerships, working with the local communities, to co-produce, design and deliver relevant and accessible support.

Our aim across the system is ensure that all people, irrespective of their personal characteristics, or their personal circumstances, are able to access high quality services in the right place at the right time.

### **Priority 16: Develop strong integrated neighbourhood teams so that people's needs can be met in local communities.**

#### **Why this matters:**

Primary care, as the first point of contact into health and care services, has an essential role to play in preventing ill health and tackling health inequalities. However, many of these services in our area are struggling.

Patient satisfaction with GP services is falling. In the 2022 GP patient survey, less than 6 in 10 people in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West described the experience of making an appointment to see their GP as good.

GPs are reporting it is harder to balance caring for people with non-urgent, longer term care needs with the increasing pressure from more people who want urgent, same day support. More people are living with long term conditions but these pressures mean maintaining continuity of care is getting harder.

The number of GPs per person also varies across our area.

All our GP practices have joined a Primary Care Network with other practices. These networks are bringing together a wider range of professionals who can provide support to people when they need it.

GPs often see patients who could be seen by another member of the locally based team such as community, district and practice nurses, pharmacists, social workers, dentists, opticians, and health coaches. More people could be helped by these professional to manage their health or support needs, reducing the burden on GPs.

In some parts of the country there are examples of non-health and care services, such as Citizens Advice, employment advisors, or money and debt specialists sharing space with clinical teams to provide support for people in other aspects of their lives that can directly impact their health or wellbeing.

#### **Our areas of focus:**

- Ensure people understand the alternative options to access care and support in the community and are supported to use them.
- Integrate health, care and voluntary services at neighbourhood level better
- Strengthen the networks of professionals in our communities to make it easier for people to get support when they need it.
- Ensure there is greater continuity of care for those that need it, particularly those with long term conditions.

#### **What we want to achieve:**

- More people access the right support and care when they need it.
- People are more satisfied with the care they receive from primary care professionals in the community (increased patient satisfaction, measured through patient survey).
- Inequalities in access to GP services are reduced across Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West.

## **Priority 17: Reduce and eliminate long waits for our planned services, and address variation in access across the system.**

#### **Why this matters:**

Faster treatment generally results in more positive outcomes while delays can lead to worse outcomes. Unfortunately, there are long waits to access some of our services.

Waiting times for some diagnostic and specialist services are particularly high, with some people waiting more than a year and a half. Many of these waiting times increased during the pandemic and continue to increase as the number of referrals is still growing.

Waiting times vary across Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West because the demand for services and the capacity of our specialist services is different. By working better together across our entire system we plan to make better use of capacity and provide a faster service to patients. We will further improve services by involving people in decisions about their care.

### **Our areas of focus:**

- Work across the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West system to make the best use of all capacity. This should lead to earlier diagnosis by specialities and a quicker start to treatment.
- Help more people be actively involved in decision making about their care through the whole care pathway.
- Embrace the use of technology to develop innovative models of support
- Help people prepare to ensure they get the best outcomes from surgery or planned treatment and avoid complications of surgery. This could include support to stop smoking, optimising physical fitness by increasing physical activity or losing weight, preparing for life after surgery e.g. learning how to use walking aids before hip surgery to aid post-op recovery.

### **What we want to achieve:**

- Reduced waiting times for patients to access diagnostic and specialist care services.
- More people have the specialist support and care at the right time, in line with national constitutional targets.
- Improved patient experience and confidence in their local health system.

## **Priority 18: Support the consistent development of our urgent care services to reduce demand and support timely access.**

### **Why this matters:**

Urgent and emergency care services are under pressure across England. We see this when we try to get same-day GP appointments, face long waits for an ambulance and when we wait in A&E. These delays result in a poor experience for people trying to access services and increase the risk of less positive outcomes.

Trends in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West mirror this national picture. More people are using urgent and emergency care services which means there are times when people do not get the support they want, when they need it.

We are committed to improving this.

### **Our areas of focus:**

- Provide high quality urgent care services in community settings that complement our hospital services so only the people most in need go to hospital.
- Assess people's needs and make it easier for them to get the right support in the right place.
- Provide people at highest risk of using unplanned, urgent or emergency care with the support to stay at home.
- When people are ready to leave hospital, our teams, including social care, provide joined up support that meets their needs, closer to their home communities.

### **What we want to achieve:**

- People's experience of accessing urgent or emergency care is improved and they find it easier to get the right support at the right time.
- Preventable unplanned emergency admissions are reduced in our hospitals.
- The time people spend in hospital is reduced.

## 5 Have your say

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We are keen to hear what people who live or work in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West think about our principles and priorities. We will use your feedback to refine and finalise the principles and priorities. This is only the start of our journey. Our aim is to publish a final version of the integrated care strategy for BOB in March 2023.

This will ensure we consider your views and patient experience as we develop our ideas for new ways of providing care.

To find out more and give your feedback by answering an online survey please visit <https://yourvoicebob-icb.uk.engagementhq.com/icp-strategy-engagement>

A hard copy of the survey is available by contacting us by post, email or telephone outlined below.

Questions:

1. We will use the principles to guide how we work together on the development of health and care services for the future.
  - a. Are these the right principles?
  - b. Which are the most important to you?
  - c. Any other comments / suggestions?
2. We have proposed 18 priorities that are divided into the following categories:
  - **Promoting and protecting health** – to support people to stay healthy, protect people from health hazards and prevent ill-health (page 11)
  - **Start Well** – to help children achieve the best start in life (page 17)
  - **Live Well** – to support people and communities to stay healthy for as long as possible (page 21)
  - **Age Well** – to support people to live healthier, independent lives for longer (page 25)
  - **Improving quality and access to services** – to help people access our services at the right place and right time (page 28)
  - a. Are these the right priority areas?
  - b. Which are the most important to you?
  - c. Any other comments / suggestions?

You can send your responses to the questions until 29 January 2023 to:

Communications and Engagement Team, Freepost BOB INTEGRATED CARE BOARD (Note: when using this Freepost address please ensure BOB INTEGRATED CARE BOARD is written in capital letters)

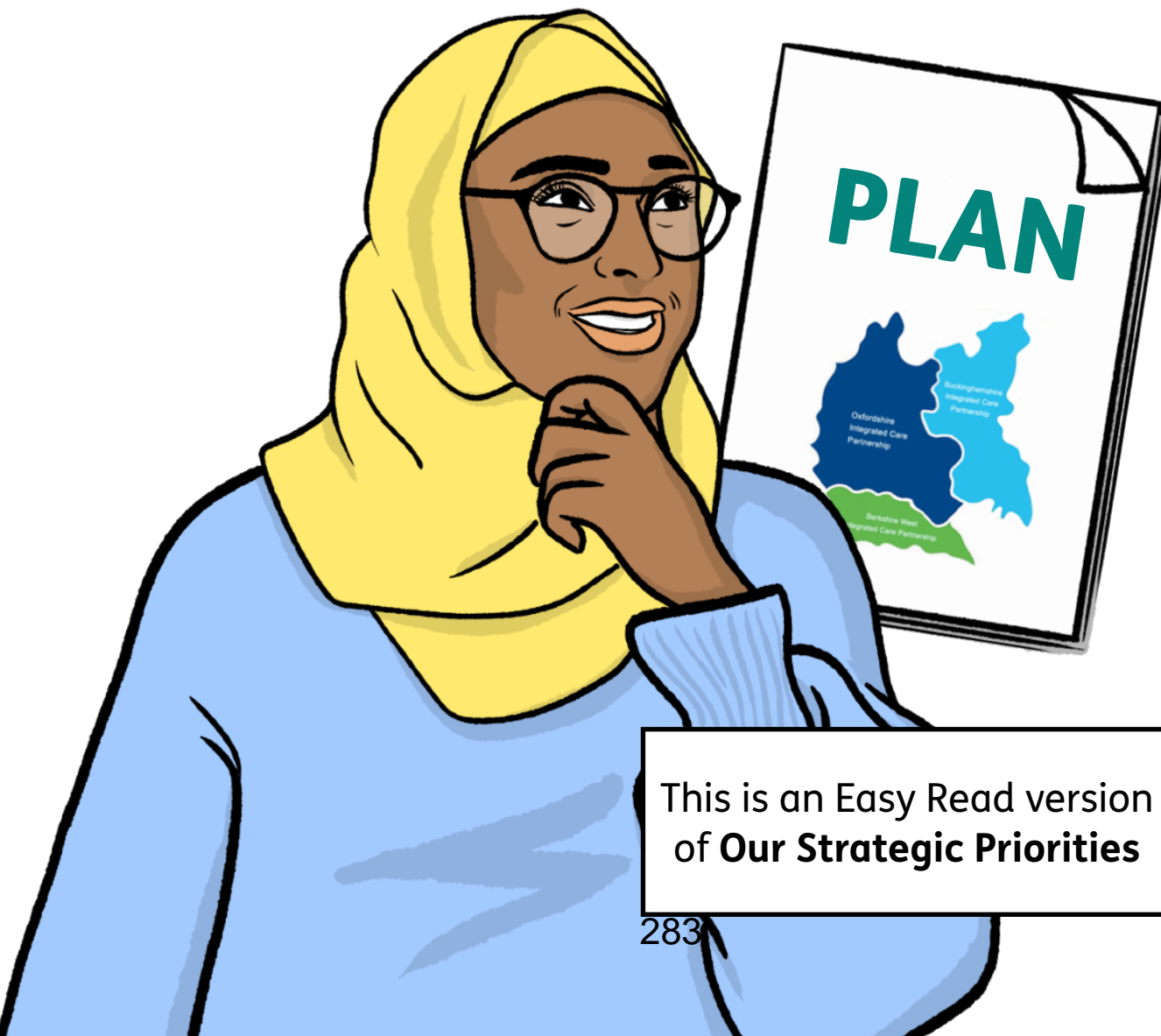
Or email: [engagement.bobics@nhs.net](mailto:engagement.bobics@nhs.net)

If you need this leaflet in a different format or language pls email the above address or call 0300 123 4465.



# A plan for the future of health in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West

What do you think?



This is an Easy Read version  
of **Our Strategic Priorities**





# Contents

About.....	3
Why we need a plan .....	4
What we want in the future .....	6
What we want to do now .....	10
How we will do it .....	11
Thank you.....	20
For more information .....	21



In this Easy Read document, hard words are in **bold**. We explain what these words mean in the sentence after we have used them.



Some words are [blue and underlined](#). These are links that will go to another website which has more information.



# About



We are Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Partnership.



We are a group of organisations that plan and provide health and care services for people in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West.



We want everyone in these areas to be healthy, happy and able to get the right support when they need it.



We are writing a plan to help us achieve this and we want to know what you think.



Please read this Easy Read information and then answer the questions.

# Why we need a plan



We know that not everyone has the same fair chance to be happy and healthy.



It is more difficult for some people and can depend on different things, like:

- The quality of home you live in.



- The area where you live.



- Whether you have a job or you can learn the skills you need to get a job.



- How much money you have and what you can afford.



We need a plan that sets out:

- How our organisations will work together to improve everyone's health and happiness, and
- Tackle the issues that are stopping some people from getting the same fair chance to be happy and healthy.



The plan needs to be clear about what is most important for us to do first.



Next we will tell you about our ideas.

# What we want in the future

In the future, we want everyone in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West to:



- Have the best possible start in life.



- Live a happy and healthy life for as long as possible.



- Be able to get the right support when they need it.



We call this our 'vision'.

We want to work towards our vision in 5 ways. We call these 'principles'.



1. Support people to live healthy lives so they don't become ill in the future.



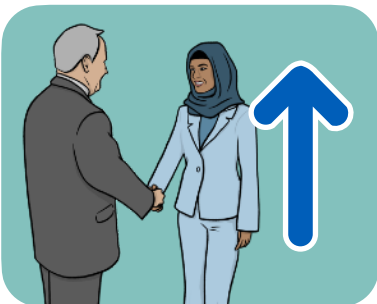
2. Make sure everyone has a fair chance to be healthy and use health and care services.



3. Provide care and support that is right for each person.

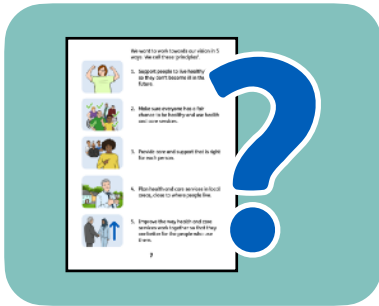


4. Plan health and care services in local areas, close to where people live.



5. Improve the way health and care services work together so that they are better for the people who use them.

## What do you think?



**Question 1a:** Do you agree with our 5 principles? *Please tick 1 box.*

☐

Yes

☐

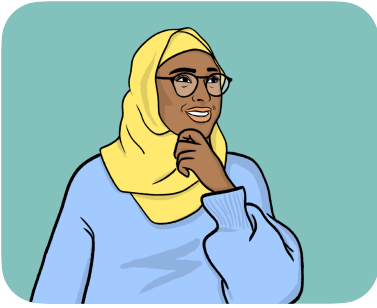
No

☐

I don't know



**Question 1b:** Which principles are most important to you? *Please write your answer.*



**Question 1c:** Do you have any other comments or suggestions about our principles? *Please write your answer.*

# What we want to do now

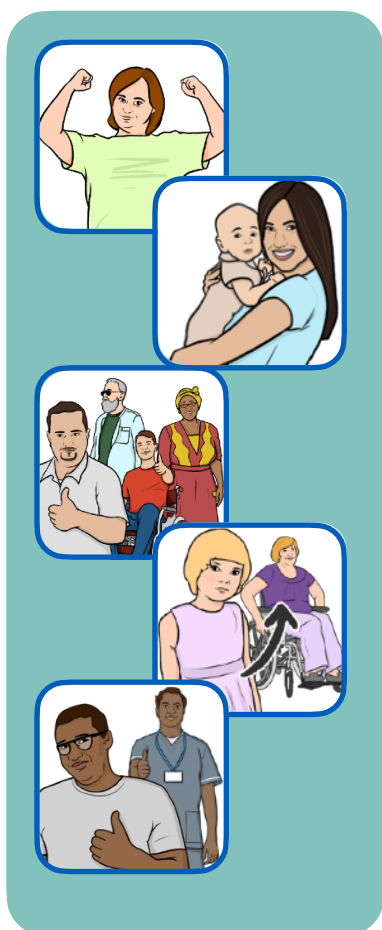


There are 5 main areas we want to focus on now to improve people's health and **wellbeing**.

**Wellbeing** means feeling happy and healthy in your body and mind.



We call these 5 main areas 'our priorities'. These are the most important things that we want to do first.



1. Supporting people to stay healthy.
2. Supporting children to get the best start in life.
3. Supporting people and local communities to stay healthy for as long as possible.
4. Supporting people to be healthy and independent as they grow older.
5. Supporting people to get the right services at the right time.



# How we will do it



These are the things we will do to achieve our priorities.

## Supporting people to stay healthy

To support people to stay healthy we will:



- Help more people to quit smoking and put people off starting to smoke.



- Encourage more people to be a healthy weight through being active and eating healthier food.



- Help people to drink less alcohol.

To support people to stay healthy we will also:



- Improve the areas where people live to make it easier for them to be healthy.

## **Supporting children to get the best start in life**

To support children to get the best start in life we will:



- Provide better support for families during pregnancy and in the years straight after the birth.



- Improve mental health and wellbeing support for children and young people.

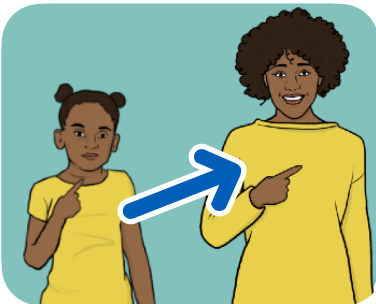
To support children to get the best start in life we will also:



- Improve support for children and young people with **SEND**, their families and carers.



**SEND** stands for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. Children and young people with SEND are aged 0 to 25 and need some extra support to learn and grow.



- Support young people as they move up to use adult services.

# Supporting people and local communities to stay healthy for as long as possible

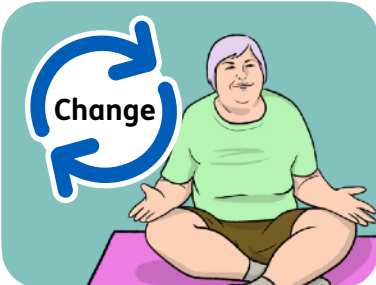
To support local communities to stay healthy for as long as possible we will:



- Reduce the number of people who have heart disease or a stroke by:



- Helping people from backgrounds that have a higher chance of heart disease or a stroke, like black and South Asian groups.



- Helping people who are at risk to make changes so they can be healthier.



- Make it easier for people to get mental health support when they need it.



- Do more early checks for cancer, so that we can treat people before their cancer gets worse.



We will also make sure that everyone has a fair chance to get checked for cancer.

## **Supporting people to be healthy and able to look after themselves as they grow older**

To support people to be healthy and able to look after themselves as they grow older we will:



- Help people get the support they need to stay healthy in their local community for longer.



- Provide joined-up care from different services to support people with more needs as they get older.



- Give support to carers who look after someone else without getting paid, like a family member or friend.

## Supporting people to get the right services at the right time

To support people to get the right services at the right time we will:



- Set up health and care teams that work to help people in local communities.



- Reduce the amount of time that people in all areas have to wait to get the care they need.



- Keep working to improve our urgent care services so that they are available to people who need them, when they need them.



## What do you think?

**Question 2a:** Do you agree with our 5 priorities and the things we will do to achieve them? *Please tick 1 box.*

☐

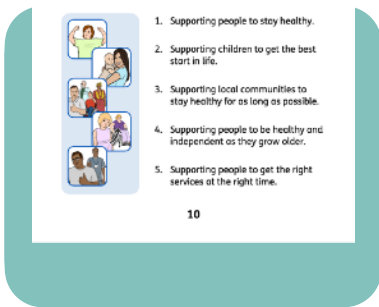
Yes

☐

No

☐

I don't know



**Question 2b:** Which priorities are most important to you? *Please write your answer.*



**Question 2c:** Do you have any other comments or suggestions about our priorities? *Please write your answer.*





**Question 3:** Is there anything else you would like to say that will help us to write our plan? *Please write your answer.*

# Thank you



Thank you for answering the questions.



Your answers will help us to make a final decision about our plan for the future.



Please send your answers back to us by:

- Post: Communications and Engagement Team  
Freepost  
BOB INTEGRATED CARE BOARD

*Postage is free. You do not need a stamp.*



- Email: [engagement.bobics@nhs.net](mailto:engagement.bobics@nhs.net)



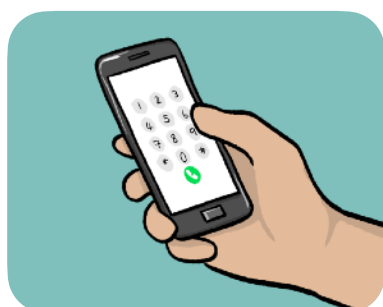
We need your answers back by Sunday, 29 January 2023.

# For more information



To find out more about how to tell us what you think and do our online survey, go to:

<https://yourvoicebob-icb.uk.engagementhq.com/icp-strategy-engagement>



If you need any more information or support with this document please contact us by:

- Phone: 0300 123 4465



- Email: [engagement.bobics@nhs.net](mailto:engagement.bobics@nhs.net)

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**To:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 15 March 2023  
**Report of:** Head of Corporate Strategy  
**Title of Report:** Development of a Biodiversity Strategy for Oxford

Summary and recommendations	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To present Cabinet with a proposed approach to the development of a Biodiversity Strategy for the City of Oxford.
<b>Key decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Anna Railton, Cabinet Member for Zero Carbon Oxford and Climate Justice
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	Pursue a zero carbon Oxford
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	Council Strategy 2020-24

<b>Recommendation:</b> That Cabinet resolves to:
1. <b>Note</b> the report and the proposed establishment of steering group in connection with the preparation of the Biodiversity Strategy.

Appendices
None.

## Introduction and background

- On 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2022, the Council adopted a motion addressing the ecological emergency. The Council resolved to:

*“Request that the Head of Corporate Strategy submits a report to Cabinet setting out options to develop and agree on an evidence-based strategy and action plan to tackle the ecological emergency and report on the progress made...”*

- Previously, Oxford City Council produced the Biodiversity Action Plan 2015-2020, which set objectives focused on the Council’s roles as landowner, regulator, and facilitator. However, to address the ecological emergency any biodiversity strategy

needs to consider a citywide approach, rather than just actions the Council can take itself. It will need to look more widely at any contributing factors to the ecological emergency, understand the current state of nature, and identify actions across all sectors to help address the issues.

3. At present, multiple teams within Oxford City Council and across organisations inside and outside the city undertake work related to conserving and enhancing ecology at the organisation, city, and county levels. A dedicated strategy and action plan would need to coordinate and support this work in pursuit of a defined set of shared objectives.
4. The City Council itself convenes groups that work to conserve and enhance nature, such as the Green and Blue Spaces Network, while also being a member of countywide partnerships including the Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership.
5. The Environment Act 2021 requires that a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) will be produced for Oxfordshire as whole, for which Oxfordshire County Council will likely be the responsible authority. Any city-focused strategy needs to be mindful of the fact that nature operates across district and county boundaries, and should seek to work effectively alongside the LNRS.
6. In order to formulate a Biodiversity Strategy we first need to identify the specific problems it should aim to solve – the key objectives and targets. This should be followed by work with key stakeholders to identify ways to meet the objectives and finally agreement through an action plan of how the objectives will be pursued.
7. It is recommended that a Steering Group is set up to help develop the work, including stakeholder representing those engaged in or with the influence to enhance and conserve nature. It is expected that the steering group will include representatives from the Local Nature Partnership, health, universities, businesses, wildlife groups, planning and community groups. The City Council would expect to chair the steering group and lead the development of the strategy with input from all sectors. Below is an overview of the recommended steps a steering group could take to develop a strategy.

## **Baseline Exercise**

8. The first task in formulating the strategy is to identify the specific problems it should aim to solve. This should begin with an exercise to pull together the various disparate sources of data and information related to biodiversity to generate a baseline understanding of the state of nature in Oxford.
9. This would include compiling and analysing data from the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) and Natural England, the Green Infrastructure Study and Urban Forest Strategy commissioned by the Oxford City Council, as well as work undertaken in support of the Conservation Target Areas and draft Nature Recovery Network, among other sources.
10. A Steering Group would then need to evaluate the baseline and identify what the most pressing issues in the areas of ecology and biodiversity are, what solutions may exist to address these, and – crucially – what is in the scope of the partners to influence through the production of a Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.

## **Key Areas of Focus**

11. There are a number of areas of focus a Biodiversity Strategy could cover. Some of these are outlined below to provide an overview of what a future strategy might contain:
- Ensuring the numerous designated sites in Oxford are appropriately managed while exploring the potential to make them bigger, better and more joined up.
  - Maximising the ecological and biodiversity value of land under the control of the Oxford City Council wherever possible and ensuring it contributes to the wider nature recovery network. Ensuring land is managed in a sustainable manner considering the appropriateness of the use of pesticides including glyphosates.
  - Supporting other organisations and individuals to maximise the ecological and biodiversity value of their land within Oxford by promoting best practice and knowledge sharing.
  - Promoting urban greening within Oxford City as a means of maintaining and increasing its permeability to nature and connectivity between the most ecologically valuable areas.
  - Improving public access to nature, potentially through greening public rights of way and creating wilder and more natural public spaces.
12. However, any decision on where to focus work should be informed by the Steering Group and by the state of nature assessment.

## **Designated Sites**

13. There are eight Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) selected for their nature conservation value within the city. The largest is the Port Meadow with Wolvercote Common & Green SSSI at 167.14ha, which forms part of the internationally important Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation. The smallest is the Lye Valley SSSI at 2.34ha, which supports nationally rare and threatened calcareous valley fen, making it the jewel in the crown of Oxford's wetland habitats.
14. The SSSIs are actively managed and Natural England considers much of the land to be in favourable condition. An audit could be undertaken to better understand how favourable condition can be retained/achieved across these sites, in addition to exploring the potential to make them bigger, better and more joined up.
15. Oxford also includes 66 sites protected by various local designations (e.g. Local Wildlife Sites). Many of these are under private ownership and little is known about their current condition. The Council has commissioned the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) to undertake a data review to establish the existing knowledge base for these sites, which could form the basis for additional work to assess, protect and improve their ecological value.

## **Land owned by Oxford City Council**

16. The City Council manages and owns large areas of land in the city and has a long record of delivering biodiversity improvements. It will be essential to ensure that any land which the City Council has direct control over maximises its benefits for nature.
17. Ensuring that land managed by the City Council has plans in place for effective habitat management could be a key feature of a strategy. This would require a baseline understanding of the current state of the land and management practices, including the use of pesticides.
18. The strategy could also help ensure all service areas within the Council consider ecology and biodiversity within their work, including project planning and procurement decisions.

## **Land owned by other individuals and organisations**

19. It is essential that the strategy engages landowners across Oxford and actions supporting landowners to enhance biodiversity must be included. This may entail the provision of advice or resources regarding best practice for nature conservation, or by connecting landowners with other organisations with the relevant expertise and interests. The first step would be to establish what the opportunities may be and what the needs of those landowners are.

## **Urban greening and connectivity**

20. Valuable work has been undertaken mapping green spaces in Oxford, including in the Urban Forest Strategy and the Green Infrastructure (GI) Study<sup>1</sup>. The study concluded that: *“A key issue for the city is reducing fragmentation and improving habitat connectivity to improve ecological resilience”*.
21. The existing mapping work could be built on to develop a better understanding of how the main areas of ecological value are linked and how certain faunal groups (e.g. birds, bats and invertebrates) move through the city. This would entail relating the mapping undertaken to knowledge of where protected species are most prevalent, informed by the baseline exercise described above.
22. The concept of green corridors could be formalised and the scope for enhancing them explored. This could aim to achieve beneficial management of a range of urban features (roadside verges, hedgerows, private gardens, etc.). The concept of green corridors already forms part of planning policies and recent work has been undertaken to develop a Nature Recovery Network for Oxfordshire which covers Oxford as well, which seeks to link up areas of value for nature.

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<sup>1</sup> Oxford City Council Green Infrastructure Study, available at:  
[https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/8112/occ\\_green\\_infrastructure\\_study\\_2022](https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/8112/occ_green_infrastructure_study_2022)



## **Public access to nature**

23. The GI Study found there is “generally good access” to natural green spaces within 15 minutes’ walking time for most of the City but with some gaps – for example in the Cowley/Temple Cowley area. In addition, most public open spaces were evaluated as being of excellent or good quality (84%) but issues including low biodiversity value were identified in others.
24. The Biodiversity Strategy could contribute to efforts to improve both access and open space quality. Potential areas of investigation include the greening of public rights of way and increasing habitat diversity in public spaces. Initially, the findings of the GI Study could be used as the foundation for further assessment of the specific challenges and prioritisation of potential actions.

## **Financial implications**

25. Until the full scope of the strategy is decided with stakeholders it is not possible to estimate costs. The Council holds £10,000 awarded by DEFRA, some of which can be utilised in the development of the strategy.

## **Legal issues**

26. Under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (as amended by the Environment Act 2021), Oxford City Council has a duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity. Section 40(1) of the 2006 Act now states:

*“A public authority which has any functions exercisable in relation to England must from time to time consider what action the authority can properly take, consistently with the proper exercise of its functions, to further the general biodiversity objective”.*

This initial consideration must be completed by the authority within one year of the amended subsection taking effect which will be by 1 January 2024.

27. Oxford City Council needs to meet the additional reporting requirements under the Act, relating both to actions taken in relation to the enhanced biodiversity duty, and actions taken in relation to biodiversity net gain.

## **Level of risk**

28. A full risk assessment will be developed as part of the Strategy Development.

## **Equalities impact**

29. Access to nature is expected to be a key theme of the Biodiversity Strategy. The improved environmental quality that the Biodiversity Strategy will aim to deliver can lead to better physical and mental health amongst all our citizens, thus helping

to tackle some of the inequalities in the city. Further equalities impacts will be considered as part of strategy development.

### **Carbon and Environmental Considerations**

30. The purpose of the development of the Biodiversity Strategy is to enhance and improve nature. This proposed strategy will comply with Oxford City Council's policies and commitments relating to carbon reduction and safeguarding the environment.

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Job title	Ecology and Biodiversity Officer
Service area or department	Environmental Sustainability
Telephone	01865 252578
e-mail	<a href="mailto:tcarlyle@oxford.gov.uk">tcarlyle@oxford.gov.uk</a>

<b>Background Papers: None</b>
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**To:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 15 March 2023  
**Report of:** Head of Corporate Strategy  
**Title of Report:** Oxford City Council Corporate Business Plan 2023/24

Summary and recommendations	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	Approval of Oxford City Council's Corporate Business Plan priorities 2023/24
<b>Key decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Cllr Susan Brown, Leader and Cabinet Member for Inclusive Economy and Partnerships
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	All Council Strategy priorities
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	Council Strategy 2020-2024

<b>Recommendations:</b> That Cabinet resolves to:	
1.	<b>Agree</b> the draft Oxford City Council Corporate Business Plan priorities 2023/24, which set out the Council's priority work for the next financial year;
2.	<b>Delegate</b> authority to the Head of Corporate Strategy in consultation with the Council Leader to make further minor amendments to the draft Business Plan priorities before implementation; and
3.	<b>Note</b> the progress made in delivery against the actions set out in the current year's Corporate Business Plan 2022/23.

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Oxford City Council's Draft Corporate Business Plan priorities 2023/24
Appendix 2	Oxford City Council Corporate Business Plan 2022/23 update
Appendix 3	Oxford City Council Corporate Strategy 2020-24
Appendix 4	Equalities Impact Assessment

## **Introduction and background**

1. Oxford City Council's Business Plan 2023-24 is an annual document that sets out publically the Council's priority work programme activities for the year.
2. The Draft Business Plan 2023-24 sets out the fourth year of activity toward achieving the outcomes specified in our Council Strategy 20-24.
3. The Business Plan was developed in conjunction with, and is supported by, the Council's annual budget and medium term financial plan (MTFP) that will allocate resources against the agreed priorities.
4. The Business Plan will inform the actions laid out in each department service plan.
5. Progress in delivery of the actions set out within the Business Plan will be tracked through the year, alongside the existing corporate key performance indicators.

## **Development of the Business Plan 2023/24**

6. The Business Plan sets out key actions that typically take the form of projects or new initiatives rather than 'business as usual'. It is not an exhaustive list of such actions. It should be noted therefore that there are many important areas of activity that are not captured within the Business Plan, but will nonetheless be identified within individual departmental Service Plans.
7. A number of the important work strands under the Council's Change Programme – our internal transformation programme - don't sit neatly under any of the Corporate Priority areas, and so a fifth priority 'Ensure Council service delivery is fit for the future' has been added.
8. The process for development of the Draft Business Plan 2023-24 has included two workshop sessions with Directors and Heads of Service.

## **Document structure**

9. The Business Plan activities sit against our four Council Strategy 20-24 priorities: Enable an Inclusive Economy; Deliver More, Affordable Housing; Support Thriving Communities and Pursue a Zero Carbon Oxford. With the addition of Priority 5 Ensure Council service delivery is fit for the future for the Business Plan 2023-2024.
10. Many activities within the Business Plan are cross cutting in their nature, however each activity has been allocated against one of the four strategic priorities to avoid repetition.

## **Business Plan 2022/23 update**

11. Significant progress has been made in delivery of the current year's Business Plan.
12. Key achievements include:
  - a. Social value was increased to 10% in all standard procurement template documents early in 2022 and is a cornerstone of the new procurement strategy approved in November 2022.
  - b. The percentage of staff in workforce from minority ethnic groups increased. An Equalities Steering Group was created to oversee a number of activities within the workforce and Equalities and Recruitment specialists appointed to develop a more inclusive culture.
  - c. The Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Charter was launched on 24 January 2023 with over 100 organisations in attendance.

- d. Planning permission is now granted for redevelopment of Standingford House on Cave Street. We are working with contractors to cost the scheme ahead of commencement and demolition and strip out are underway.
- e. City Council Cabinet agreed in December 2022 to a local funding package for the full business case phase of work relating to the Cowley Branch Line. This decision relies on entering into funding contracts with three local landowners, as well as a memorandum of understanding with County and then a development services agreement with Network Rail. Subject to contract, work commences in February 2023.
- f. Over 100 Oxford Living Wage self-certified organisations are now in place. The scheme is linked with the OIEP Inclusive economy charter and further growth in the scheme is expected.
- g. The draft Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 23-28 was consulted upon and an Action Plan has been developed. The final Strategy and Action plan is due to go to Cabinet in March for final approval before implementation.
- h. Oxford City Council continues to increase the supply of affordable housing. 318 affordable homes have been completed in Oxford so far in 2022/23, of which 144 are social rented homes. OX Place developments account for 89 of these units. A further 97 units are expected before the end of 2022/23.
- i. This year OX Place delivered its greenest council homes to date with eight new bungalows that are nearly zero carbon. These are being let at social rent and are adapted for people with specific mobility and social needs. Other examples of high quality schemes include 26 flats at Cannons Court which are on average 89% more energy efficient than 2013 building regulations.
- j. The bid to Government for citywide Selective Licensing was approved and the scheme commenced on 1 September 2022. To date over 7,600 applications have been made with several thousand more due from letting agents. Nearly 800 premises have been issued with a draft licence and over 300 with a full licence. The "early bird" offer ended at the end of November and enforcement activity is being planned.
- k. Service Integration phase one was successfully completed with Locality Managers in each of the four quadrants in the city working as locality teams with staff from across the Communities and People Directorate.
- l. £13million of Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme funding has enabled three of Oxford's leisure centres and the seasonal outdoor pool to implement decarbonisation schemes helping to reduce the carbon impact of these facilities, and support their future sustainability for Oxford communities. These projects alone are anticipated to deliver an average 86.4% reduction in gas consumption, and 56% reduction in carbon emissions.
- m. The Council engaged with more than 200 people, strategic partners, stakeholders and community representatives across city-wide conversations to help develop a Thriving Communities Strategy for Oxford for 2023/2027. Council has agreed the new Strategy, which brings together leisure, culture, and work with communities to tackle inequalities. An easy read-version and videos have been created to help explain what the Council is trying to achieve.
- n. 16 GP surgeries are actively referring into Move Together with over 540 referrals received over the course of the pathway. Over 170 people are participating in sustained physical activity for a period of more than 3 months. 92 participants have taken up the 5 gyms for £5 offer at Fusion Lifestyle. We

have also been awarded funding for You Move, a programme to support families in receipt of benefits-related Free School Meals to access free and low cost physical activity. To date over 180 families and more than 670 individuals have signed up to You Move.

- o. The Housing Needs restructure has been implemented with homelessness teams divided between Prevention and Rapid Rehousing. The new prevention team will focus on reducing homelessness from the private rented sector and increase partnership working to prevent homelessness from hospitals, prisons and supported accommodation. The Rapid Rehousing Team will focus on reducing stays in temporary accommodation by creating a coordinated response to rehousing households into social and private rented accommodation.
- p. Oxford City Council recruited an Anti-Slavery Coordinator to bring agencies together to identify, prevent and disrupt modern slavery and exploitation across Oxfordshire.
- q. A Sustainability Strategy was not commissioned. Instead we have published a Net Zero Roadmap which sets out steps for city to be net zero by 2040, which has been signed up to by all Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership (ZCOP) partners. Scoping work for a Biodiversity Strategy is currently taking place.
- r. An energy efficiency project utilising government LAD1b funding was completed at the end of 2022 improving 60 properties. A bid has been submitted for Social Housing Decarbonisation wave 2.1 funding and if successful will deliver improvements to over 300 properties from March 2023.
- s. An Oxford Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy has been published and an implementation plan is being developed currently. Alongside this we continue delivery of grant funded projects which are delivering the objectives of the strategy.
- t. There is ongoing work to support Environment Agency delivery of the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme.
- u. In July 2022, the Climate Action Oxfordshire website [www.climateactionoxfordshire.org.uk](http://www.climateactionoxfordshire.org.uk) and associated campaign was created in partnership between Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford City Council, Cherwell, South Oxfordshire, West Oxfordshire, and the Vale of White Horse district councils, and OxLEP. The website offers practical advice for people in Oxford city and Oxfordshire wanting to reduce their carbon footprint and save energy.

### **Financial Implications**

- 13. The Business Plan 2023-24 sets out the high level activities and milestones that are supported in the Council budget 2023-24. It does not contain additional or specific expenditure commitments.

### **Legal Implications**

- 14. There are no legal issues associated with the Business plan.

### **Level of Risk**

- 15. Delivery of the Business Plan 2023-24 is linked with the Budget 2023-24 and the financial and operational health of the Council. This is a high level strategic

document that doesn't include risks associated with each of the measures it sets out, however failure to deliver the Business Plan carries a reputational risk to the Council.

### **Equalities Impact**

16. The Business Plan 2023-24 is concerned with high level activities and milestones. It contains specific actions that will support the delivery of the Council's strategic objectives.
17. Equality, diversity and inclusion are together a key focus for all the Council's work. They form a core part of all our policies and partnerships, for our residents, staff and elected members. As part of delivering the actions through the Business Plan 2023-24, we will, *inter alia*:
  - a. Work with key partners to tackle health inequalities and help underpin our leisure and community services – Primary Care Networks, Integrated Care Systems, using momentum from our Active Lifestyles Commissioning Group.
  - b. Embed Oxford's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and Thriving Communities Strategy's and delivery action plans.
  - c. Enable arts, culture, sport, community activities and grants to provide and promote opportunities for everyone, and foster a sense of pride and belonging in Oxford's leisure, cultural and community assets.
  - d. Embed our Anti-Racism Charter and review our Anti-Racism Quality Mark
  - e. With the County Council, which is now investing in youth service provision in Oxford, review our Youth Ambition programme and seek closer partnership working to achieve a more efficient and effective joint approach to support children and young people.
  - f. Increase participation, inclusivity and accessibility of Oxford's three leisure centres, seasonal heated outdoor pool and ice rink, and community centres, arts venues and parks, ensuring they work for everyone.
  - g. Explore opportunities to improve the inclusivity and sustainability of Oxford's community facilities, and review opportunities as they arise through a business case.
  - h. Embed healthy place shaping by integrating health prevention into neighbourhoods, helping to create more connected neighbourhoods with cycle and walking routes and providing affordable public transport, particularly focusing on areas with the greatest health inequalities.
  - i. Chair the Oxford Safer Communities Partnership to tackle the city's community safety priorities - modern slavery, serious violence, disruption of organised crime, violence against women and girls, and anti-social behaviour.

### **Environmental Implications**

18. The Business Plan 2023/24 sets out the fourth year plans for delivery of the Council Strategy 2020-24 corporate priority: Pursue a Zero Carbon Oxford. It sets out a number of key actions that act on the clear message from Oxford's Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change to continue to take a lead in reducing emissions and increasing biodiversity.
19. Planned actions to achieve these objectives include:

- a. Deliver a programme of Carbon Literacy training for relevant Council staff and elected members.
- b. OX Place housing development at design and planning stage will meet 40% below national standards, be electrically heated with a fabric first approach; using an energy quality assurance service to ensure energy standard are met, where appropriate.
- c. Deliver SHDF retrofit programme (if our bid is successful), develop retrofit plans for void properties and trial new zero carbon technologies in HRA stock.
- d. Promote investment in energy efficiency for the owner occupier and privately rented sectors. Use the Selective Licencing Scheme to support compliance with minimum energy efficiency standards (MEES) regulations. Prepare to extend MEES into commercial premises and work with County Trading Standards to agree a regulatory approach.
- e. Deliver Phase 2 of the GULO electric vehicle charging infrastructure programme, installing up to 150 additional on- and off-street charge points. Agree an implementation plan to deliver further EV infrastructure in line with the 2022 EVI Strategy. Work with ODS to develop a business case that supports this delivery and determines 'best value' to Oxford.
- f. All new OX Place developments currently in design stage will have EV chargers.
- g. Commission a Biodiversity Strategy for the Oxford which addresses the environmental crisis and supports delivery of biodiversity net gain implementation.
- h. Take further action aligned with the Carbon Management Plan, to reduce or mitigate increases in the Council's energy and water utility costs, consumption and related carbon emissions.
- i. Work with neighbouring authorities through the Future Oxfordshire Partnership to support collaborative delivery of ZCOP and Pathways to a Zero Carbon Oxfordshire (PaZCO) Action Plans, to achieve a zero carbon city, and county.
- j. Provide guidance in welcome pack provided to all new commercial tenants including building and supply chain energy efficiencies. Use relationship with commercial tenants to encourage reduction of usage of single use plastics.

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**Background Papers:** None



## Oxford City Council Business Plan 2023-2024

### Priority 1: Enable an inclusive Economy

	Council Strategy 2020-2024 Outcome	Year 4 (2023-2024) Actions
Deliver	1. Our Council-owned companies will have increased their profits to help maintain the services we provide, and we will have supported more local businesses, including social enterprises and cooperatives, by changing the way we buy our goods and services.	Continue to provide capital investment to enable the Council's wholly owned housing company, OX Place, to continue to deliver new housing.
		ODS to continue to look to expand its reach across the city and county, by securing new public and commercial contracts. Council to work with partners in the Oxfordshire Resources and Waste Partnership to influence Government changes in waste & recycling and mitigate impacts on ODS.
		Embed the Council's new Procurement Strategy, which ensures social value is a key part of the assessment process for new contracts.
		Deliver on the Procurement Strategy action plan, including rolling out Contract Management and Training, finalising the 'OxTOMS' tool for the measurement and management of social value in our procurement, and reviewing how to further incorporate Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) and sustainability into the procurement process.
	2. Our staff will be more skilled and confident in delivering services our citizens want and our workforce will better reflect Oxford's diverse population.	Embed Oxford's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and delivery action plan.
Partner	3. Oxford's economy will be stronger, with diverse sectors providing a wider range of accessible business and employment opportunities for all.	Ensure the development of the draft Local Plan 2040 supports economic growth in the city in an inclusive and sustainable way by allocating much needed employment space, balanced with housing and other key uses and infrastructure needs. Explore the inclusion of an affordable workspace policy to support start-ups and third sector groups to contribute to a more inclusive economy.

	4. We will have secured different types of new workspace in the city to support business and employment growth	Publish the Asset Management Action Plan and a review progress over the first year. Identify new income streams from the Council's assets to support the Council's broader ambitions, including workspace.
		Commence the redevelopment of new and enhanced Council-owned employment space at Cave St - Standingford House, including the provision of affordable workspace.
		Complete and open new Council-owned city centre workspace at 1-3 George Street, including the provision of affordable workspace
		Continue to work with landowners and developers on our allocated employment and mixed-use sites to bring forward high quality employment space, including across the growth areas identified in the economic strategy at Oxford North, Oxford West End, Oxford Science Park, Oxford Business Park, and Headington. Support the evolution of the Botley Road retail parks into laboratory-led commercial development in line with the Botley Road planning brief.
	5. The movement of people and goods into and within the city will have improved, resulting in less traffic congestion, better air quality and faster journey times.	Partner with Oxfordshire County Council to move towards delivery of the core transport schemes including Traffic Filters, Workplace Parking Levy and wider rollout of the Zero Emission Zone and better use of our Park & Ride assets.
		Commence work on the detailed design and planning (including a full business case) to open up the Cowley Branch Line to passenger services. Undertake feasibility work for supporting cycle and pedestrian connections linked to the two proposed new stations. Continue to work with landowners to explore how best to secure a local contribution to future delivery.
<b>Influence</b>	6. We will improve the resilience of the city centre and its relevance to more of our citizens	Continue to work with other major retail owning landlords in the city centre to support the delivery of the City Centre Action Plan.
		Work with Oxfordshire County Council to scope out and secure funding for a city centre movement action plan, to identify improvements to pedestrian, cycle and bus routes.

		Implement key City Centre Action Plan projects, including further improvements to pedestrianised St Michael St; and work to implement the Covered Market masterplan, including developing a planning application, bringing forward major improvements to Market St, the creation of a new public square in the market, and improved entrances.
	7. The city centre will be expanding to the west. Attractive new areas will be emerging around Oxford station, in Oxpens and Osney Mead - but not at the expense of the health and vibrancy of the existing city centre.	Facilitate the Oxford West End Strategic Board, involving local and central government, and landowners to coordinate and align priorities and development in line with the West End and Osney Mead SPD, design guide and strategic framework.
		Submit a planning application for Osney to Oxpens Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge across the river and if permitted, commence delivery.
		Work with partners at Network Rail, Oxfordshire County Council and Great Western Railways to refine options for redeveloping the eastern side Oxford Station including Becket Street Car Park.
		As part of the OxWED joint venture, secure planning permission for the redevelopment of Oxpens to deliver a mix of residential and commercial floor space, a hotel and significant public open space.
	8. More organisations in Oxford will be socially and environmentally responsible - paying the Oxford Living Wage and adopting practices that deliver clean economic growth which benefits all residents.	Partner with key developers to facilitate successful Community Employment Plans and exploration of meanwhile uses in the city.
		Agree and deliver pledges as a signatory to the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Charter.
	9. Oxford will have improved the workforce skills it needs through higher educational attainment and more training for the jobs of the future.	Work with key partners including OxLEP and the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership to increase the sector-based higher and advanced level apprenticeship programmes delivered locally, and promote the increased use of the new Community Employment Plan Toolkit across Oxford's new developments.
		Work with OxLEP and neighbouring authorities to on a refreshed economic strategy for Oxfordshire.

## Priority 2: Deliver more, affordable Housing

	<b>Council Strategy 2020-2024 Outcome</b>	<b>Year 4 (2023-2024) Actions</b>
<b>Deliver</b>	1. We will have increased the supply of high quality, energy efficient, accessible, and affordable housing, including new council housing as well as other types of homes to rent and for sale at different prices.	Implement the new Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-28, with an annual review and refresh of the strategy Action Plan.
		Work alongside OX Place to progress the development of sites as laid out in the OX Place Business Plan.
		Identify further opportunities for improving the quality and energy efficiency of existing Council-owned housing stock, as well as redevelopment opportunities, where appropriate.
		Create a framework to enable the development of small sites owned by the Council for housing - including community-led housing - or to agree other possible uses for these sites.
	2. In regeneration projects such as Blackbird Leys, our new housing will be high quality with improved public spaces and served by good public transport and cycling and walking routes.	Secure planning permission for new affordable homes as part of the regeneration of the district centre at Blackbird Leys and - through our joint venture OxWED - at Oxpens. Continue to look to secure additional affordable homes at Oxford North, including on land owned by the City Council.
	3. More Council and private sector tenants will have been supported to stay in their homes when they face the prospect of eviction.	Embed new ways of working within our homelessness services that are focussed on prevention, including advice, guidance and support with household's finances. Evaluate our service offer to Private Rented Sector (PRS) landlords and tenants and use approaches that work to reduce evictions.
<b>Partner</b>	4. More developers, housing associations and others will view Oxford as a good place to build a range of different housing types.	Develop a Local Plan 2040 to set the planning policy framework for the city which will form the basis of planning decisions over that period; involving development of an evidence base, engagement and consultation with stakeholders and the public and an awareness of changing government policy. Work closely with neighbouring authorities on cross-boundary issues including housing provision.

	5. Working with neighbouring authorities we will be implementing the agreed countywide approach to meeting housing needs.	Work closely with neighbouring authorities to deliver homes and associated infrastructure on the allocated Oxford's unmet sites around the edges of the city. Work with neighbours to help frame both the policies of the Oxford Local Plan 2040 and the policies of their Local Plans to ensure Oxford's needs continue to be addressed and delivered.
	6. Working with housing associations we will have delivered more move on accommodation for people in need.	Collaborate with the key Registered Providers and explore opportunities for the further development of homes locally, and to use enabling grants where appropriate, to help facilitate this.
	7. Working with landlords we will have improved the quality and energy efficiency of privately rented homes in Oxford.	Progress and embed the Selective Licensing scheme by commencing enforcement against unlicensed properties and carrying out an inspection programme to check for compliance. In addition, continue to ensure compliance in Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) using the existing HMO licensing scheme.
		Extend and improve the online application system Metastreet to HMO licensing.
<b>Influence</b>	8. New housing including new urban extensions will be being built to create strong communities with good local amenities and sustainable transport links into the city. Sites valued by local people for leisure and recreation will be protected.	Work with neighbouring authorities, Oxfordshire County Council, and landowners to influence the planning applications coming forward for the urban extensions to the South, East and North of the city that will address Oxford's unmet housing needs. Through this process ensure that pedestrian, cycle and public transport movement and more broadly shared infrastructure planning and delivery are aligned.

Priority 3: Support thriving communities

	<b>Council Strategy 2020-2024 Outcome</b>	<b>Year 4 (2023-2024) Actions</b>
<b>Deliver</b>	1. Our services, grants, community and leisure facilities, parks and cultural events will have helped reduce inequality, increase cohesion and improve health and wellbeing across Oxford's communities.	Work with key partners to tackle health Inequalities and help underpin our leisure and community services including the Primary Care Networks, Integrated Care Systems, and partners in our Active Lifestyles Commissioning Group
		Work with key partners through the Active Lifestyles Commissioning Group to develop and design our new Active lifestyle model. Increase referrals from targeted groups into social prescribing activities. Maximise opportunities from the success of GO Active and Move together programmes and increase the number of people physically active.
		Mobilise a new model for operation of Oxford's three leisure centres, seasonal heated outdoor pool and ice rink.
		Confirm a plan to secure long term replacement of ice rink.
		Enable arts, culture, sport, community activities and grants to provide and promote opportunities for everyone, and foster a sense of pride and belonging in Oxford's leisure, cultural and community assets.
		Expand the offer in Oxford Town Hall via its events spaces, the Museum of Oxford and café to attract a wider audience from the local community and beyond with the aim of becoming one of the leading events and cultural venues in the city.
		Work with key partners through the Active Lifestyles Commissioning Group to develop and design our new Active lifestyle model. Increase referrals from targeted groups into social prescribing activities. Maximize opportunities from the success of GO Active and Move together programmes and increase the number of people physically active
		Commence refurbishment and extension of East Oxford Community Centre.
	2. Children and young people's resilience and confidence will have increased through the	With Oxfordshire County Council, which is now investing in youth service provision in Oxford, review our Youth Ambition programme and seek closer partnership working to achieve a more efficient and effective joint approach to support children and young people.

	educational and recreational activities we offer.	
	3. As a good landlord, we will have worked with our Council tenants and residents to strengthen local communities; and worked with other major landlords to improve the services they provide.	Embed the new locality-based model for supporting our tenants and residents, shaped by their views and needs, and work with other landlords to improve engagement and service delivery.
		Transform the way we deliver services to our tenants leading to improved satisfaction rates aligned to RSH Tenant Satisfaction Measures. This work will be informed by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• responses to the latest tenant and leaseholder survey,</li> <li>• recommendations of an external review of our Landlord Services function,</li> <li>• a review of our tenants' engagement and tenants' involvement function,</li> <li>• changes to building safety regulation,</li> <li>• changes to the Decent Homes standards</li> <li>• ensuring compliance with the Social Housing White Paper.</li> </ul>
		Deliver a rolling stock condition survey which will validate our initial capital investment programme to improve the standard of the Council's housing stock and other buildings.
		Introduce a new asset management system to create and deliver a proactive longer-term repairs and maintenance programme.
	4. Our parks and public spaces will remain clean, safe, and well maintained, and will be accessible to more people to people to enjoy the health and wellbeing benefits they provide.	
<b>Partner</b>	5. Working with neighbouring councils and partners, we will prevent homelessness, move people in temporary accommodation more rapidly into secure housing, and ensure that	Work with partners to continue to implement the countywide rough sleeping and single homelessness strategy to reduce homelessness and rough sleeping. Work with commissioning partners and the alliance of organisations delivering services to evaluate the delivery of a housing-led approach – including supporting people through more flexible and responsive services - to ensure that the new services are effective.

	no one has to sleep rough on the streets of Oxford.	
	6. Local voluntary and community groups will be better engaged with, supported and enabled to take a greater role in improving the city and the lives of citizens.	Increase participation, inclusivity and accessibility of Oxford's three leisure centres, seasonal heated outdoor pool and ice rink, and community centres, arts venues and parks, ensuring they work for everyone.
		Continue to integrate council services and seek out opportunities to better align our work with partner agencies, including co-location and co-production.
	7. Increasing numbers of people who walk and cycle around the city, benefitting their health and wellbeing.	Work closely with advice centres and other community and voluntary sector organisations to extend their support and reach across Oxford's diverse communities, linking with Locality Teams (Council teams that support residents), Welfare Reform and the Contact Centre
		Embed healthy place-shaping by integrating health prevention into neighbourhoods, helping to create more connected neighbourhoods with cycle and walking routes and providing affordable public transport, particularly focusing on areas with the greatest health inequalities.
	8. Our work with Thames Valley Police will keep communities safe and help reduce hate crime, human trafficking, modern slavery, domestic abuse, sexual violence, drug-related crime and antisocial behaviour.	Chair the Oxford Safer Communities Partnership to tackle the city's community safety priorities - modern slavery, serious violence, disruption of organised crime, violence against women and girls, and anti-social behaviour.
	9. Vulnerable people will continue to be safeguarded against harm.	Continue to work towards Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance accreditation - work started in December 2022 and may take up to 2 years for full accreditation.
<b>Influence</b>	10. Oxford's diversity will continue to be celebrated, with a	Embed the Oxford Anti-racism Charter.



	greater sense of togetherness across its communities.	Explore opportunities to improve the inclusivity and sustainability of Oxford's community facilities, and review opportunities as they arise through a business case.
	11. Citizens will increase their active engagement in civic and political life.	Encourage greater participation in the electoral process, particularly in the light of the Parliamentary and County boundary reviews, and introduction of voter identification requirements.
		Encourage greater participation in open democracy by embedding the hybrid arrangements for all Council and Committee meetings, to live stream all such meetings and improve accessibility by enabling hybrid attendance.

## Priority 4: Pursue a zero carbon Oxford

	<b>Council Strategy 2020-2024 Outcome</b>	<b>Year 4 (2023-2024) Actions</b>
<b>Deliver</b>	1. Oxford City Council will have reduced the carbon footprint from its own operations to zero.	Work closely with ODS to develop options for meeting net zero OCC/ODS Fleet by 2030.
		Take further action aligned with the Carbon Management Plan, to reduce or mitigate increases in the Council's energy and water utility costs, consumption and related carbon emissions.
		Deliver a programme of Carbon Literacy training for relevant Council staff and elected members.
	2. All new building by Oxford City Council will be significantly more energy efficient – moving towards near-zero or zero carbon standards.	All OX Place housing development at design and planning stage will meet 40% below national standards, be electrically heated with a fabric first approach, using an energy quality assurance service to ensure energy standard are met, where appropriate.
	3. We will have a significant programme of energy efficiency improvements across of our existing council housing.	Deliver the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) retrofit programme, develop retrofit plans for void properties, trial new zero carbon technologies in HRA stock and build capabilities in ODS to deliver retrofit works.
<b>Partner</b>	4. All new building by developers in Oxford will be significantly more energy efficient – moving towards near-zero or zero carbon standards, with some examples of carbon-positive development.	Ensure the Local Plan 2040 provides a clear framework to help underpin the move to zero carbon development.
		Deliver a Technical Advice Note to provide further planning guidance on domestic retrofit and EV charger installation.
	5. We will be promoting and enforcing the higher energy efficiency standards that will have been set nationally by the	Promote investment in energy efficiency for the owner occupier and privately rented sectors. Use the Selective Licencing Scheme to support compliance with minimum energy efficiency standards (MEES) regulations. Prepare to extend MEES into commercial premises and work with County Trading Standards to agree a regulatory approach.

	Government for residential and commercial landlords.	
	6. Oxford will have taken a leading role in the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs).	Deliver Phase 2 of the GULO electric vehicle charging infrastructure programme, installing up to 150 additional on- and off-street charge points. Roll out ODS' GULe pavement crossing as a solution for onstreet home charging. Agree an implementation plan to deliver further EV infrastructure in line with the 2022 EVI Strategy.
		Work with ODS to develop a business case to guide investment decisions on which areas of the EV infrastructure market offer the best returns for the Council and best value for Oxford.
		All new OX Place developments currently in design stage will have EV chargers.
	7. Air quality throughout the city will have improved.	Maintain an enhanced level of air quality monitoring and reporting across the city. Work with the Canal & River Trust to deliver eco-moorings at Aristotle Lane with electricity connections to enable boats to reduce their reliance on solid fuel for heating which will improve air quality.
	8. Our streets, neighbourhoods and open spaces will be greener with more trees and other plants, and increased biodiversity.	Commission a biodiversity strategy for the Council which addresses the environmental crisis and supports delivery of biodiversity net gain implementation.
	9. The city will become more resilient to climate change including improved flood defences.	Work with the Environment Agency to provide HIF funding that enables delivery of the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme. Work with Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership (ZCOP) and Pathways to a Zero Carbon Oxfordshire (PaZCO) partners to develop plans for adaptation to climate change.
<b>Influence</b>	10. We will campaign for the Government to introduce more rigorous energy efficiency standards on new build and bring forward the end of petrol and diesel vehicle sales.	Work with neighbouring authorities through the Future Oxfordshire Partnership to support collaborative delivery of the Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership (ZCOP) and Pathways to a Zero Carbon Oxfordshire (PaZCO) Action Plans, to achieve a zero carbon city and county.

	<p>11. Citizens, businesses and other organisations in the city will be taking action to reduce carbon emissions and increase biodiversity.</p>	<p>Guidance in welcome pack provided to all new commercial tenants including building and supply chain energy efficiencies. Use relationship with commercial tenants to encourage reduction of usage of single use plastics. Extend ZCOP learnings, information and support to SMEs.</p>
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Priority 5: Ensure Council service delivery is fit for the future

Outcome	Year 4 (2023-2024) Actions
1. Implement the Council's Technology and Digital Strategy, exploiting digital solutions and robotics to increase efficiency, reduce the number of IT systems, and shift to Cloud-based systems	Provide new and redesigned online forms to enable citizens to self-serve.
	Design and implement an updated Council Website that supports increasing and simplifying digital access to a wider range of council services.
	Apply process simplification and automation, making processes easier, automating high volume and repetitive tasks.
	Develop information tools to enable data-led decision making.
2. Implement a Citizen Experience Programme to simplify and make more accessible the Council's service offer to residents and businesses - with a 'citizen first' approach that meets their needs	Develop and implement a Citizen Experience Strategy and Operating model for Citizen-focused services to improve citizens' experience of accessing council services, while maintaining Customer Service Excellence accreditation.
	Implement an 'assisted support' model for vulnerable residents and for more complex queries, while maximising support available through the Council's locality-focused teams as well as through community groups and other partners.
	Continue the integration of Communities, Housing, Customer Service and Community Safety teams to provide a seamless 'right first time' service to citizens. Use behavioural insight techniques and the Council's links with the advice sector to optimise that service.
3. Implement a People Programme to support the organisation to deliver its objectives and to create a culture embracing the organisation's values. Build the brand of the organisation to become an employer of choice. Transform management structures in the Council to align resources to corporate priorities	Implement a Health and Safety Plan to ensure the wellbeing of staff working on behalf of the Council.
	Develop and deploy a Leadership Development Programme for Oxford City Council staff, encouraging people to have confidence in their leaders to create high performing, highly motivated, inclusive and engaged teams.
	Work with our unions to develop and deploy a new pay deal and revised Reward Strategy for Oxford City Council staff - including a review of pay and grading to improve recruitment and retention of the workforce.
	Develop a People Team that builds confidence in the organisation and develop and deploy systems and processes that support leaders and staff to thrive at work.
	Design and implement an organisational redesign programme.

4. Implement a Flexible Working Programme to make the best use of technology, modern working practices and space to work in the best way to respond to citizens' needs.	Embed the relocation of the Council's main office into the Town Hall together with hybrid working policies and practices.
	Design and implement Phase 2 of the Future Work Styles project, including a project to digitally scan paper document records and the automation of post and scanning into business as usual.
	Deploy MS365 office suite, including training and awareness programmes for staff of the system and associated applications.
5. Implement an updated robust and inclusive integrated Business Planning and Medium Term Financial Planning process, which ensures the sustainability of the Oxford Model.	Develop and deploy a budget process that integrates with the ongoing identification and delivery of change-based efficiencies.
	Embed the principles of good contract management within the organisation, enabling devolved procurement and ensuring that we get the best value for money out of each contract we have.
	Implement a commercial framework in order to strengthen our income generation, trading development and identify new commercial opportunities.
	Develop and deploy a methodology to review service-based operating models across the organisation.
	Drive additional income from our assets and services within the next four-year Medium Term Financial Plan, balanced against an assessment of risk and resource.
	Strengthen our understanding of what drives demand in our services, both internally and externally, and manage it through a range of interventions in order to provide savings and better outcomes to citizens.
	Exploit opportunities for joint working with other local authorities to deliver shared support functions and citizen-facing services.
6. Implement a Business Intelligence Programme to ensure an evidence-led and evidence-based organisation.	Create a 'virtual business insight unit' with the skills and technology to provide integrated, advanced analysis on demand as well as operational and customer insight to support decision making.
	Deliver a sustainable business architecture and performance framework that supports our transformation into a data and intelligence-led, needs-driven high performing organisation.
	Support the delivery of the Council Strategy by providing analytic capability to inform decision and demand and prioritise activities to deliver maximised customer and business value.

	Develop and deploy standardised and streamlined performance reports aligned with our policy objectives.
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## Oxford City Council Business Plan 2022-2023 Progress Update

## Appendix 2

### Priority 1: Enable an inclusive Economy

	Council Strategy 2020-2024 Outcome	Year 3 (2022-2023) Actions	Year 3 (2022-2023) Progress Update
333	<b>Deliver</b> 1. Our Council-owned companies will have increased their profits to help maintain the services we provide, and we will have supported more local businesses, including social enterprises and cooperatives, by changing the way we buy our goods and services.	Implement the new Procurement Strategy that seeks to increase weighting on social value from 5% to 10%.	Social value was increased to 10% in all standard procurement template documents early in 2022 and was further approved in the new procurement strategy approved in November 2022.
		Work to align and deliver the actions in social value plans for both the Council's wholly-owned companies, Oxford City Housing Limited (OCHL) and Oxford Direct Services (ODS).	
	2. Our staff will be more skilled and confident in delivering services our citizens want and our workforce will better reflect Oxford's diverse population.	Implement the priority aims and actions from the Workforce Equality report for 22-24 including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create an Equalities Steering Group.</li> <li>• Develop workforce development plans for each service.</li> <li>• Review recruitment and on-boarding to consider how we can apply best practice at different stages of the recruitment process.</li> <li>• Improve our data collection so we can use</li> </ul>	Improved percentage of staff in workforce from minority ethnic groups. Equalities Steering Group created to oversee a number of activities within the workforce. Equalities and Recruitment specialists appointed to develop a more inclusive culture and who have started to review and improve the recruitment processes and attraction opportunities for the City as an employer. Pay Gap reports produced in respect of

		evidence-based insights, data, and experience to progress our diversity and inclusion commitments.	Gender, Disability and Ethnicity. Pay Gap reports produced in respect of Gender, Disability and Ethnicity.
<b>Partner</b>	3. Oxford's economy will be stronger, with diverse sectors providing a wider range of accessible business and employment opportunities for all.	Develop an Inclusive Economy Charter for the city, to articulate and promote a high standard of economic and social wellbeing for businesses and organisations to adhere to	Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Charter Launched 24th January 2023 with over 100 organisations in attendance.
	4. We will have secured different types of new workspace in the city to support business and employment growth	Use the £20m identified in the Council budget to actively seek investment opportunities in regeneration across the city, where our investment could support the priorities of the Business Plan including supporting access to good quality space and jobs and wider regeneration	
		Explore the potential for an affordable workspace policy through the next Local Plan.	Is incorporated in draft Plan, and Viability Report has considered implications of policy, alongside other policies within the Draft Plan. Policy may require tweaking to ensure AW can be delivered without rendering other developments viable.
		Work proactively with landowners to intensify, modernise, and regenerate commercial space on key employment sites as defined in the Local Plan and in line with the objectives of the Economic Strategy.	Working closely with Oxford Business Park, alongside Planning colleagues to develop and enable a Masterplan to intensify, diversify and modernise the site to meet future demand from knowledge and technology sectors. Similar conversations underway to deliver Oxford Science Park, with funding sought to enable the Cowley Branch Line.

			Progress to intensify employment land in the West End is detailed further in Point 7 below.
		Seek planning permission and if permitted commence redevelopment of Standingford House on Cave Street as flexible and affordable workspace, working with a workspace operator	Planning permission now granted. Working with contractors to cost the scheme ahead of commencement. Demolition and Strip out underway.
	5. The movement of people and goods into and within the city will have improved, resulting in less traffic congestion, better air quality and faster journey times.	Work with the County Council to refresh the Oxford Transport Strategy and help secure funding to support the implementation of a range of measures that may include traffic filters, a Workplace Parking Levy, extension of Controlled Parking Zones and the 20mph speed limit, as well as improvements to active travel and public transport. Throughout the year there will be extensive engagement and consultation with key stakeholders, community groups and residents to help shape the final proposals. As part of our work on this we will seek to ensure that proposals consider the inclusive economy principles of our Economic Strategy.	City supported County's engagement on "core schemes" throughout 2022, which led to significantly revised proposals going to public consultation in autumn and then November County cabinet decision to implement six strategic traffic filters across the city, on a trial basis. City's involvement, leading on engagement with some stakeholder groups such as businesses and people with disabilities, was crucial to scheme amendments to improve how inclusive the final proposals were
		Work with Network Rail and the County Council to actively pursue funding for the Oxfordshire Connect programme of rail improvements. This will include agreeing the shortlist of masterplan options for Oxford Station and interchange with partners to inform the further work necessary to identify a preferred option. It should also include work on the detailed design and funding options for the Cowley Branch Line.	City Council Cabinet agreed in December 2022 to a local funding package for the full business case phase of work relating to the Cowley Branch Line. This decision relies on entering into funding contracts with three local landowners, as well as a memorandum of understanding with County and then a development services agreement with Network Rail. Subject to contract, work commences in February 2023.

			External funding contribution secured and consultants appointed to develop masterplans options. We aim is to carry out further stakeholder engagement and public consultation to inform the preferred option in the latter half of 2023.
<b>Influence</b>	6. We will improve the resilience of the city centre and its relevance to more of our citizens	Adopt the City Centre Action Plan and set up task groups with key partners for each workstream.	City Centre Action Plan adopted by Cabinet in January 2022. Monitoring and reporting, internal officer groups, and working groups including partners for key workstreams are all in place. Engagement with businesses and landlords taking place. Delivery of the action plan is well underway
	7. The city centre will be expanding to the west. Attractive new areas will be emerging around Oxford station, in Oxpens and Osney Mead - but not at the expense of the health and vibrancy of the existing city centre.	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to facilitate the Oxford West End Strategic Board, involving local and central Government, and landowners to co-ordinate and align activity.</li> <li>• Adopt a new West End masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to guide development in the West End Area of Change, in line with the Local Plan.</li> <li>• As part of OxWED, submit outline planning permission for the redevelopment of Oxpens to enable this key site's redevelopment with a mix of uses that enhances the city centre.</li> <li>• Continue to develop plans for a new river crossing connecting Osney Mead into the wider city centre.</li> <li>• Work with partners to develop a business case for investment in the West End and secure funding.</li> </ul>	Partnership working continues on Oxford West End. The West End and Osney Mead SPD adopted in November 2022, including a design guide. The first site, Oxpens, has now submitted for outline planning permission incorporating up to 90,974 square metres (gross external) of employment space and a 250 bed hotel (in support of Outcome 4. above) as well as 234 homes (50% affordable) and 258 student rooms. Alongside, the City Council has consulted on designs of the new river crossing linking Oxpens to Osney Mead. External funding contributions have been secured to support the coordination of the West End programme and station masterplan options report, which will help articulate the business case for further investment at the station. A West End website is being

			developed for launch in 2023 which further sets out the plans and case for wider infrastructure investment.
	8. More organisations in Oxford will be socially and environmentally responsible - paying the Oxford Living Wage and adopting practices that deliver clean economic growth which benefits all residents.	Continue to work with partners to increase adoption of the Oxford Living Wage across the city.	Over 100 OLW self-certified organisations are now in place, after just over 3 years. The scheme is linked with the OIEP Inclusive economy charter and further growth in the scheme is expected.
	9. Oxford will have improved the workforce skills it needs through higher educational attainment and more training for the jobs of the future.	Work with key partners including OxLEP and the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership to increase the sector-based higher and advanced level apprenticeship programmes delivered locally, and promote the increased use of the new Community Employment Plan Toolkit across Oxford's new developments.	Numerous Community Employment Plans underway or in development. Locations for CEPs include Oxford North, Barton Park, Oxpens, Ellison Institute, Botley Road redevelopments of retail to office and the Clarendon Centre redevelopment. We are working closely with OxLEP to promote take up of apprenticeships through the Social Contract programme including the pledging of unused apprenticeship levy funds by larger employers from SMEs to use on training. 71 jobs created through the City Council's delivery of the KickStart work placement programme for 16-24 year olds to work for SMEs in Oxford.

## Priority 2: Deliver more, affordable Housing

	<b>Council Strategy 2020-2024 Outcome</b>	<b>Year 3 (2022-2023) Actions</b>	<b>Year 3 (2022-2023) Progress Update</b>
<b>Deliver</b>	1. We will have increased the supply of high quality, energy efficient, accessible, and affordable housing, including new council housing as well as other types of homes to rent and for sale at different prices.	Deliver a new Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for Oxford, setting out ambitious plans to increase the supply of affordable housing, including social rent and intermediate tenure types, and explore new approaches, such as developing an Oxford Living Rent intermediate housing product.	The draft Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 23-28 went to public consultation in Oct 22 which received significant support, amendments were made to the Strategy in response to feedback received and the Action Plan has been developed. The final Strategy and Action plan is due to go to Cabinet in March for final approval before implementation.
		Provide strategic direction and support to Oxford City Housing Limited (OCHL), the City Council's wholly owned housing company, to help it deliver and develop its Business Plan – this will involve acting as a best practice housing provider, scaling up the delivery of new housing, and considering a range of approaches to tenure including exploring an Oxford Living Rent.	<p>Oxford City Council continues to increase the supply of affordable housing. 318 affordable homes have been completed in Oxford so far in 2022/23, of which 144 are social rented homes. OxPlace developments account for 89 of these units. A further 97 units are expected before the end of 2022/23.</p> <p>This year OxPlace delivered its greenest council homes to date with eight new bungalows that are nearly zero carbon. These are being let at social rent and are adapted for people with specific mobility and social needs. Other examples of high quality schemes include 26 flats at Cannons Court which are on average 89% more energy efficient than 2013 building regulations.</p> <p>Oxford City Council works closely with</p>

			OxPlace to access funding for its schemes and has recently been successful with securing grant for 26 new affordable homes in east Oxford. Further grant applications will be submitted in Q4.
		Deliver an integrated Oxford Needs Homes communications and engagement campaign that explains the need to increase supply and build understanding as to how this will help address a range of needs	
		Take actions to improve the condition and energy efficiency of the Council's existing housing stock to improve standards and quality of living, informed by a Strategic Review of stock to inform investment and regeneration decisions and a new Asset Strategy.	The procurement process is due to start in February 2023 to commission a full rolling detailed stock condition survey of all HRA dwellings. This will inform and validate a new capital investment programme and energy efficiency to be delivered from 2024 onwards.
	2. In regeneration projects such as Blackbird Leys, our new housing will be high quality with improved public spaces and served by good public transport and cycling and walking routes.	Continue to support and where appropriate fund a number of key regeneration and new development schemes that will bring forward much needed housing, including new council housing - Blackbird Leys District Centre regeneration (Council is a delivery partner); Oxpens (Council is a Joint Venture partner); South Oxford Science Village (Council is a land owner); Northern Gateway (Council is the Local Planning Authority and infrastructure funder).	Work has started on site at Northern Gateway with the provision of infrastructure and housing in the Canalside area. A planning application has now been submitted for the Oxpens development which is being considered. Work is continuing to bring forward the proposals for Blackbird Leys and South Oxford Science Village.
	3. More Council and private sector tenants will have been	Continue to improve services and countywide partnership working, strengthening the	The Tenancy Relations Officer in the HMO Enforcement Team dealt with 289 cases in the

	supported to stay in their homes when they face the prospect of eviction.	corporate commitment to homelessness prevention. Increase focus on upstream prevention, launching a trial of new prevention services for private rented sector (PRS) tenants, and establish a “single gateway” approach to make it easier for people to get the support they need quickly.	<p>first three quarters of the year. Of these, 113 were related to threatened or illegal evictions (39%) and in 111 cases homelessness has been prevented.</p> <p>A significant restructure of the Housing Needs team was implemented in November. A new upstream prevention team has been created devoted to supporting individuals to remain in their private rented accommodation, this includes a new landlord mediation service. Work to simplify entry points into homelessness services has started, with the aim of creating a single gateway for customers. We have appointed a Domestic Abuse Link Worker sitting within our prevention team supporting survivors of domestic abuse and preventing their homelessness. We are also working towards DAHA (Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance) accreditation.</p>
<b>Partner</b>	4. More developers, housing associations and others will view Oxford as a good place to build a range of different housing types.	Consult on policy options and potential development sites for the Oxford Local Plan 2040, and support the next stages of development of the Oxfordshire 2050 Plan, to address future housing need including the location and levels of housing and employment across Oxfordshire, and sustainable transport options	Oxfordshire 2050 off the table and so focus on Oxford 2040. Regulation 18 consultation has taken place looking at AH options, and options have also been assessed through Viability Report. HENA consultation to take place Feb/March on quantum of employment and housing need in Oxfordshire.
	5. Working with neighbouring authorities we will be implementing the agreed	Work with neighbouring councils, landlords and stakeholders to deliver more houses that are integrated into the city and wider county with	Focus principally with Cherwell currently from a planning point of view to ensure any additional requirements as a result of the



	<p>countywide approach to meeting housing needs.</p>	<p>appropriate infrastructure to enhance a sense of community and wellbeing and enable people to live closer to where they work.</p>	<p>HENA work for the 2040 Plan can, where possible, be accommodated within the existing unmet need sites due to their pre-existing integration.</p> <p>Oxford City Council is working with neighbouring district councils to secure agreements on affordable housing contributions on strategic sites around the County. Agreements with Vale of White Horse and West Oxfordshire are now in place with the remaining documents to be signed before the end of March.</p> <p>The affordable housing schemes delivered so far this year secure high quality housing for local residents. Residents allocated social and affordable rented units have a demonstrable housing need and connection to Oxford. This supports the development of strong local communities. This is also evidenced by the demographics of those who have secured dwellings on shared ownership developments through OxPlace. More than three quarters are from Oxford and 50 per cent of purchasers are key workers.</p>
	<p>6. Working with housing associations we will have delivered more move on accommodation for people in need.</p>	<p>Work with partners to deliver and increase access to housing to best meet locally identified needs, such as for those who have experienced rough sleeping and those living in temporary accommodation, and provide wraparound services such as mental health and substance support.</p>	<p>The affordable housing supply team are currently working to deliver supported housing units for people with specific health and social needs across two different sites in Oxford.</p>

			<p>Roken House - The affordable Housing Team continue their work to deliver 8 one-bedroom self-contained flats to increase access to housing in order to support the locally identified housing needs. Planning consent was granted in March 2022, next milestones are for Council client sign off for the tender contract award. There is a target date for 'Start On Site' in early spring 2023 with an estimated 20 week build programme to achieve 'Practical Completion' for summer 2023.</p> <p>To date this year we have delivered 16 Housing First Units, (11 units purchased, 1 from our existing stock and two provided by a housing association) as part of this project we have commissioned intensive support to enable those who have experienced homelessness to sustain their accommodation. This has been funded through the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP)</p>
	7. Working with landlords we will have improved the quality and energy efficiency of privately rented homes in Oxford.	Subject to Government approval, implement a Selective Licensing Scheme for all PRS property across the City.	The bid to Government for citywide Selective Licensing was approved and the scheme commenced on the 1st September 2022. To date over 7,600 applications have been made with several thousand more due from letting agents. Nearly 800 premises have been issued with a draft licence and over 300 with a full licence. The "earlybird" offer ended at the end

			of November and enforcement activity is being planned.
<b>Influence</b>	8. New housing including new urban extensions will be being built to create strong communities with good local amenities and sustainable transport links into the city. Sites valued by local people for leisure and recreation will be protected.	Work with Oxfordshire councils and other partners to ensure that schemes are well designed, are integrated into the city and the wider county, and promote both active travel and public transport alongside low carbon/zero carbon building	Work on going with partners when pre-application or applications received, e.g. Land North of Bayswater Brook, working collaboratively with other services to ensure the planning consultation response reflects Council aspirations.

## Priority 3: Support thriving communities

	<b>Council Strategy 2020-2024 Outcome</b>	<b>Year 3 (2022-2023) Actions</b>	<b>Year 3 (2022-2023) Progress Update</b>
Deliver	1. Our services, grants, community and leisure facilities, parks and cultural events will have helped reduce inequality, increase cohesion and improve health and wellbeing across Oxford's communities.	Deliver a Service Integration Programme that brings together our Communities, Housing, Customer Service and Community Safety teams to deliver a seamless and more efficient service for our tenants and residents.	<p>Service Integration phase one was successfully completed with Locality Managers in each of the four quadrants in the city working as locality teams with staff from across the Communities and People Directorate.</p> <p>With the focus to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improved customer experience, with all our teams working more collaboratively,</li> <li>- Working collaboratively with local services, community groups and stakeholders to help prevent residents from falling into crisis through early intervention</li> <li>- Signpost and help support community-based solutions to resolve community issues</li> <li>- Oxford residents are more confident and actively involved in their community</li> </ul> <p>A co-produced Needs Assessment Questionnaire for the front door into services is now in place to better understand people's situation to react appropriately by the right service who is best placed to support the customer. Guidance and Training materials have also been developed and rolled out to teams to upskill staff and develop confidence in supporting residents in</p>

			<p>a holistic approach. This includes how to exploit QL in a way that gives a better view of the customer so to reduce touchpoints and reduce demand.</p> <p>A Sharepoint site has been developed with a Directory of community-based solutions that can be accessed by teams across the council to increase awareness of services and initiatives available to residents when in need of support closer to the community.</p> <p>Phase two will see the model adopted by wider council services and closer working with local stakeholders. Phase three involves service integration with other statutory agencies, housing associations, the new integrated care system and also co-locating teams.</p> <p>Meaningful Measurements are being trailed to identify impact and progress in this locality approach, improving staff awareness and buy-in.</p> <p>We have also held cost of living support sessions and have been administering funds from the government's Household Support Fund.</p>
		Work with Fusion Lifestyle to sustain a recovery in usage of our leisure centres, which have	Oxford's three leisure centres, seasonal heated outdoor pool, and ice rink opened.

		<p>been badly impacted through the pandemic. Develop a plan for their longer term sustainability.</p>	<p>In partnership with Oxford's leisure operator Fusion Lifestyle, a diverse and inclusive leisure offer continues to be offered across Oxford's communities.</p> <p>Oxford's free swimming sessions for those 16 years and under (OX1-OX4 residents), and the subsidised Bonus Concessionary leisure membership continue to support affordable participation for communities in their Oxford leisure facilities</p> <p>£13million of Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme funding has enabled three of Oxford's leisure centres and the seasonal outdoor pool to implement decarbonisation schemes helping to reduce the carbon impact of these facilities, and support their future sustainability for Oxford communities. These projects alone are anticipated to deliver an average 86.4% reduction in gas consumption, and 56% Carbon Reduction.</p> <p>The Council engaged with more than 200 people, strategic partners, stakeholders and community representatives across city-wide conversations to help develop a Thriving Communities Strategy for Oxford. Council agreed a new Thriving Communities Strategy for 2023/2027, which brings together leisure, culture, and work with communities to tackle inequalities. An easy read-version and videos have been created to help explain what the</p>
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			Council is trying to achieve. The Strategy includes Oxford's approach to leisure services from April 2024.
	2. Children and young people's resilience and confidence will have increased through the educational and recreational activities we offer.	With the County Council, which is now investing in youth service provision in Oxford, review our Youth Ambition programme and seek closer partnership working to achieve a more efficient and effective joint approach to support children and young people.	We are looking to explore this in 2023/24, but have had initial conversations with the County Council.
	3. As a good landlord, we will have worked with our Council tenants and residents to strengthen local communities; and worked with other major landlords to improve the services they provide.	Design and implement a new locality-based model for supporting our tenants and residents, shaped by their views and needs - improving engagement and driving up tenant satisfaction levels.	The locality based model continues to develop and work is active with many community groups and food larders. The annual STAR survey was commissioned in Autumn 2022. Draft report received in Dec 2022 and tenant satisfaction levels across key areas have improved.
		Respond to the feedback from the recent Tenant Survey, through a programme of increased investment into our council stock and improvements to our repairs service.	We are investing significantly in our Council stock and are seeing significant improvements in the repairs service, including improved communication, dedicated named team leaders responsible for multi-order works to homes and will be introducing a text notification service for tenants in spring 2023 called Localz.
	4. Our parks and public spaces will remain clean, safe, and well maintained, and will be accessible to more people to	Extend the impact of social prescribing that links funding to health improvement activities delivered through the Council's leisure, wellbeing and community facilities and maximise the opportunities	16 GP surgeries are actively referring into Move Together with over 540 referrals received over the course of the pathway. Over 170 people are participating in sustained physical activity for a period of

	people to enjoy the health and wellbeing benefits they provide.	from our GO Active and Move Together programmes to get more people active.	more than 3 months. 92 participants have taken up the 5 gyms for £5 offer at Fusion Lifestyle. We have also been awarded funding for You Move, a programme to support families in receipt of benefits related FSM to access free and low cost physical activity. To date over 180 families and more than 670 individuals have signed up to You Move.
		Subject to DEFRA approval, operationalise the bathing water status designation for a stretch of the River Thames in Port Meadow and work with local communities to make wild swimming safer.	
		Put in place transition arrangements for a new burial space in Oxford and a firm delivery plan.	New burial space is continuing to be explored, this is a slower moving project and this work stream will continue in 2023/24.
Partner	5. Working with neighbouring councils and partners, we will prevent homelessness, move people in temporary accommodation more rapidly into secure housing, and ensure that no one has to sleep rough on the streets of Oxford.	Work with partners to implement the countywide homelessness prevention strategy to reduce homelessness and rough sleeping in Oxford, through new commissioned services to deliver a housing-led approach, and support people through more flexible and responsive services	The Oxfordshire Homelessness Alliance was commissioned to deliver services across the county from April 2022. This year the alliance has focussed on establishing itself as a new entity laying the foundations to deliver transformation of services over the remainder of the contract. This will see the development of a housing led approach through a change in the property mix and a more personalised provision of support. The out of hospital programme, which provides a multi-disciplinary team approach of social, mental health and housing workers,



			continues to support the alliance with transformation work to prevent homelessness and reduce unplanned discharges from hospital settings.
		Continue to transform our homelessness services based on the principles of early homelessness prevention and rapid rehousing, working in partnership to prevent people losing their homes, and bringing down numbers of people in temporary accommodation.	<p>The Housing Needs restructure has been implemented with homelessness teams divided between Prevention and Rapid Rehousing.</p> <p>The new prevention team will focus on reducing homelessness from the private rented sector and increase partnership working to prevent homelessness from hospitals, prisons and supported accommodation.</p> <p>The Rapid Rehousing Team will focus on reducing stays in temporary accommodation by creating a coordinated response to rehousing households into social and private rented accommodation. This is, however, happening at a time of increased demand due to the cost of living crisis which we predict will have an impact on the number of households in temporary accommodation. Ongoing transformation work across homelessness services will develop over the coming months.</p>
		<p>Implement the Thriving Communities Strategy - delivering programmes of work to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase participation, inclusivity and accessibility of leisure and community centres, arts venues and parks, ensuring they work for everyone.</li> </ul>	Oxford's Thriving Communities Strategy was approved by Cabinet in December 2022 and making its way to Full Council in early 2023 to become part of the Council's Policy Framework. Implemented co-location in

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tackle issues of isolation in our elderly communities.</li> <li>• Protect and safeguard the heritage of local communities as part of our place based and asset development strategies for the future.</li> <li>• Work closely with advice centres and other community and voluntary sector organisations to extend their support and reach across Oxford's diverse communities, linking with Locality Hubs (Council teams that support residents), Welfare Reform and the Contact Centre.</li> </ul>	<p>Westgate Library from January 2023 delivering City Council face to face services alongside Citizen's Advice Oxford.</p> <p>An internal action plan has been produced to guide work to help tackle inequalities. An easy-read version of the Strategy has been created, a series of videos are being developed to show why this work is important.</p>
	7. Increasing numbers of people who walk and cycle around the city, benefitting their health and wellbeing.	Secure funds to deliver the first phase(s) of the Oxford Greenways cycle routes project.	Greenways funding secured but project paused by all partners in 2022 - seeking to re-start it in early 2023/24 financial year. Progress in 2022 to support people walking and cycling was through the funding of the ParkThatBike initiative, which will support the installation of publicly accessible bike parking at places of work across the city. And scoping for more than 100 additional bike parking spaces on the highway has been undertaken, seeking installation before the end of 22-23 financial year.
	8. Our work with Thames Valley Police will keep communities safe and help reduce hate crime, human trafficking, modern slavery, domestic abuse, sexual violence, drug-related crime and antisocial behaviour.	Work with our partners to deliver the Oxford Safer Communities Partnership's Violence Against Women and Girls, and Hate Crime plans.	The Oxford Safer Communities Partnership oversaw the implementation of the Home Office Safer Streets 3 project to address Violence Against Women and Girls in the night-time economy. Titled, Safe Journey; Safe Destination, the project worked across the city and with colleagues in South and Vale and West Oxfordshire to reduce the risk of violence from the start of a person's journey on their night out

			<p>in the city, during their night out and on their return home, recognising that a significant number of people come from outside Oxford to enjoy the city's night-time economy offer. Interventions included the development of the Nightsafe Network that brings together the police, City Council, Street Pastors, the universities, taxi marshals, door staff and pub and club managers to manage safety in the night-time economy.</p> <p>New high-resolution CCTV cameras and improved lighting in key locations help to improve safety. A Safe Places scheme, bystander training, campaign materials were also developed.</p> <p>The Oxford City Angels were introduced through a grant from the project. The mainly female group of volunteers work from 22:00 - 04:00 at key weekends, supporting people in need of help and assistance.</p> <p>Although Oxford is a low risk area, hate crime remains an under-reported and significant concern for the partnership. All hate offences are reviewed by the police and investigative actions taken. Repeat victims and offenders are identified, with victims tending to be from the police and health services, whilst the offenders are often in health settings.</p>
	9. Vulnerable people will continue to be safeguarded against harm.	Work with other agencies to develop local responses to the findings of the Modern Slavery research.	Oxford City Council recruited an Anti-Slavery Coordinator to bring agencies together to identify, prevent and disrupt modern slavery and exploitation across Oxfordshire. The programme includes communication and training activities, support for victims and the disruption of exploitative practices and

			<p>people through a multi-agency approach. New pathways and procedures have been developed with partner agencies alerting the coordinator to new cases for discussion and resolution.</p> <p>The coordinator was instrumental in the successful bid to the Home Office to manage a local assessment of National Referral Mechanism. Funding has been allocated to this project which will ensure young people who are victims of modern slavery received a quicker assessment and the necessary support.</p>
<b>Influence</b>	<p>10. Oxford's diversity will continue to be celebrated, with a greater sense of togetherness across its communities.</p>	<p>Embed an Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion strategy that will increase trust and belonging between the Council and communities, predicated on inclusive values and reflecting the rich diversity in Oxford - and help us to build back fairer. Refresh the gender-balanced Race Advisory Group every two years</p>	<p>The Equalities Steering Group now has 43 active members from 15 different service areas. Representation from across the council ensures that we are able to drive a cultural change based on our work, learnings, and lived experiences, thus informing our work with our communities. Residents' Panel benefitted from key equalities input to ensure that we use communication that is inclusive, especially in terms of gender and for a neurodiverse audience. Additionally, we used the latest census findings to ensure that we consciously include Roma and Gypsy communities as separate survey variable in our resident panels. Thus, beginning our work on one of the key actions in our Anti-Racism Charter to understand and include voices from these marginalised communities. Interfaith leaders continue to meet every</p>

			<p>two months. This is a platform to share key information and concerns.</p> <p>We are yet to deliver on EDI training. They take time and involve understanding the needs of the audience. We have 2-3 training modules that we are working on and they will lead to better awareness, while associated toolkits prepared based on feedback will build institutional capabilities and sustain a culture of using equalities to understand our work with communities.</p>
	11. Citizens will increase their active engagement in civic and political life.	Ongoing engagement work by Elections team to increase participation in elections.	

Priority 4: Pursue a zero carbon Oxford

	<b>Council Strategy 2020-2024 Outcome</b>	<b>Year 3 (2022-2023) Actions</b>	<b>Year 3 (2022-2023) Progress Update</b>
<b>Deliver</b>	1. Oxford City Council will have reduced the carbon footprint from its own operations to zero.	Commission deep dive energy audits for Council buildings where we pay the energy bill to identify carbon reduction measures and optimum ways to transition from gas to electric based and other low carbon heating; and pursue funding opportunities to undertake the works identified.	Detailed and costed Heat Decarbonisation Plans have been produced for the Town Hall, Barton Neighbourhood Centre. Any further development of technical/financial feasibility paused however at present as per Property Services guidance to potentially align with longer term upgrade works required at the Town Hall and develop the options. Heritage consideration of the look/feel of integration of any new plant and pipe work locations/runs needs careful consideration and consultation with relevant stakeholders/heritage groups given Grade2 listed status and needs to be built in to any project development.
		Develop a plan outlining next steps towards the full decarbonisation of fleet vehicles by 2030.	ODS are in the process of developing plan, expected in February. Decision has been made to not invest in HVO fuel for short term reduction in carbon emissions as lifecycle impact of the fuel is negative.
		Commission a new Sustainability Strategy to provide a roadmap for the many actions the Council is taking on decarbonisation and biodiversity.	Sustainability Strategy not commissioned. Instead we have published a Net Zero Roadmap which sets out steps for city to be net zero by 2040, which has been signed up to by all ZCOP partners. Biodiversity Strategy Scoping currently taking place.

	2. All new building by Oxford City Council will be significantly more energy efficient – moving towards near-zero or zero carbon standards.	Improve standards of Council/OCHL builds in line with legislative and market developments and above the legal minimum - and balance further increases in the standard for energy efficiency with the need to increase both affordable housing supply and financial returns to the Council.	This year OX Place developments significantly exceeded the 40% carbon reduction target required - the bungalows met 96% below 2013 BR, Cannons Court achieved 89% and The Curve 56%
	3. We will have a significant programme of energy efficiency improvements across of our existing council housing.	Accelerate our Council house retrofit programme against requirements identified in the Stock Condition Survey, utilising the experience gained from existing programmes and the £7m we have already committed over the next four years to optimise our approaches to retrofit; and seek additional Government funding through national schemes as they come forward. Establish a Retrofitting Champions scheme involving tenants and those in other accommodation to help engagement, highlight the financial and environmental benefits and boost take up of measures among tenants.	<p>A report has been produced detailing the cost and improvements needed to achieve EPC C and net zero in our housing stock that will form the basis of a delivery strategy.</p> <p>An Energy efficiency project utilising government LAD1b funding was completed at the end of 2022 improving 60 properties. A bid has been submitted for Social Housing Decarbonisation wave 2.1 funding and if successful will deliver improvements to over 300 properties from March 2023.</p>
<b>Partner</b>	4. All new building by developers in Oxford will be significantly more energy efficient – moving towards near-zero or zero carbon standards, with some examples of carbon-positive development.	Work with our Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership (ZCOP) partners to accelerate emissions reduction in the city, focusing on priority areas identified in the ZCOP roadmap and action plan - including retrofit of residential and commercial buildings, supply chain, active travel, freight, new green technologies and skills.	<p>A number of ZCOP sprint group focusing on the action plan are running or have concluded. These include: Funding bid to the MCS foundation to develop a costed and scalable retrofit plan</p> <p>Feasibility in Rose Hill to develop retrofit engagement plan</p> <p>Funding bid to UKRI with the Low Carbon Hub, Lucy Group, Universities, Octopus, Arup,</p>

			<p>ODS</p> <p>Secured input into Oxford Local Plan development</p> <p>Hosted a meeting with Lord Deben, former Environment Minister and Chair of the Committee on Climate Change</p> <p>Workshops to support partners participate in energy flexibility trials for Project LEO Consulted the RAF and Defence Infrastructure Organisation on onshore wind/ radar issues</p> <p>Workshop to share best practice on corporate scope 3 emissions</p> <p>Participation in local authority in setting trial to scope potential as a funding stream in Oxford</p> <p>Liaised with key organisations seeking to work together on freight consolidation</p> <p>Completed survey of partners on key potential projects to improve active travel across estates</p> <p>Tour of the BMW Mini plant energy saving initiatives and Oxford Brooke's borehole project</p>
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	5. We will be promoting and enforcing the higher energy efficiency standards that will have been set nationally by the Government for residential and commercial landlords.	Promote and incentivise compliance with energy efficiency (MEES) regulations among residential landlords. Prepare to extend this work into commercial premises in the following year.	A new post is being created which will work across Environmental Sustainability and Regulation to work with landlords to ensure compliance.
	6. Oxford will have taken a leading role in the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs).	Finalise an EV Strategy and Implementation Plan for Oxford, and work with ODS and commercial operators to identify optimal approaches for its implementation to accelerate the delivery of EV infrastructure across the city, including greater provision for car clubs.	The EV Strategy has been published and an implementation plan being developed currently. Alongside this we continue delivery of grant funded projects which are delivering the objectives of the strategy.
	7. Air quality throughout the city will have improved.	Work with officers at the County Council to deliver an integrated programme of transport measures to reduce private car use and improve air quality in the city, including the phased roll out of ZEZ and increase in walking, cycling and public transport usage.	The Zero Emission Zone was launched in Feb 2022 and officers and members continue to work and engage with the County Council on transport plans for the city including traffic filters, expansion of the ZEZ and WPL.
	8. Our streets, neighbourhoods and open spaces will be greener with more trees and other plants, and increased biodiversity.	Build public understanding of the importance of biodiversity and set a policy on offsetting linked to biodiversity enhancement and identify Council land and other sites - or even buildings - where this could be applied. This will be needed to help meet a statutory requirement (expected from 2023 onwards) that all new development delivers 10% Biodiversity Net Gain on the site itself, or elsewhere under an agreed programme determined by the Council as Planning Authority.	Several social media post has been created with the Councils Ecologist highlighting the importance of biodiversity. We have an adopted policy on BNG which requires 5% net gain and we have delivered some of this on council land and also work with ToE to deliver it where we do not have suitable projects available. Work being scoped which will allow us to look at our full estate and possibly that of other landowners in the city where BNG can be delivered.

		Implement the Council's Urban Forest Strategy, initially by securing funding and sites to deliver additional street trees in Oxford to mark the Platinum Jubilee 'Queen's Canopy' celebrations. Use the opportunity to encourage Oxford institutions and residents to plant trees on their own land.	Completed planting of a Jubilee Avenue of trees to mark the Queens Jubilee. We developed Tree Mail for National Tree week, which provided information on Oxfords Urban Forest and provided advice on how and where to plant trees for residents. Worked with the County Council to secure funding for Woodland Creation Accelerator Fund which has secured funding for officers who will work across Oxfordshire to increase tree cover
	9. The city will become more resilient to climate change including improved flood defences.	Ongoing work to support Environment Agency delivery of the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme.	Work is ongoing to deliver the scheme
<b>Influence</b>	10. We will campaign for the Government to introduce more rigorous energy efficiency standards on new build and bring forward the end of petrol and diesel vehicle sales.	Work with neighbouring authorities through Oxfordshire Plan 2050 and through Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership (ZCOP) to lobby Government for powers that would allow councils to set higher energy efficiency standards for new developments.	ZCOP invited Lord Deben to a meeting where this was raised. Since collapse of OP2050 focus needs to be on individual planning authorities work is ongoing.
	11. Citizens, businesses and other organisations in the city will be taking action to reduce carbon emissions and increase biodiversity.	Work with other Oxfordshire councils to implement a Zero Carbon Communities Campaign to encourage and support residents to reduce their own carbon footprints. Train and educate our Council staff so we can use all of our points of contact with citizens to build engagement and encourage behaviour change across domestic energy use, transport, waste and recycling and other areas that help decarbonisation and boost biodiversity.	In July 2022, the Climate Action Oxfordshire website <a href="http://www.climateactionoxfordshire.org.uk">www.climateactionoxfordshire.org.uk</a> and campaign was created in partnership between Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford City Council, Cherwell, South Oxfordshire, West Oxfordshire, and the Vale of White Horse district councils, and OxLEP. The website offers practical advice for people in Oxford city and Oxfordshire wanting to

			<p>reduce their carbon footprint and save energy.</p> <p>The one stop shop has sections aimed at individuals, communities, and organisations, including businesses, and advice on transport, lifestyle, shopping, home and biodiversity matters. The website contains filters so that users can tailor it to their own circumstances. The website is updated with new information and advice to help the county's residents do what they can to reduce their carbon footprint. There are plans to develop and deliver Carbon Literacy Training to key staff, senior managers and members.</p>
		<p>Deliver and implement an updated Recycling and Waste Strategy for Oxford that supports the circular economy and ensures that waste reduction forms a key part of our goal of becoming a zero carbon city by 2040. The updated Strategy will also address an increase in street littering and will help prepare the city for likely significant changes in waste management expected to be introduced by Government following the 2021 Environment Act.</p>	

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**Appendix 3**

# Key statistics and trends

**Population:** 154,300 (2020)

**Student population:** 42,000

**Visitor statistics:** 8 million visitors

**Economic growth:** +14% (2013-2018)

**Tourist income:** £780m

**Educational attainment:** 45.9 score

**Healthcare facilities:** 6 hospitals, theatres and museums of Oxford aren't just used by residents of the city. These public access facilities have a far greater reach, serving much of the county and beyond.

**Map of Oxfordshire:** This map shows the location of usual residence of people who travelled to work in Oxford. Around 70% of people whose workplace was in Oxford lived in the areas coloured in blue, mauve, pink, or orange.

**AccoCoef:** The coefficient of the city is equal to 5 mph.

**Website:** www.oxford.gov.uk

**Oxford City Council Logo:** A logo featuring a lion standing on a shield, with the text "OXFORD CITY COUNCIL" below it.



## Leader's Foreword

In 2019 when we started the process of renewing our four year Council Strategy, no one would have imagined the world that was to come, and the impact the COVID-19 pandemic would have on our wonderful city and the people that live and work here. Publication of our Strategy, which had followed a deep process of consultation, was delayed. However, following a review we were satisfied our strategic ambitions still hold even in this new normal.

Our Strategy is the result of a huge amount of work including a fantastic public and stakeholder response to the consultation, and we believe reflects the focus, dedication and ambition of the Council both now and in the future. It represents the next steps along the journey towards our 2050 Vision for Oxford.

We are unashamedly ambitious for our city which is already a beacon in many aspects nationally and internationally, but which we want to be truly world class for the benefit of all citizens. Our Strategy reflects that ambition – to enable a more inclusive economy in which everyone shares the benefits of growth; to overcome our housing crisis; to support our communities in a way that reduces the inequalities we see across the city; and to take a lead in cutting carbon emissions while ensuring this does not impact citizens' living standards.

We can't deliver these outcomes alone. And so our Strategy sets out where we task ourselves to deliver, where we will work in partnership with others, and where as a voice for Oxford we will use our influence to help achieve these aims.

Looking back on the last Corporate Plan 2016-2020 we made really good progress. We launched two wholly-owned companies

Oxford Direct Services (ODS) and Oxford City Housing Ltd (OCHL) to deliver services and housing. This strengthened our 'Oxford Model' in which the Council seeks to in-source work and retain the associated earnings to help pay for the services it provides. We helped secure the Oxfordshire Growth Deal that is bringing over £500 million of investment in housing and infrastructure across the county. We put in place a new Local Plan to guide and shape new developments in Oxford, so that they respect our past and present while improving our future through the delivery of much needed affordable housing and higher environmental standards. We delivered new council housing at Barton Park, two new temporary accommodation facilities for homeless people, and the refurbishment of all five of the city's tower blocks. We settled 30 Syrian refugee families under a Government scheme – more than any other local authority in the South East. We built the new Horspath Sports Park in partnership with Oxford United and enabled the new Westgate centre that created 3,400 jobs. And we were the first city in the UK to hold a Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change which is now shaping how we are working with others to cut Oxford's emissions to net zero.

Looking forward we clearly have some significant challenges to overcome. Oxford, partly due to its economic reliance on tourists and students has been particularly hit by the pandemic. Unemployment has risen, retail businesses are struggling and we are very concerned about the educational attainment of those children who were already struggling to meet national standards prior to COVID-19. But equally I am proud of the response to the pandemic by Council staff, our partners, and the people of Oxford. Together, we have helped protect and meet the needs of the most vulnerable during the crisis. And together, I am confident we can build a better Oxford.

# Content

Leader’s Foreword

Content ..... 1

Key statistics and trends .....2-5

Our vision. .... 6

Our priorities. .... 6

How we work – a “customer-first” approach ..... 7

Priorities and outcomes ..... 7

Priority: Enable an inclusive economy .....8-9

Priority: Deliver more, affordable housing .....10-11

Priority: Support thriving communities .....12-13

Priority: Pursue a zero carbon Oxford .....14-15

Our organisation..... 16

Our values ..... 16

The external context for our strategy ..... 17

How we’ll use this strategy ..... 17


This Council Strategy is complemented by an annual business plan that sets out the key priorities and actions Oxford City Council will undertake in each of the next four years. This strengthens the prioritisation of key areas of work and support collaboration among officers and with external partners. The first Business Plan covering the period 2020-21 was published in September 2020.

# Key statistics and trends

The following data reflects key underlying trends under each of the Council’s four priority areas, some of which may have been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in the short - and potentially longer - term.

## Population

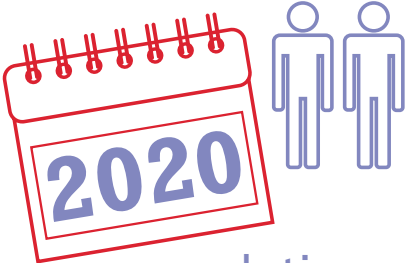
Oxford’s population is 154,300. Between 2001 and 2011 it rose by 11% (15,000 residents). By 2021 it is forecast to increase by another 15,000.



### 42,000

student population

There are 42,000 students in Oxford and with a median age of 29 years we are one of the UK’s youngest cities.




population  
**154,300**



## 8

million visitors

Oxford is the tourism gateway to the rest of Oxfordshire. Approximately 8 million visitors arrive per year, generating £780 million of income for local Oxford businesses. In terms of overseas visitors to the UK, Oxford is the eighth most visited city for staying visits.



## £780m

tourist income




## 6

hospitals



## 9

theatres

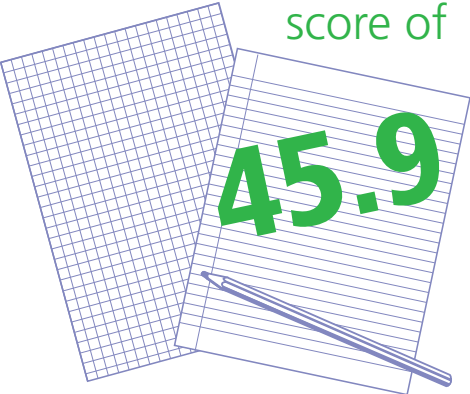


## 12

museums

The hospitals, theatres and museums of Oxford aren’t just used by residents of the city. These public access facilities have a far greater reach, serving much of the county and beyond.

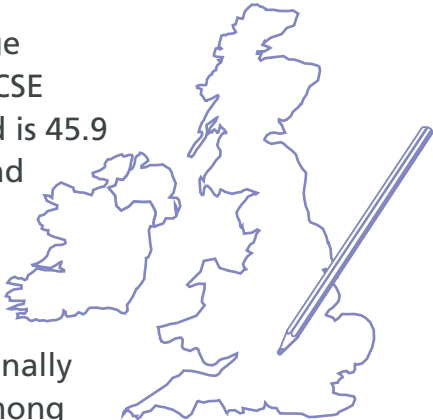
below average attainment 8 score of



## 45.9

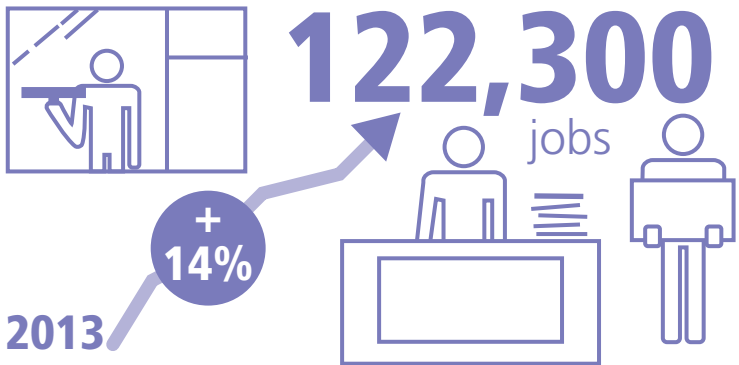
Latest figures show the average attainment 8 (equivalent to GCSE level) score per pupil in Oxford is 45.9 which is below the national and Oxfordshire averages of 46.9 and 47.7 respectively.

11 areas in Oxford are in the most deprived decile nationally for educational attainment among children and young people.





# Enable an Inclusive Economy

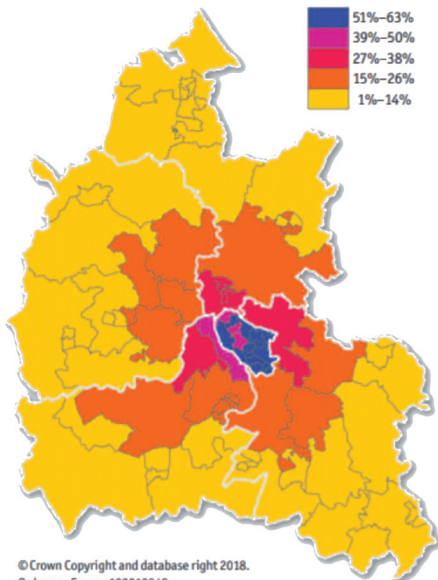


**£6.75** billion: 2018 economic contribution

In 2018 Oxford contributed 6.75bn to the economy. There are 122,300 jobs in the city, 14% more than in 2013, a growth rate stronger than the national level of 10%.



## Usual residence of people who travelled to work in Oxford



This map of Oxfordshire shows the location of usual residence of people who travelled to work in Oxford.

Around **70%** of people whose workplace was in Oxford lived in the areas coloured in **blue, mauve, pink, or orange.**

© Crown Copyright and database right 2018. Ordnance Survey 100019348.

## Key job sectors in Oxford

Education, health, public admin, technology, hospitality, leisure & recreation and manufacturing.

**6,000** businesses

Oxford is home to around 6,000 businesses. This has grown by 12% since 2014, slightly lower than the national average of 18%.

2014

**5** mph

In the first half of 2019, there were 65 days – half of all weekdays - when speeds on at least one major road into Oxford fell to under 5mph during the morning rush hour. Bus speeds in the centre of Oxford are 38% slower than in 2006.



According to the Gini Coefficient, Oxford is the second least equal city in the UK for income equality.



# Deliver more affordable housing

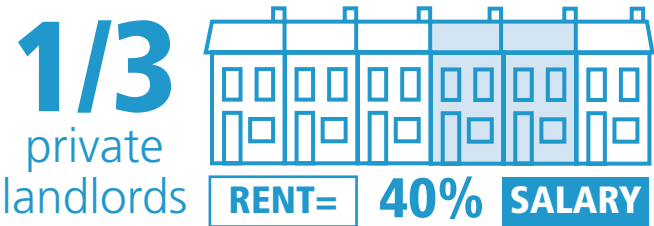
There are over 57,000 dwellings in Oxford. Over the next 15 years 28,000 more homes are needed with 11,000 of these being built in the city.



Average house prices are 17 times average salary making Oxford the least affordable city in the UK.

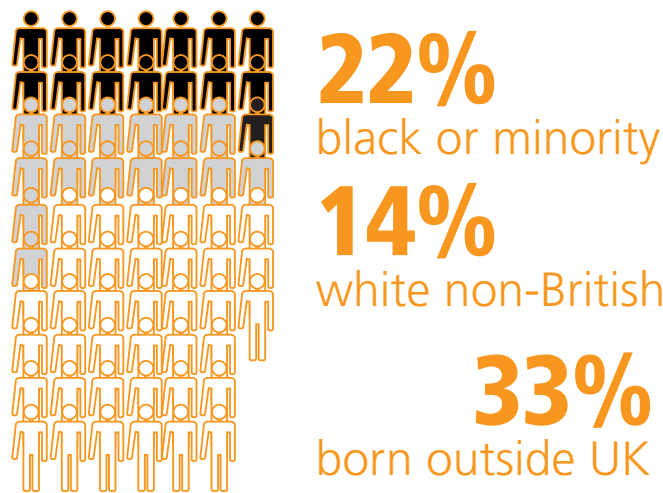


The City Council has social housing stock of 7,800 properties, which is set to increase by more than 1,100 over the next 10 years. There are currently 2,340 households on our housing register.

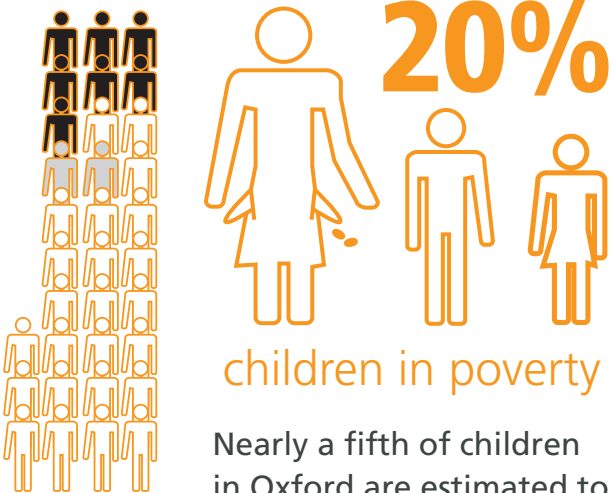


A third of properties in Oxford are private rentals compared to 20% nationally. On average over 40% of monthly salaries are spent on rent.

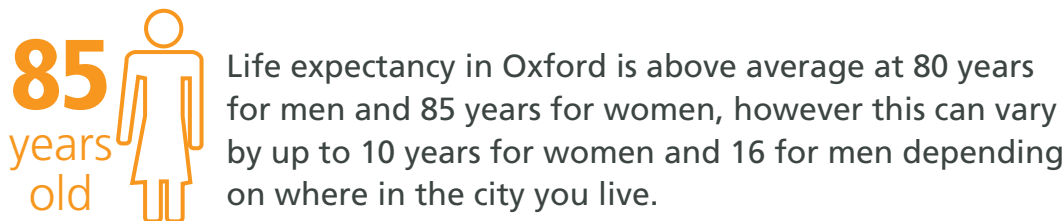
## Support Thriving Communities



Oxford is one of the UK's most diverse cities. 22% of Oxford residents are from a black or minority ethnic group and 14% are from a white but non-British background. 33% were born outside the UK.



Nearly a fifth of children in Oxford are estimated to be living in poverty after housing costs. This rises to over a third in some of the city's most deprived wards.



# 73% physically active



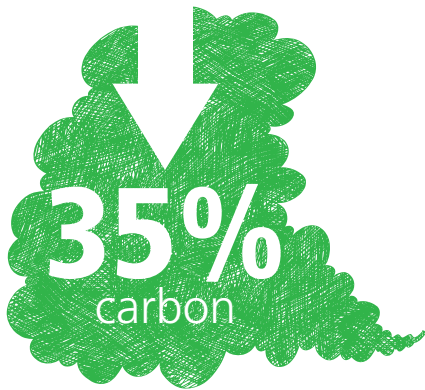
Adults in Oxford are more physically active (73% vs 63%) than the national average and are more likely to have walked or cycled somewhere in the last week (84% vs 72%).



# 4% less than 2018

In November 2019 street count 43 people were rough sleeping. This represents a 16% percent decrease from the 51 counted during the street count in September and a 4% decrease from the 45 people counted in November 2018

## Pursue a zero Carbon Oxford

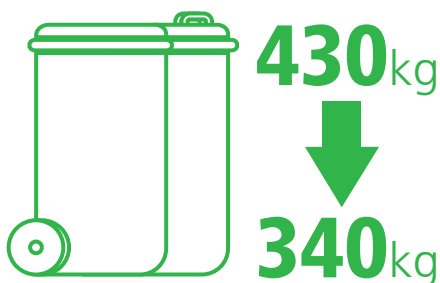


Between 2005 and 2017 overall carbon emissions in Oxford city fell by 35%. The City Council accounts for 1% of the city's total carbon emissions and this has been reduced by 40% in the last four years.

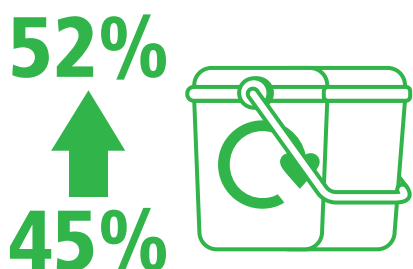
Oxford has seen a significant reduction in air pollution levels over recent years with a fall of 29% in levels of toxic NO<sub>2</sub> between 2014 and 2018. Latest levels are at 46 µg/m<sup>3</sup> annual mean average, taking us nearer to the Government's target of below 40 µg/m<sup>3</sup>.



Oxford's urban forest contains around 248,200 trees which is nearly two trees per person, double the ratio for London. They filter an estimated 65 tonnes of airborne pollutants and remove 2,500 tonnes of carbon from the atmosphere every year.



Over the last four years residents in Oxford have reduced their average residual waste per household from 430kg to 340kg.



Over the same period rates of reuse, recycling or composting of household waste have increased from 45% to 52%.

367

# 248,200



# 2 trees per person



# Our vision

## Building a world-class city for everyone

By creating successful places in which to live and work, supporting our communities and addressing the climate emergency, we will build a fairer, greener city in which everyone can thrive.

# Our priorities

We have set four key priorities over the next four years – all of equal importance: The four priorities are all interconnected, and we will work to achieve them in a joined-up way.



## How we work – a “customer-first” approach

**We work innovatively and efficiently** – we are a flexible and customer-focused team offering high quality services that meet people’s needs.

**We work to tackle inequality** – our employment practices and the way in which we deliver our services aim to provide equality of opportunity and access for all. Our investments and policy-making are all designed to address the social and financial inequalities across Oxford. We value diversity and seek to build a greater sense of togetherness across the city’s communities. We want to ensure all of Oxford’s citizens, including those who are harder to reach, have fair opportunities and a real share in the city’s future.

**We work in partnership with others** – we work with other councils, businesses, communities, the voluntary sector, Oxford’s universities, the Government and other public sector bodies to ensure the way we shape our services and direct our investments is joined-up with others.

**We use our commercial assets for the benefit of local people** – our wholly-owned companies and the commercial properties we own create jobs, support the local economy and provide additional funds that support our delivery of public services. We call this the Oxford Model.

**We are a campaigning organisation** – we work actively to engage with residents, businesses, stakeholders and Government and use our influence to help achieve the aims set out in this Strategy.

## Priorities and outcomes

For each of our four priorities, we have set out the outcomes we would like to see achieved over the next four years, and some of the headline actions we believe will be required to help deliver this.

To support the delivery of the strategy, we produce an annual Business Plan that sets out specific actions and milestones for the year ahead and reports on progress against agreed key performance indicators.



# Priority: Enable an inclusive economy

**Oxford needs a more inclusive economy in which wealth is distributed across our communities and where all citizens can share the benefits of growth.**

Over the next four years we want to see the following outcomes achieved as part of a more inclusive economy:

<b>We will deliver ourselves</b>
1. Our Council-owned companies will have increased their profits to help maintain the services we provide and we will have supported more local businesses, including social enterprises and cooperatives, by changing the way we buy our goods and services
2. Our staff will be more skilled and confident in delivering services our citizens want and our workforce will better reflect Oxford’s diverse population
<b>We will partner with others to help achieve</b>
3. Oxford’s economy will be stronger, with diverse sectors providing a wider range of accessible business and employment opportunities for all
4. We will have secured different types of new workspace in the city to support business and employment growth
5. The movement of people and goods into and within the city will have improved, resulting in less traffic congestion, better air quality and faster journey times
6. The city centre will be relevant to more of our citizens with more accessible public space. The impacts of tourism will be better managed and more of its economic benefits retained locally
7. The city centre will be expanding to the west. Attractive new areas will be emerging around Oxford station, in Oxpens and Osney Mead, but not at the expense of the health and vibrancy of the existing city centre
<b>We will use our influence to seek to achieve</b>
8. More organisations in Oxford will be socially and environmentally responsible - paying the Oxford Living Wage and adopting practices that deliver clean economic growth which benefits all residents
9. Oxford will have improved the workforce skills it needs through higher educational attainment and more training for the jobs of the future



## To support these outcomes we will take the following actions:

- Implement the Oxford City Council Workforce Equalities Action Plan to boost employee diversity through recruitment and apprenticeships and expand the management opportunities for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) staff and women.
- Strengthen the Oxford Model under which Oxford City Council uses insourcing – rather than outsourcing to private businesses – to generate income.
- Use Oxford City Council, Oxford Direct Services Ltd (ODS) and Oxford City Housing Ltd (OCHL) purchasing power to increase the reinvestment of money into the local economy by placing an increased emphasis on social value, alongside quality and cost measures.
- Establish a new Asset Management Strategy to guide the diversification of our commercial property investment portfolio, prioritise investment and management of Oxford City Council's non-housing assets, and how we could use our properties to help generate wealth locally and support existing and new small businesses, social enterprises and cooperatives.
- Implement a new inclusive Economic Strategy to tackle inequality and increase the opportunities for disadvantaged groups to have a fair share in the city's economy and reduce its impact on the environment; while also setting out a plan for delivering the types of different employment space needed to support a more diverse economy.
- Build closer partnerships with the universities to boost productivity in the city's economy and extend economic opportunities to a wider range of Oxford's citizens.
- Work with Oxfordshire County Council to implement Connecting Oxford and improve bus and cycle routes into and around the city, better connecting key employment sites.
- Attract investment to build a new Oxford Station and expand its capacity to provide greater connectivity nationally and locally, including securing commitment to the opening of the Cowley Branch line to passengers.
- Create more accessible public space in the city centre for people to enjoy and reprioritise road space for pedestrians, cyclists and buses.
- Implement a city centre strategy to support independent retailers, enhance the Covered Market, widen the cultural offer, support more temporary uses of empty properties, encourage longer stays by tourists and reduce the impact of coaches and overcrowded streets in the heart of the city.
- Work with partners to create a new mixed housing and commercial quarter in the city centre's west end, alongside infrastructure improvements to create more sustainable transport and movement routes in the area.
- Encourage investment in new skills and apprenticeships across the local economy to tackle inequality and manage the technology challenge to existing jobs.
- Promote the Oxford Living Wage among Oxford employers including the universities and colleges and seek to double the number that adopt it.



# Priority: Deliver more, affordable housing

Intervention is needed to address Oxford’s housing crisis where existing homes are unaffordable for many and demand for good quality homes outstrips what is available.

Over the next four years we want to see the following outcomes achieved to deliver more genuinely affordable housing in Oxford:

<b>We will deliver ourselves</b>
1. We will have increased the supply of high quality, energy efficient, accessible and affordable housing, including new council housing as well as other types of homes to rent and for sale at different prices
2. In regeneration projects such as Blackbird Leys, our new housing will be high quality with improved public spaces and served by good public transport, and cycling and walking routes
3. More Council and private sector tenants will have been supported to stay in their homes when they face the prospect of eviction
<b>We will partner with others to help achieve</b>
4. More developers, housing associations and others will view Oxford as a good place to build a range of different housing types
5. Working with neighbouring authorities we will be implementing the agreed countywide approach to meeting housing needs
6. Working with housing associations we will have delivered more move on accommodation for people housed in supported accommodation
7. Working with landlords we will have improved the quality and energy efficiency of privately-rented homes in Oxford
<b>We will use our influence to seek to achieve</b>
8. New housing including new urban extensions will be being built to create strong communities with good local amenities and sustainable transport links into the city. Sites valued by local people for leisure and recreation will be protected.



### To support these outcomes we will take the following actions:

- Accelerate our housebuilding programme using OCHL and ODS to deliver new affordable homes at speed and scale with a range of tenures including new council housing, shared ownership and a below-market level Oxford Living Rent.
- Offer enhanced planning support to developers, social landlords and community-led housing groups to encourage a faster rate of delivery of new homes, including use of factory-built housing and modular construction.
- Ensure all new homes are built to high standards, including accessible design and high levels of energy efficiency consistent with Oxford's journey towards net zero carbon emissions.
- Take a preventative approach to homelessness, working with landlords and tenants to reduce evictions.
- Implement a selective licencing scheme to improve standards in private sector housing.
- Work with neighbouring councils to address housing need across Oxford's functional economic area to house people close to where they work and in places that enhance a sense of community and wellbeing.





# Priority: Support thriving communities

Oxford’s diverse communities should be equipped, supported and enabled to tackle inequality and ensure everyone is able to play a full part in the life of our city.

Over the next four years we would like to see the following outcomes achieved to support thriving communities across Oxford:

<b>We will deliver ourselves</b>
1. Our services, grants, community and leisure facilities, parks and cultural events will have helped reduce inequality, increase cohesion and improve health and wellbeing across Oxford’s communities
2. Children and young people’s resilience and confidence will have increased through the educational and recreational activities we offer
3. As a good landlord, we will have worked with our Council tenants and residents to strengthen local communities; and worked with other major landlords to improve the services they provide
4. Our parks and public spaces will remain clean, safe, and well maintained, and will be accessible to more people to enjoy the health and wellbeing benefits they provide
<b>We will partner with others to help achieve</b>
5. Working with neighbouring councils and partners, we will prevent homelessness, move people in temporary accommodation more rapidly into secure housing, and ensure that no one has to sleep rough on the streets of Oxford
6. Local voluntary and community groups will be better engaged with, supported and enabled to take a greater role in improving the city and the lives of citizens
7. Increasing numbers of people will walk and cycle around the city, benefitting their health and wellbeing
8. Our work with Thames Valley Police will keep communities safe and help reduce hate crime, human trafficking, drugs-related crime and antisocial behaviour
9. Vulnerable people will continue to be safeguarded against harm
<b>We will use our influence to seek to achieve</b>
10. Oxford’s diversity will continue to be celebrated, with a greater sense of togetherness across its communities
11. Citizens will increase their active engagement in civic and political life

### To support these outcomes we will take the following actions:

- Create an integrated locality-based delivery model for community and housing services with multi-skilled teams, embedding learnings obtained from the COVID-19 response hubs.
- Implement an Equalities Action Plan that shapes our services and use of our community assets to address inequalities particularly for disadvantaged, hard-to-reach and excluded groups.
- Develop data sources to better understand the strengths and needs of our diverse communities and to target our work to where the gaps are.
- Work with our tenants and other citizens to understand their needs, simplify the way they can engage with us and involve them more in design and decision-making in regard to Council services and facilities in their local communities.
- Modernise our community assets and explore innovative approaches for their operation which encourages engagement and a sense of community ownership.
- Deliver a Thriving Communities Strategy that sets ambitions and actions to reduce isolation and support community involvement, health and wellbeing through active lifestyles, volunteering, cultural engagement, and use of our parks and community assets.
- Join up our service delivery at a local level, improve our landlord services for Council tenants and strengthen our relationships with housing associations to improve the service they provide to their tenants.
- Work with health partners to reduce health inequalities, particularly across disadvantaged communities.
- Work with neighbouring councils and partners in the city to deliver a cross-county approach to early intervention on rough sleeping and providing wraparound to support people moving from rough sleeping to safe and stable living arrangements.
- Develop a "One Council" approach to tackling homelessness.
- Work with Thames Valley Police, other partners and communities to tackle the visible drugs market, challenge racism, Antisemitism and Islamophobia, human trafficking and serious antisocial behaviour.
- Use our grants programme and partnership working to enable local voluntary and community groups to help create resilient communities, improve outcomes for citizens and reduce inequalities across our communities.
- Celebrate diversity by supporting and stimulating a wide variety of events and cultural activities that bring Oxford people together.



# Priority: Pursue a zero carbon Oxford

In 2019 Oxford City Council declared a Climate Emergency and held the Oxford Citizens’ Assembly on Climate Change. The clear message from citizens was that they want the city to continue to take a lead in reducing emissions and increasing biodiversity, while ensuring this does not impact citizens’ living standards.

Over the next four years we would like to see the following outcomes achieved as we pursue a zero carbon Oxford:

<b>We will deliver ourselves</b>
1. Oxford City Council will have reduced the carbon footprint from its own operations to zero
2. All new building by Oxford City Council will be significantly more energy efficient – moving towards near-zero or zero carbon standards
3. We will have a significant programme of energy efficiency improvements across our existing council housing
<b>We will partner with others to help achieve</b>
4. All new building by developers in Oxford will be significantly more energy efficient – moving towards near-zero or zero carbon standards, with some examples of carbon-positive development
5. We will be promoting and enforcing the higher energy efficiency standards that will have been set nationally by the Government for residential and commercial landlords
6. Oxford will have taken a leading role in the adoption of electric vehicles
7. Air quality throughout the city will have improved
8. Our streets, neighbourhoods and open spaces will be greener with more trees and other plants, and increased biodiversity
9. The city will become more resilient to climate change including improved flood defences
<b>We will use our influence to seek to achieve</b>
10. We will campaign for the Government to introduce more rigorous energy efficiency standards on new build and bring forward the end of petrol and diesel vehicle sales
11. Citizens, businesses and other organisations in the city will be taking action to reduce carbon emissions and waste, and increase biodiversity and recycling



### To support these outcomes we will take the following actions:

- Reduce Oxford City Council's carbon footprint from our own activities to zero where we pay the bill – including our buildings and fleet.
- Develop and implement an action plan in response to the recommendations of the Oxford Citizens Assembly on Climate Change.
- Work with tenants to agree and implement a programme of retrofitting our council housing to significantly reduce emissions.
- Work in partnership across the county to coordinate our response to the climate emergency.
- Use our influence with government, partners, businesses and citizens to lobby, inform, convene, educate and campaign to help respond to the climate emergency.
- Engage all commercial and residential landlords to level up energy efficiency standards towards B rating, with information provided and enforcement action where necessary.
- Create a citywide network of electric vehicle charging points to encourage the take-up of electric vehicles.
- Implement a Zero Emissions Zone - initially in the city centre and eventually citywide - to improve air quality and encourage further take up of ultralow emission vehicles.
- Encourage and enable further innovation and investment in green technology in Oxford, moving from pilot to full deployment wherever possible.
- Use our planning system to ensure the natural environment is enhanced and carbon emissions are reduced through all new development.
- Work in partnership with others to increase the city's resilience to climate change, particularly flooding.
- Encourage and enable public access to nature and support a significant programme to increase biodiversity and tree-planting.
- Reduce amount of waste we collect and increase the proportion we recycle.
- Review our People Strategy, ways of working and use of technology to reduce Oxford City Council employees' overall travel to work impact on the environment.

# Our organisation

To achieve our aims, we need to be responsible, reliable, adaptable and innovative as an organisation. We need to think and act strategically and at pace, actively engaging citizens in helping us make the decisions that impact them. We need a diverse workforce that is representative of Oxford and offers opportunities to under-represented or disadvantaged groups. We need a supportive and motivating environment that brings out the best in our people. We need the right structures in place including wholly-owned businesses, joint ventures and partnerships to maximise the resources we can bring to bear. We need strong governance, robust processes and efficient systems to ensure our people are equipped and empowered to deliver their best for Oxford.

# Our values

How we do things is as important as what we do. Our values reflect the important shared attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours that everyone working at Oxford City Council is expected to demonstrate to our colleagues, stakeholders, customers, partners and volunteers.



**One Team** - We work together as one team with the shared aim of achieving effective strategic outcomes and organisational success



**Inclusion & Respect** - We communicate with transparency and respect, creating a working environment that is based on trust, honesty, and integrity. We celebrate being diverse, where there are no barriers to inclusion and where we view the differences between people as a source of strength



**Service Excellence** - We keep our promises and deliver an agreed standard of work to all; always learning, and striving for excellence



**Stepping Up** - We step up, drive it, and deliver it, we collaborate, communicate and we're accountable. We do what we say we'll do



**Amazing Outcomes** - We can adapt ideas and new ways of working to bring innovation and continuous improvement to our business

## The external context for our strategy

Like all organisations we need to be prepared for, and responsive to developing trends, new challenges and change that emerge at a local, regional, national and global level. These include both threats and opportunities for Oxford. Over the next four years we expect this to include:

- The need to address the economic impacts and poverty related issues in Oxford as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic
- The need to significantly accelerate actions to combat climate change while managing increased risks of flooding
- Managing and mitigating the impacts of Brexit on Oxford's citizens and businesses
- Responding as necessary to the agenda set out by the UK Government
- Opportunities to apply innovations in technology and big data to improve the productivity of public services, alongside the task of managing the disruption to jobs that is likely to accompany this
- Harnessing the Oxford-Cambridge Arc growth opportunity to ensure we deliver inclusive and clean growth for Oxfordshire
- The high cost of housing in Oxford putting ownership out of the reach of many, and insecure tenancies preventing families setting down roots

- Rising levels of obesity and an ageing population that puts increasing pressure on many public services
- The increasing impact of cybercrime
- Engaging proactively with equality, diversity and inclusion issues highlighted by the Black Lives Matter movement

## How we'll use this strategy

This strategy is designed to be used as a framework to guide our thinking and decision-making and resource allocation, and help ensure that everything we do takes us closer to achieving our vision. It succeeds Oxford City Council's Corporate Plan 2016-20 and updates our objectives, while maintaining the same overarching aims to achieve sustainable systematic change for Oxford.

The strategy is underpinned by the Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2020-2024 that sets out our financial priorities and commitments over the next four years. To support the delivery of the strategy, we will produce an annual Business Plan that will set specific priorities for the year ahead and report on progress against agreed key performance indicators. In turn the Business Plan will be complemented by Oxford City Council's annual Budget that will allocate resources against the priorities set.









## Appendix 4

### Form to be used for the Full Equalities Impact Assessment

<b>Service Area:</b>	<b>Corporate Strategy</b>	<b>Section:</b> CPPC	<b>Date of Initial assessment:</b> 19/01/2023	<b>Key Person responsible for assessment:</b> Mish Tullar	<b>Date assessment commenced:</b>
<b>Name of Policy to be assessed:</b>			Corporate Business Plan 2023-2024		
<b>1. In what area are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact</b>			<b>Race</b>	<b>Disability</b>	<b>Age</b>
			<b>Gender reassignment</b>	<b>Religion or Belief</b>	<b>Sexual Orientation</b>
			<b>Sex</b>	<b>Pregnancy and Maternity</b>	<b>Marriage &amp; Civil Partnership</b>
<b>Other strategic/ equalities considerations</b>			<b>Safeguarding/ Welfare of Children and vulnerable adults</b>	<b>Mental Wellbeing/ Community Resilience</b>	<b>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022</b>
			<b>Countywide Homelessness Strategy</b>	<b>Thriving Communities Strategy</b>	
<b>2. Background:</b>  Give the background information to the policy and the perceived problems with			1. Oxford City Council's Business Plan 2023-24 is an annual document that sets out publically the Council's priority work programme activities for the year.		

<p>the policy which are the reason for the Impact Assessment.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. The Draft Business Plan 2023-24 sets out the fourth year of activity toward achieving the outcomes set out in our Council Strategy 20-24.</li> <li>3. The Business Plan was developed in conjunction with, and is supported by, the annual budget and medium term financial plan (MTFP) that will allocate resources against the agreed priorities.</li> <li>4. The Business Plan will inform the actions laid out in each department service plan.</li> </ol> <p>Progress in delivery of the actions set out within the Business Plan will be tracked through the year, alongside the existing corporate key performance indicators</p> <p>The aim of the Corporate Business Plan Cabinet report is to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Agree the draft Oxford City Council Corporate Business Plan priorities 2023/24, which set out the Council's priority work for the next financial year;</li> <li>2. Delegate authority to the Head of Corporate Strategy in consultation with the Council Leader to make further minor amendments to the draft Business Plan priorities before implementation</li> <li>3. Note the progress made in delivery against the actions set out in the current year's Corporate Business Plan 2022/23.</li> </ol> <p>Service areas involved and impacted include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Corporate Strategy</li> <li>Housing Services</li> <li>Regeneration</li> <li>Financial Services</li> <li>Regulatory Services and Community Safety</li> <li>Corporate Property</li> <li>Business Improvement</li> <li>Planning Services</li> <li>OX Place</li> <li>ODS</li> </ul>
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	Community Services Law and Governance
<b>3. Methodology and Sources of Data:</b>  The methods used to collect data and what sources of data	<p>Corporate strategy outcomes and individual service plans</p> <p>22-23 progress update and corporate strategy 20-24 data determined actions for the next year</p> <p>Qualitative data from conversations and data they had for their own service areas</p> <p>Considered methodology of collecting data and chose one on one conversations approach to enable discussions. Decisions recorded and tracked on Teams page excel spreadsheet. All service heads, appropriate officers, directors and Chief Executive were involved, collaborated and given time to feedback. Support and collaboration built in to methodology.</p> <p>Process reviewed over three months.</p>

#### 4. Consultation

This section should outline all the consultation that has taken place on the EIA. It should include the following.

- Why you carried out the consultation.
- Details about how you went about it.
- A summary of the replies you received from people you consulted.
- An assessment of your proposed policy (or policy options) in the light of the responses you received.
- A statement of what you plan to do next

1. Meetings were held with all Heads of Service to understand each service areas actions for the Corporate Business Plan Priorities, for the year ahead. 15 people attended the in person Operations Delivery Group meeting in November 2022.
2. Group meetings were followed by individual one to one meetings. Heads of Service included officers from their service area in the consultation process. 10 one to one meetings between held December 2022 and January 2023.  
Service Heads updated a live Teams document with actions relating to their service area.
3. The Corporate Business Plan and Corporate Business Plan covering report will go to Cabinet in March 2023, following consultation with portfolio holders.
4. Citywide conversations (strand 1, 2 and 3) for TCS which provides various action for Priority 3, Thriving Communities.
5. Directors, CEX and Cabinet members were consulted and reviewed Business Plan

70 members of Teams page able to review and edit the live document in draft stage.

**5. Assessment of Impact:**

Provide details of the assessment of the policy on the six primary equality strands. There may have been other groups or individuals that you considered. Please also consider whether the policy, strategy or spending decisions could have an impact on safeguarding and / or the welfare of children and vulnerable adults

<b>Race</b> Positive	<b>Disability</b> Positive	<b>Age</b> Positive
<b>Gender reassignment</b> Positive	<b>Religion or Belief</b> Positive	<b>Sexual Orientation</b> Positive
<b>Sex</b> Positive	<b>Pregnancy and Maternity</b> Neutral	<b>Marriage &amp; Civil Partnership</b> Neutral
<p>Risk to reputation – not meeting strategic targets            Impact equality and environment            If we do not meet our targets, all of these will be impacted on different levels, eg:            Joint approach to support young people may have positive or negative affect on children, depending on outcome of action plan.</p> <p>We cannot suggest which areas will be impacted in a positive or negative way as this will depend on the outcome of the business plan.</p>		

<p><b>6. Consideration of Measures:</b></p> <p>This section should explain in detail all the consideration of alternative approaches/mitigation of adverse impact of the policy</p>	<p>The Council Strategy 2020-2024 is complemented by the annual Corporate Business Plan that sets out the key priorities and actions Oxford City Council will undertake in each of the next four years. This strengthens the prioritisation of key areas of work and support collaboration among officers and with external partners.</p> <p>There is no alternative approach. Mitigation of adverse impact is ensured upon consideration of actions within business plan at draft stage.</p> <p>The Business Plan has been created from the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and Thriving Communities Strategies, grants review, service integration programme and Economic Strategies, which include mitigation of impact, and associated EqlAs; using a whole system approach and collaborative, collective working</p> <p>Other associated strategies and consideration of measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pay gaps</li> <li>Social value in procurement template – embed equalities impact in business with other organisations</li> <li>Monitoring ethnic groups</li> <li>Rough sleeping strategy monitors access to homes</li> <li>Easy read documents, mitigates negative impact emerging around disability. However, this is not a standard practice. It has been incorporated in different areas at different levels however we will need to monitor impact.</li> </ul>
<p><b>6a. Monitoring Arrangements:</b></p> <p>Outline systems which will be put in place to monitor for adverse impact in the future and this should include all relevant timetables. In addition it could include a summary and assessment of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progress updates feature in annual cabinet reports</li> <li>Scrutiny work plan</li> <li>Internal audit programme</li> <li>Corporate dashboard monthly</li> <li>Corporate, service and team KPIs updated and reported on.</li> </ul>

your monitoring, making clear whether you found any evidence of discrimination.		Monitoring – EDI steering group  Document will grow and change as new information is presented			
<b>7. Date reported and signed off by Cabinet:</b>					
<b>8. Conclusions:</b>  What are your conclusions drawn from the results in terms of the policy impact		1. Keep monitoring the protected characteristics. Prompt service heads when next collecting data for any risks to protected characteristics. 2. Ongoing plans of delivering equalities training which will help.			
<b>9. Are there implications for the Service Plans?</b>	YES/NO	<b>10. Date the Service Plans will be updated</b>		<b>11. Date copy sent to Equalities Lead Officer</b>	
<b>13. Date reported to Scrutiny and Executive Board:</b>		<b>14. Date reported to Cabinet:</b>		<b>12. The date the report on EqlA will be published</b>	

Signed L Jones

Signed M Tullar

**Please list the team members and service areas that were involved in this process:**

EDI Lead, Community Services  
 Safeguarding Coordinator, Corporate Strategy  
 Head of Service, Corporate Strategy

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**To:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 15 March 2023  
**Report of:** Head of Financial Services  
**Title of Report:** Integrated Performance Report for Quarter 3 2022/23

Summary and recommendations	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To update Cabinet on Finance, Risk and Corporate Performance matters as at 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2022
<b>Key decision:</b>	No
<b>Executive Board Member:</b>	Councillor Ed Turner, Deputy Leader (Statutory) – Finance and Asset Management
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	Efficient and Effective Council
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	Council Strategy 2020-24

<b>Recommendations:</b> That Cabinet resolves to:	
1.	<b>Note</b> the projected financial outturn for 2022-23 as well as the current position on risk and performance as at 31 December 2022; and
2.	<b>Note</b> the change in timing of the insurance contract procurement exercise for the new contract to commence from 1 <sup>st</sup> January 2024 as outlined in paragraph 18.

Appendices	
Appendix A	General Fund - Dec 2022 Forecast Outturn
Appendix B	Housing Revenue Account - December 2022 Forecast Outturn
Appendix C	Capital Programme - December 2022
Appendix D	Corporate KPIs - December 2022

## Introduction and background

1. This report updates the Cabinet on the financial, corporate performance and corporate risk positions of the Council as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022. A brief summary is as follows:

## Financial Position

- **General Fund** – the outturn position is forecasting an adverse variance of £0.718 million against the net budget agreed by Council in February 2022 of £22.382 million after a £2 million transfer from the COVID reserve.
  - **Housing Revenue Account** – The budgeted surplus agreed by the Council in February 2022 was £0.064 million. Currently the outturn forecast is an adverse variance of £0.543 million;
  - **Capital Programme** – The budget for 2022-23 approved at Council in February 2022, after allowing for carry forward of unspent balances in 2021-22 and a reprofile of the HRA budget was set at £210.98 million. After some additional slippage in the first two quarters of the year the latest outturn budget is £126.24 million. As at the last reported position to Cabinet of 30<sup>th</sup> September, outturn forecast was £151.271 million which following further slippage of £44.797 million now stands at £106.474 million as at the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022.
2. **Performance** – There are 23 Corporate Indicators for the current financial year, 6 of which are rated Green (on target); 6 are rated Amber (within a tolerance of target) and 1 is rated Red (outside of target), there are also 10 indicators which are tracking indicators or have no data available. More details can be found in paragraph 20.
  3. **Corporate Risk Management** – There are four red corporate risks at the end of quarter three. These relate to actions taken to ensure housing delivery and supply for the city of Oxford and to enable sufficient house building and investment; local, national or international factors adversely affecting the economic growth of the city; negative impacts of Climate Change; and delivery of services by external suppliers and partners. More details of the risks can be found in paragraphs 18 to 19.

## Financial Position

### General Fund Revenue

4. The overall Net Budget Requirement agreed by the Council in February 2022 was £22.382 million. Since setting the budget, service area expenditure has increased by a net total of £1.811 million. This is the net movement to release the pay inflation to services from the contingency (shown within the corporate line) with the agreed pay award. The Net Budget Requirement for this transaction remains unchanged since this is simply a virement.
5. As at 31st December 2022 the General Fund Service Areas excluding SLA's (service level agreement) and capital charges indicates an adverse variance of £1.596 million, the details of these variances are summarised below:
  - **Corporate Property** – an adverse variance forecast of £1.117 million due to income from a regeneration project that has been budgeted for as revenue income, which now needs to be classified as capital income. The offset of this variance is shown in corporate accounts against Direct Revenue Funding resources used to finance the capital programme and corporate contingencies which are now both reduced to zero. The remaining income budget is on target with a level of bad debt provision still in place. Outstanding debt is approximately £6million and a provision for bad debt stands at around £4million.
  - **Community Services** – a favourable variance of £0.483 million. There are savings on salaries within the Community Centre team, Youth Ambition team

and Localities teams due to posts not being filled. We are also receiving additional income above that budgeted at BlackBird Leys and East Oxford Community Centres due to the delay of their closure. The Town Hall is also seeing a favourable variance due to income over and above budget and some operational cost savings.

- **Planning Services** - a favourable variance of £0.090 million is forecast due to an increase in major applications in the last month. There are also salary savings due to some vacant posts being held
- **Oxford Direct Services Client** – adverse variance of £0.468 million. The ODS board have declared a dividend for 2020-21 of £0.600 million which was paid in November 2022 and represents a positive variance. The 2021-22 dividend of £1.068 million is not expected to be declared until the sign off of the accounts later this year and therefore has been slipped into next financial year as it will not be paid until then, this nets off against the positive variance to give an overall adverse variance.

Car park income is now showing a nil variance as usage is picking up and income on parking income is above that budgeted for, albeit below pre Covid levels. The change to park and ride charges came into effect at the beginning of October and across all of the park and ride sites the usage has increased by 17% for the 3 month period of the trial compared to the previous 3 months with a small increase in income of 3%;

- **Business Improvement** – adverse variance of £0.194 million which is due to staffing overspends in the Contact Centre, this is due an increase in call volumes mainly relating to enquiries regarding the £150 energy rebate grants. There is also an expected overspend on postage charges in year. Work is ongoing in both areas to mitigate the overspends.
- **Financial Services** – adverse variance of £0.053 million primarily due to bank charges continuing to be above budget due to non-compliance of Payment Card Industry Data Security Standards (PCIDSS). The self-assessment questionnaire has been submitted to the service provider to establish whether costs can be reduced from the mitigations the Council has already taken;
- **Law & Governance** – adverse variance of £0.060 million due to continuing recruitment issues and the need to use locum staff who command a higher rate although this is mitigated somewhat by additional income from the management arrangements with West Oxfordshire District Council.

## Corporate Accounts

6. Overall favourable variance of £1.438 million, which is made up of:

- £0.550 million reduction in the budget of Direct Revenue Funding for the capital programme to contribute towards the variation in the commercial rents of £1.117 million referred to above;
- A favourable variance of £1.1 million on interest payable due to a reduced need to borrow for HRA and General Fund capital schemes estimated at around £45 million over 2021-22 and forecast for 2022-23;
- A favourable variance of £0.587 million on investment interest due to higher balances and interest rates being received on investments;

- An adverse variance of £0.582 million relating to interest charged to the HRA due to reduced borrowing requirements;
- Reduction in interest due from ODS of £0.200 million due to less vehicles being purchased in 2021/22.

## Contingencies

7. Overall adverse variance of £0.560 million, resulting from a:

- Favourable variance of £0.550 million as the second part of the adjustment to cover the £1.117 million reduction in commercial rents shown above. Contingencies are now reduced to zero.
- A pressure of £0.400 million which has been included to cover the cost of a one off salary payment of £500 to be made to all staff to help support them with the cost of living increases under a decision made by the Chief Executive under urgent powers.
- Utility cost pressure is now reduced to £0.710 million as our best estimate to date, however, the market is very volatile and fluctuating on a daily basis, and the forecasts are being updated as information is available.

## Efficiencies

8. Of the £2.351 million of new efficiencies introduced in the 2022/23 budget, most are on target to be achieved. The decision regarding the letting of the whole of St Aldate's Chambers will allow us to realise these savings. The printing and scanning budget is currently overspending in year so further investigation is required to ensure these savings are achieved. As mentioned above call volumes in the contact centre have increased significantly making it difficult to realise those savings identified.

	Budgeted savings 2022/23 £000's	On track Y/N	Comments
<u>Efficiencies</u>			
St Aldates Chambers	199	Y	On track to make savings with new tenant to occupy building by Dec 2022
ICT Contracts - Strategic review	200	Y	System rationalisation, as contracts come to an end should be achievable
Service Integration Project	480	Y	Post savings in Communities £168k; £90k saving on Director roles, post in HIA £46k and £176k turnover savings across the teams
Housing Needs System and Structure change	200	Y	Restructure almost complete and on track to deliver £238k in 22/23 and a further £50k in 23/24 and 24/25
County Wide rough sleeping recommissioning strategy efficiencies	142	Y	savings across a variety of areas identified to make the total saving
Council Tax Reduction Scheme	120	Y	Linkage to channel shift and Civica Open Revenues introduction
Replacement Revenues and Benefits system	100	Y	Linkage to channel shift and Civica Open Revenues introduction
			Full management fee of £500k agreed and being paid. Utility costs are being reviewed and have been calculated and recharged to Fusion, but unsure if these will be paid in full, but £100k saving will be achieved in year
Leisure services review	100	Y	savings identified
Review of voluntary sector grants	200	Y	partially implemented, trials on cashless car parks looking successful
Cashless payments	20	Y	Overspends showing in this area - further review needed to ensure savings are achieved
Printing and scanning	50	N	the scheme has now gone live and income is being received
Selective licensing	369	Y	
<u>Transformation projects</u>			
Procurement	50	N	at risk but procurement are working with services to identify savings
			Currently overspending on staffing in the contact centre due to increased call volumes which is making it difficult to find these savings
Customer services	63	N	customer experience savings
Service based savings	46	Y	CORVU has been taken off line so savings will be made
CORVU replacement	12	Y	
	2,351		

## Housing Revenue Account (“the HRA”)

9. The HRA budgeted surplus agreed by the Council in February 2022 was £0.064 million. The forecast outturn is currently projecting an adverse variance of £0.543 million.

10. Key variances within the HRA are detailed below:

- **Miscellaneous Income** – favourable variance of £0.100 million additional income from Furnished Tenancy, this will help offset the increase in furniture purchases mentioned below.
- **Management and Services (stock related)** – a small adverse variance of £0.006 million, this is the net position of pressures on utility costs (£314k) and additional furniture purchases (£191k) offset by (£546k) savings on vacant posts and some supplies and services budgets, namely court costs.
- **Other Revenue Spend (Stock related)** – favourable variance of £0.270 million of the consultancy budget held, as there hasn't been any spend to date.
- **Responsive and Cyclical repairs** – a net adverse variance of £1.260 million due to increases in material prices and work demand. QL transactions are now being posted into Agresso and this is showing a year to date overspend. The forecast pressure arises from ODS delegated works which is forecast to be overspent by £2.260 million, this is being offset by forecast savings of almost £1.0 m from other repairs and maintenance budgets. Officers are working with ODS to reduce the pressure as much as possible, and are looking to mitigate this overspend position further by suspending some areas of work. The main adverse variances making up the £2.260 million are:
  - General Minor Works (£1.350m) – the expenditure against this budget is to be examined for any items that can be legitimately charged to capital. A significant proportion of this spend relates to items costing between £5,000 and £10,000
  - Fencing (£0.650m) – ODS have reported an increase in fencing work due to storm damage. Members will need to consider options for a revised approach which either increases ongoing expenditure in the area, funded by budget savings elsewhere, or changing the specification for works to ensure the budget is adhered to in future.
  - Void works (£0.260m) – an increase in the number of void properties has arisen as a result of the investment in new housing stock. ODS estimate that for every 10 new properties, 7 voids are generated as tenants move out of the older stock into the new builds.

## Capital

11. The capital budget, as approved by the Council at its meeting in February 2022, was set at £210.981 million. Since that date the budget has been increased to take account of unspent balances rolled forward from 2021-22 totalling £26.8 million across HRA and GF. With other in year adjustments include reprofiling of the HRA capital programme, new approvals and slippage of schemes, giving a revised latest budget of £125.817 million.

12. Spend against the budget up to December 2022 is £53.527 million, which equates to 43% of the latest budget, and the forecast outturn is £106.475 million with a total of £44.797 million variance on Quarter 2.
13. While efforts continue to accurately profile capital expenditure, this is offset in part by the very challenging external environment in relation to increasing construction costs, and delays across our supply chains. This is affecting projects that have been due to move forward into the delivery phase, being paused while value engineering and/or retendering is undertaken to ensure the Council moves forward with adequate mitigation in place around cost certainty and risk. The supply chain issues are also affecting projects in delivery, where delays mean in some cases projects cannot complete, and spend cannot be made. There is also significant slippage shown due to prolonged and complex contract negotiations with grant funders and delivery partners, which whilst frustrating is necessary to ensure the Council is entering into projects in the best possible position to deliver schemes.

### General Fund

14. A summary of the General Fund schemes by project type is shown below and this provides an insight into the value of development projects that the Council is undergoing. It highlights that a significant percentage of the capital programme relates to Housing Company Loans of which a significant value has slipped in this quarter to reflect a more accurate year end position.

Project Classification	Projects	In Delivery Stage	Latest Budget	Spend to Date	% Spent	Q2 Forecast	Variance from Q2	Q3 Forecast
Project - Development	37	8	9,542,300	3,662,752	38%	13,744,978	(6,286,027)	7,458,951
Project - ICT	16	7	808,157	876,999	109%	1,047,204	140,000	1,187,204
Project - Compliance	5	0	584,977	210,346	36%	324,260	279,717	603,977
Project - Other	15	5	2,947,450	232,594	8%	2,957,208	(1,472,522)	1,484,686
Rolling Programme	9	2	7,041,180	1,588,459	23%	7,586,397	(1,858,681)	5,727,716
Housing Company Loans	2	0	21,141,700	2,829,935	13%	25,371,476	(15,561,476)	9,810,000
Other Capital Spend	18	1	26,081,419	13,076,756	50%	26,765,994	(2,191,696)	24,574,298
<b>General Fund Total</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>68,147,183</b>	<b>22,477,843</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>77,797,517</b>	<b>(26,950,685)</b>	<b>50,846,832</b>

15. Details of the General Fund slippage are:

- East Oxford Community Centre – slippage of £3.530 million, delays to project commencement following vacant possession and extended discharge of planning conditions. Service disconnections delayed the start of the demolition;
- National Homelessness Property Fund – slippage of £1.0 million due to a tightness in the market driven by higher interest rates and general economic uncertainty. As a result far fewer properties are currently available than would otherwise be expected;
- MT Vehicle replacement – slippage of £0.382 million, due to delays in receiving delivery of vehicles from the manufacturer's, many items are on order and expected to be received before the end of March 2023;
- Enabling works – Decarbonisation Project – slippage of £0.400 million, retention payment and some outstanding items will be paid for in 23/24, overall a project underspend is likely but this is currently being finalised;

- Stock Condition surveys – slippage of £1.293 million, which includes slippage of £0.747 million due to the work on the former Jamie's unit being delayed due to unexpected additional work required on site during the set up and mobilisation phase;
- Blackbird Leys Regeneration – Slippage of £0.100 million, detailed viability review is being undertaken resulting in delay to the scheme and the submission of the planning application. This is indicative slippage the programme is under review with Peabody (formerly Catalyst);
- Cave Street Development – Slippage of £0.194 million. Planning has been approved and Business plan updated but shows a significant viability risk due to construction cost increase and increase in interest rates. Agreed to proceed to tender of main contract to enable value engineering but an updated business case may be required;
- Depot Rationalisation – slippage of £0.225 million, project paused until further information on land acquisition options progresses;
- Osney Mead Path Works – slippage of £0.100 million, further slippage on this scheme due to delays in agreeing contractual terms with Homes England;
- Osney Bridge – slippage of £0.200 million. There is slippage on this scheme while Growth Deal funds were approved by Central Government, and now they are, to enable amendments to funding agreements to be finalised and contracts to be completed;
- City Cycle Schemes – slippage of £0.730 million, the inclement weather has led to delays on site so some spend will slip into Q1 of 2023/24;
- City Centre Restart – slippage of £0.100 million, due to reprofiling of the programme of projects with other grant that is available but has specific spend deadlines to maximise funding overall;
- Housing Company Loans – underspend of £15.060 million due to reduced borrowing requirement from OX Place;
- Growth Deal Registered Provider Payments – slippage of £0.706 million, final grant paid for William Morris Close, remaining balance to be paid out in future years
- Northern Gateway – slippage of £1.5 million to allow for agreements between the contractor (TWO), Homes England and the Council to be signed;
- End point devices – slippage of £0.164 million into future years to allow for a replacement programme of devices to be carried out;
- Salary costs - slippage of £0.180 million as not all posts have been filled in year and therefore will not be charged to capital.

## HRA

16. A summary of the HRA schemes by project type is shown in the table below, and this shows that a significant element of the capital programme is a rolling programme, for example kitchen and bathroom replacements, heating and electrics etc. The other large element is the Other Capital Spend classification, and these

schemes relate to acquisitions and developments linked to improving the supply of housing.

Project Classification	Projects	In Delivery Stage	Latest Budget	Spend to Date	% Spent	Q2 Forecast	Variance from Q2	Q3 Forecast
Project - Development	4	2	1,811,582	329,877	18%	5,060,988	(3,684,048)	1,376,940
Project - Compliance	1	0	50,000	27,078	54%	50,000	-	50,000
Project - Other	1	0	333,753	7,828	2%	333,753	(233,753)	100,000
Rolling Programme	20	1	12,669,693	7,413,848	59%	13,276,397	(1,433,179)	11,843,218
Other Capital Spend	9	2	42,785,019	22,630,909	53%	54,752,704	(12,494,921)	42,257,783
<b>HRA Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>57,650,047</b>	<b>30,409,541</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>73,473,842</b>	<b>(17,845,901)</b>	<b>55,627,941</b>

17. Details of the HRA slippage showing in Appendix B are:

- Tower Blocks – slippage of £0.354 million as work on Evenlode & Windrush will slip through into the 2023/24 financial year at the earliest, this being subject to statutory approvals, completion of the works and compliance with the Employers Requirements;
- Structural – slippage of £1.216 million due to a delay in starting the concrete repairs to the five blocks;
- Social Rented Housing Acquisitions – underspend of £0.726 million. There have been six completions in year to date with a further four at conveyancing stage;
- East Oxford Development – slippage of £3.298 million. Tenders are being assessed and contract award recommendation due soon, budget and programming are being reset as part of a separate paper at March 2023 Cabinet;
- Properties purchased from OCHL – slippage of £7.105 million in line with lower level of expected unit completions now profiled in the current year;
- Lanham Way – slippage of £3.498 million – delay to obtaining planning consent and now the build contract is out to tender. Budget and programme are being reset as part of a separate paper at March 2023 Cabinet;
- Juniper Drive – slippage of £1.586 million as project has significant delivery challenges to bring forward. Budget and programme are being reset as part of a separate paper at March 2023 Cabinet.

## Insurance Contract

18. On 13 April 2022, Cabinet delegated authority to the Head of Financial Services in consultation with the Head of Law and Governance to award a contract for the provision of insurance services to Oxford City Council and group companies from 1st January 2023, following a compliant procurement exercise. After starting the exercise, on reviewing the existing insurance contract, procurement identified that the existing contract could run for a further year. It was therefore decided to extend the existing contract for the 2023 calendar year and to undertake the approved procurement exercise for a new insurance contract to commence on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024.

## Corporate Risk

19. There are five red risks on the current Corporate Risk Register, which are as follows:

- **Housing** – the Council has key priorities around housing which include ensuring housing delivery and supply for the city of Oxford and enabling



sufficient house building and investment. Insufficient housing in Oxford leads to an increase in homelessness which has an impact on residents. There are also health and quality of life issues. The Council is implementing delivery methods for temporary accommodation and accommodation for homelessness prevention which include a rent guarantee scheme, a growth deal to facilitate additional affordable housing and a tranche of property purchases to be delivered via real lettings. In addition the Council's housing companies are in the process of constructing new affordable homes the social housing elements will be purchased by the Council;

- **Economic Growth** – this relates to local, national or international factors adversely affecting the economic growth of the City. Whilst COVID 19 restrictions are currently lifted, the supply chain challenges relating to Brexit, the war in Europe, energy security and related inflationary issues are a heightened risk. The Council is able to affect this risk through the delivery of the Oxford Economic Strategy and City Centre Vision Action Plan, This aims to stimulate recovery through targeted measures and the Council will work with Economic Growth Board & City Centre Task Force and engage with businesses to understand long term impact of COVID and EU Transition, taking action where possible, Macroeconomic impacts are outside the Council's direct control but the effects can be managed and mitigated at the local level;
- **Negative Impact of Climate change** – areas of concern are flooding, which is highly weather dependent; poor air quality and increased episodes of excess heat. The Council does not have control over the global climate positions but it can make changes and improvements within its sphere of influence. The Council has made action on climate change one of its corporate priorities and has stepped up its programme of action, partnering and influencing to seek to mitigate social health and environmental impacts on the City. The Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme (OFAS) scheme continues to progress. Work is ongoing through Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Partnership (ZCOP) to reduce carbon emissions across the City. Oxford City Council's Carbon Management Plan, ongoing work around flood mitigation, tree planting and partnership with EA-led programme to deliver the OFAS scheme. Control measure relating to advocacy, clear communication and negotiation over our land assets, in particular at Seacourt and Redbridge Park and Ride sites are also employed.
- **Delivery of Services by External Suppliers/Partners/Supply Chain** – this relates to the Council's arrangements for the management of its leisure centres by an external body. The external partner continues to focus on embedding their new delivery model which in summary is a reduction of staff in the Oxford contract, a concierge cashless system, they have exited their offices, reduced support services, alongside implementing COVID safe procedures. Recruitment is a challenge and there is a requirement for safeguarding checks, induction and mandatory training before employees can commence duties. Given the state of the leisure industry at present, the risk is that our partner is manoeuvred into a position where they are unable to deliver on the contract and the Council will need to take back responsibility of delivery the services.

20. The table below shows the level of Red, Amber and Green current risks over the last 12 months:

<b>Current Risk</b>	<b>Q4 2021/22</b>	<b>Q1 2022/23</b>	<b>Q2 2022/23</b>	<b>Q3 2022/23</b>
Red	3	5	5	4
Amber	11	9	9	10
Green	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Risks</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>

### **Performance Indicators**

21. There is one red corporate performance indicators being reported at the end of quarter 3, these relate to:

- Reduction of call volume into Customer contact centre – target of 5% reductions, in December we saw an actual increase of 1.8% of calls. The increase was due to a high number of repair calls due to the cold weather and higher levels of calls relating to Council Tax due to reminders, summons and single person discount emails being issued.

### **Financial implications**

22. All financial implications are covered in the body of this report and the Appendices, as required by section 18 of the Council's constitution.

### **Legal issues**

23. There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

### **Level of risk**

24. All risk implications are covered in the body of this report and the Appendices.

### **Equalities impact**

25. There are no equalities impacts arising directly from this report.

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**Background Papers:** None

## Appendix A

General Fund Outturn Report 22/23 @ 31 December 2022	Approved Budget (per Budget book)	Previous Months Budget	Current Month Virements & Ear Marked Reserve Transfers	Latest Budget	Projected Outturn against Latest Budget	PO Variance	PO Variance (Prev Quarter)	PO Variance Mvt from Previous Quarter
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
S13 - Housing Services	4,719	4,674		4,674	4,674			
S15 - Regulatory Services & Community Safety	724	702	23	725	725		60	(60)
S22 - Community Services	5,010	5,194		5,194	4,711	(483)	(311)	(172)
Communities & People	10,453	10,570	23	10,593	10,110	(483)	(251)	(232)
S09 - Corporate Property	(9,068)	(9,242)		(9,242)	(7,975)	1,267	1,117	150
S10 - Regeneration & Economy	723	786	1	787	787			
S16 - Planning Services	570	529		529	439	(90)		(90)
Development	(7,775)	(7,927)	1	(7,926)	(6,749)	1,177	1,117	60
S01 - Corporate Strategy	907	883		883	825	(58)	(47)	(11)
S20 - Environmental Sustainability	1,130	1,096	57	1,153	1,115	(38)		(38)
Chief Executive	2,037	1,979	57	2,036	1,940	(96)	(47)	(49)
S26 - Oxford Direct Services Client	13,051	13,411		13,411	13,879	468	(200)	668
ODS Development Director	13,051	13,411		13,411	13,879	468	(200)	668
S03 - Business Improvement	9,730	9,758	(1)	9,757	9,951	194	192	2
S32 - Financial Services	3,169	3,098		3,098	3,151	53	200	(147)
S34 - Law and Governance	3,560	3,494	(23)	3,471	3,754	283	60	223
Corporate Resources	16,459	16,350	(24)	16,326	16,856	530	452	78
Directorate Total Excl SLA's & Capital Charges	34,225	34,383	57	34,440	36,036	1,596	1,071	525
SLA's & Capital Charges	(9,632)	(9,632)		(9,632)	(9,632)			
Corporate Accounts	(1,466)	(1,466)		(1,466)	(2,904)	(1,438)	(1,438)	
Contingencies	1,238	1,427		1,427	1,987	560	560	
Total Corporate Accounts & Contingencies	(228)	(39)		(39)	(917)	(878)	(878)	
Net Expenditure Budget	24,365	24,712	57	24,769	25,487	718	193	525
S48D - Transfers To/From Earmarked Reserves	(1,983)	(2,330)	(57)	(2,387)	(2,387)			
Net Budget Required	22,382	22,382		22,382	23,100	718	193	525
Funding								
S47E - New Homes Bonus	471	471		471	471			
S47B - Council Tax Funding	15,028	15,028		15,028	15,028			
S47C - Parish Precept	(271)	(271)		(271)	(271)			
S47D - NDR Funding	7,154	7,154		7,154	7,154			
Total Funding Available	22,382	22,382		22,382	22,382			
(Surplus) / Deficit for the year					718	718	193	525

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## Appendix B

HRA Report 22/23 @ Dec 2022	Approved Budget (per Budget book)	Latest Budget @ 31st Dec 2022	Actual YTD	Budget YTD	Variance YTD	Projected Outturn against Latest Budget @ 31st Dec 2022	Projected Outturn Variance	Projected Outturn Variance Mvt from Previous Month
	£000's	£'000's	£000's	£000's	£'000's	£'000's	£000's	£'000's
Dwelling Rent	(44,733)	(44,643)	(33,375)	(33,459)	85	(44,420)	223	
Service Charges	(2,091)	(2,181)	(1,785)	(1,738)	(47)	(2,181)		
Garage Income	(226)	(226)	(197)	(169)	(28)	(261)	(35)	
Miscellaneous Income	(781)	(781)	(695)	(604)	(91)	(881)	(100)	
Right to Buy (RAF)	(52)	(52)	(42)	(39)	(3)	(52)		
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>(47,882)</b>	<b>(47,882)</b>	<b>(36,094)</b>	<b>(36,009)</b>	<b>(84)</b>	<b>(47,794)</b>	<b>88</b>	
Management & Services (Stock Related)	11,434	11,453	8,043	8,316	(273)	11,459	6	
Other Revenue Spend (Stock Related)	1,127	1,107	181	405	(224)	837	(270)	
Misc Expenditure (Not Stock Related)	1,021	1,023	245	326	(81)	1,023		
Bad Debt Provision	786	786	31	34	(3)	786		
Responsive & Cyclical Repairs	15,498	15,498	13,736	11,592	2,144	16,761	1,262	
Interest Paid	8,620	8,620	5,922	6,465	(543)	8,077	(543)	
Depreciation	9,412	9,412				9,412		
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>47,899</b>	<b>47,899</b>	<b>28,157</b>	<b>27,138</b>	<b>1,019</b>	<b>48,354</b>	<b>456</b>	
<b>Net Operating Expenditure/(Income)</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>(7,937)</b>	<b>(8,872)</b>	<b>935</b>	<b>560</b>	<b>543</b>	
Investment Income	(81)	(81)	(61)	(61)	()	(81)		
Other HRA Reserve Adjustment								
<b>Total Appropriations</b>	<b>(81)</b>	<b>(81)</b>	<b>(61)</b>	<b>(61)</b>	<b>()</b>	<b>(81)</b>		
<b>Total HRA (Surplus)/Deficit</b>	<b>(64)</b>	<b>(64)</b>	<b>(7,997)</b>	<b>(8,932)</b>	<b>935</b>	<b>479</b>	<b>543</b>	

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Appendix C

	Capital Budget and Spend as at 31st October 22											
									2022/23 Forecast Variance from Q2 Position			
Cost Centre	Capital Scheme	2022/23 Original Budget	Carry Forwards	Adjustments Since Original Budget	Forecast @ Q2	Latest 2022/23 Budget	Spend to 31/12/2022	Budget Remaining	Forecast Variance	Variance due to Slippage	Over / Under Spend	2022/23 Outturn Forecast
		£	£	£		£	£	£	£	£	£	£
<b>General Fund Capital Programme</b>												
<b>Communities and People Directorate</b>												
	<b>Community Services Projects</b>			-					-	-		
A4820	Upgrade Existing Tennis Courts	-	-	35,000	35,000	35,000	-	35,000	(35,000)	(35,000)	-	0
A4847	Rose Hill Community Centre - Parking Management	-	-	10,000	10,000	10,000	-	10,000	-	-	-	10,000
B0075	Museum of Oxford Development	-	-	-	-	-	(218,439)	218,439	-	-	-	0
B0083	East Oxford Community Centre	3,547,154	(2,115)	(3,095,039)	3,670,039	450,000	181,148	268,852	(3,530,039)	(3,530,039)	-	140,000
B0096	Bullingdon Community Centre	1,064,578	(412,655)	453,000	1,104,923	1,104,923	1,227,029	(122,106)	75,000	-	75,000	1,179,923
	<b>Community Services Projects Total</b>	<b>4,611,732</b>	<b>(414,770)</b>	<b>(2,597,039)</b>	<b>4,819,962</b>	<b>1,599,923</b>	<b>1,189,737</b>	<b>410,186</b>	<b>(3,490,039)</b>	<b>(3,565,039)</b>	<b>75,000</b>	<b>1,329,923</b>
	<b>Housing Services Projects</b>											
B0102	Replace or refurbish Lifts	76,190	43,294	(119,484)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
B0108	Floyds Row Refurbishment	-	99,217	-	99,217	99,217	30,473	68,744	-	-	-	99,217
C3057	Housing System Replacement	-	-	-	418,787	418,787	441,123	(22,336)	(0)	-	(0)	418,787
M5024	National Homelessness Property Fund	-	-	4,000,000	4,000,000	4,000,000	1,218,092	2,781,908	(1,000,000)	(1,000,000)	-	3,000,000
M5038	Roken House	230,000	(500)	1,430,000	1,659,500	1,659,500	1,413,879	245,621	-	-	-	1,659,500
	<b>Housing Services Projects Total</b>	<b>306,190</b>	<b>142,011</b>	<b>5,310,516</b>	<b>6,177,504</b>	<b>6,177,504</b>	<b>3,103,567</b>	<b>3,073,937</b>	<b>(1,000,000)</b>	<b>(1,000,000)</b>	<b>(0)</b>	<b>5,177,504</b>
	<b>Regulatory &amp; Community Safety Projects</b>			-					-	-		
A4845	CCTV Suite Upgrade	-	10,583	-	10,583	10,583	11,083	(500)	-	-	-	10,583
A4852	Bodycams for Community Safety Team	-	60,450	-	60,450	60,450	-	60,450	-	-	-	60,450
E3511	Essential Repairs Grant	15,000	5,015	-	20,015	20,015	6,696	13,319	-	-	-	20,015
E3521	Disabled Facilities Grants	1,400,000	(21,452)	(361,170)	1,017,378	1,017,378	1,028,109	(10,731)	200,000	200,000	-	1,217,378
	<b>Regulatory &amp; Community Safety Projects Total</b>	<b>1,415,000</b>	<b>54,596</b>	<b>(361,170)</b>	<b>1,108,426</b>	<b>1,108,426</b>	<b>1,045,889</b>	<b>62,537</b>	<b>200,000</b>	<b>200,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,308,426</b>
	<b>Oxford Direct Services Projects</b>			-					-	-		
R0005	MT Vehicles/Plant Replacement Programme.	4,277,121	1,558,482	(2,053,661)	3,781,942	3,781,942	465,974	3,315,968	(381,942)	(381,942)	-	3,400,000
T2273	Car Parks Resurfacing	335,864	406,433	-	742,297	742,297	519,083	223,214	-	-	-	742,297
T2309	Cowley Marsh Extension	-	-	225,000	225,000	225,000	-	225,000	(57,000)	-	(57,000)	168,000
T2307	Transformation Funding	130,798	-	(130,798)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
T2308	Additional Technology Requirements	537,000	-	(537,000)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
	<b>Oxford Direct Services Projects Total</b>	<b>5,280,783</b>	<b>1,964,915</b>	<b>(2,496,459)</b>	<b>4,749,239</b>	<b>4,749,239</b>	<b>985,057</b>	<b>3,764,182</b>	<b>(438,942)</b>	<b>(381,942)</b>	<b>(57,000)</b>	<b>4,310,297</b>
	<b>Communities and People Directorate Total</b>	<b>11,613,705</b>	<b>1,746,752</b>	<b>(144,152)</b>	<b>16,855,131</b>	<b>13,635,092</b>	<b>6,324,250</b>	<b>7,310,842</b>	<b>(4,728,981)</b>	<b>(4,746,981)</b>	<b>18,000</b>	<b>12,126,150</b>
<b>Development Directorate</b>												
	<b>Corporate Property Projects</b>			-								
B0100	Gloucester Green Car Park (H&S)	262,123	241,916	(216,123)	241,916	287,916	(16,134)	304,050	65,000	-	65,000	306,916
B0101	Capital Works at Covered Market	-	28,863	-	29,043	28,863	3,460	25,403	-	-	-	29,043
B0104	Old Gas Works Bridges	-	20,451	260,000	70,234	280,451	141,126	139,325	210,217	-	210,217	280,451
B0106	Covered Market Roof Works (Capitalised Planned	426,000	131,406	-	557,406	557,406	350,463	206,943	-	-	-	557,406
B0110	Covered Market Vacant Unit Works	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
B0111	Town Hall Dry Risers	-	12,110	-	12,110	12,110	25,902	(13,792)	-	-	-	12,110
B0117	Regeneration Property	20,000,000	-	(16,956,825)	3,023,750	3,043,175	3,045,375	(2,200)	21,625	21,625	-	3,045,375
B0126	Asset Surveys	-	120,000	180,000	300,000	300,000	-	300,000	-	-	-	300,000
B0136	Covered Market CCTV	-	73,648	-	73,648	73,648	42,497	31,151	-	-	-	73,648
B0138	Enabling works - Decarbonisation Project	-	698,610	-	698,610	698,610	129,170	569,440	(400,000)	(400,000)	-	298,610
B0139	SAC Feasibility	-	37,965	-	37,965	37,965	87,829	(49,864)	50,654	-	50,654	88,619
B0142	Stock condition surveys (including bridge works)	2,362,500	-	(1,365,000)	1,542,717	997,500	-	997,500	(1,292,717)	(1,292,717)	-	250,000
B0143	Town Hall Relocation	1,000,000	-	300,000	1,300,000	1,300,000	301,989	998,011	-	-	-	1,300,000
B0150	Hinksey Pool Liner Replacement	-	-	-	-	-	12,492	(12,492)	-	-	-	0
B0151	Bus Shelters	-	-	31,500	-	31,500	-	31,500	31,500	-	31,500	31,500
B0147	Repairs to 2-4 Gloucester Street and 24-26 George St	-	-	500,000	500,000	500,000	12,492	487,508	-	-	-	500,000
	<b>Corporate Property Projects Total</b>	<b>24,050,623</b>	<b>1,364,969</b>	<b>(17,266,448)</b>	<b>8,387,399</b>	<b>8,149,144</b>	<b>4,136,663</b>	<b>4,012,481</b>	<b>(1,313,721)</b>	<b>(1,671,092)</b>	<b>357,371</b>	<b>7,073,678</b>
	<b>Regeneration &amp; Economy Projects</b>			-								

Cost Centre	Capital Scheme	2022/23 Original Budget	Carry Forwards	Adjustments Since Original Budget	Forecast @ Q2	Latest 2022/23 Budget	Spend to 31/12/2022	Budget Remaining	Forecast Variance	Variance due to Slippage	Over / Under Spend	2022/23 Outturn Forecast
		£	£	£		£	£	£	£	£	£	£
M5033	Blackbird Leys Regeneration (GF Element)	8,387,991	205,663	(8,329,228)	264,426	264,426	36,607	227,819	(100,001)	(100,001)	-	164,425
A4853	City Wide Cycling Infrastructure Contribution	109,956	12,500	-	122,456	122,456	20,744	101,712	(27,456)	(27,456)	-	95,000
B0081	Car Parking Oxpens	225,355	(517)	-	121,838	224,838	107,855	116,983	-	-	-	121,838
B0086	Seacourt Park & Ride Extension	-	137,846	-	137,846	137,846	109,124	28,722	-	-	-	137,846
B0092	Cave Street Development (Standingford House)	2,948,824	(14,902)	(2,323,498)	804,831	610,424	179,075	431,349	(194,407)	(194,407)	-	610,424
B0098	1-3 George Street	1,226,769	(339,924)	170,000	1,164,205	1,056,845	545,007	511,838	(107,360)	(107,360)		1,056,845
B0152	Cowley Branch Line	-	-	117,000	-	117,000	-	117,000	117,000	-	117,000	117,000
T2301	Depot Rationalisation	996,663	-	(946,663)	275,000	50,000	7,710	42,290	(225,000)	(225,000)	-	50,000
B0116	Osney Mead Path Works (HIF)	5,300,000	18,914	(5,118,914)	200,000	200,000	37,963	162,037	(100,000)	(100,000)	-	100,000
B0148	Oxford Flood Alleviation HIF Contribution	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
B0120	Osney Bridge (Growth Deal)	4,583,745	75,949	(4,209,694)	450,000	450,000	148,920	301,080	(200,000)	(200,000)	-	250,000
B0122	City Cycle Schemes (Growth Deal)	751,662	118,102	-	869,764	869,764	16,364	853,400	(729,764)	(729,764)	-	140,000
B0125	City Centre Restart	50,000	-	(50,000)	100,000	-	-	-	(100,000)	(100,000)	-	0
B0145	St Michael's Street Levelling Works	-	-	85,000	35,000	85,000	26,959	58,041	50,000	50,000		85,000
B0131	Meanwhile In Oxfordshire	253,874	281,496	-	535,370	535,370	447,602	87,768	-	-	-	535,370
			-		-				-			0
B0130	CIL Feasibility	-	150,000	(106,650)	43,350	43,350	-	43,350	-	-	-	43,350
B0074	R & D Feasibility Fund	740,576	-	(587,076)	-	153,500	324	153,176	-	-	-	0
	Allocated Feasibility Funding (various schemes)	-	264,783	590,153	1,012,628	854,936	357,242	497,694	(232,374)	(92,182)	(140,192)	780,254
	Regeneration & Economy Projects Total	25,575,415	909,910	(20,709,570)	6,136,714	5,775,755	2,041,495	81,519	(1,849,362)	(1,826,170)	(23,192)	4,287,352
	Housing Delivery Projects			-								
M5025	Barton Park - Purchase by Council	8,455,017	1,495,609	361,239	10,311,865	10,311,865	2,772,075	7,539,790	(501,865)	(501,865)	-	9,810,000
M5026	Housing Company Loans (excl Barton Park)	5,234,291	12,040,000	(6,444,456)	15,059,611	10,829,835	2,829,935	7,999,900	(15,059,611)		(15,059,611)	0
M5032	Barton Park - loan to OCHL	8,455,017	1,481,608	375,240	10,311,865	10,311,865	-	10,311,865	(501,865)	(501,865)	-	9,810,000
M5034	Affordable Housing Supply	914,000	-	-	914,000	914,000	-	914,000	-	-		914,000
M5035	Growth Deal Registered Provider Payments	2,560,000	781,000	(546,000)	3,501,000	2,795,000	2,795,000	-	(706,000)	(706,000)		2,795,000
M5037	Northern Gateway (Oxford North)	9,300,000	747,538	(9,047,538)	1,500,000	1,000,000	-	1,000,000	(1,500,000)	(1,500,000)		0
404	Housing Supply Projects Total	34,918,325	16,545,755	(15,301,515)	41,598,341	36,162,565	8,397,010	27,765,555	(18,269,341)	(3,209,730)	(15,059,611)	23,329,000
	Planning Projects			-								
T2299	Controlled Parking Zones	250,000	250,000	-	500,000	500,000	-	500,000	(300,000)	(300,000)	-	200,000
F7011	Headington Environmental Improvements	60,781	3,050	(57,731)	33,831	6,100	-	6,100	(27,731)	(27,731)	-	6,100
F7024	St Clements Environmental Improvements	20,000	-	11,197	50,000	31,197	-	31,197	(16,803)	(16,803)	-	33,197
	Planning Projects Total	330,781	253,050	(46,534)	583,831	537,297	-	537,297	(344,534)	(344,534)	-	239,297
	Development Directorate Total	84,875,144	19,073,684	(53,324,067)	56,706,285	50,624,761	14,575,168	32,396,852	(21,776,958)	(7,051,526)	(14,725,432)	34,929,327
Corporate Resources												
	Business Improvement Projects											
C3044	ICT Software and Licences	245,000	-	-	245,000	245,000	224,430	20,570	(20,000)	-	(20,000)	225,000
C3058	CRM Replacement	100,275	655	(50,000)	50,930	50,930	-	50,930	-	-	-	50,930
C3060	End-Point Devices (Desktops/Laptops)	153,485	24,022	(3,485)	174,022	174,022	2,117	171,905	(164,022)	(164,022)	-	10,000
C3066	Telephony Device Refresh	60,000	(16,987)	-	43,013	43,013	13,900	29,113	-	-	-	43,013
C3068	Windows 2008 Server Replacement	109,345	18,270	(125,945)	108,270	1,670	1,140	530	(106,600)	-	(106,600)	1,670
C3072	Forms Engine Replacement	-	87,108	-	87,108	87,108	87,900	(792)	-	-		87,108
C3077	Info@Work Enterprise Upgrade Rollout	-	-	18,000	-	18,000	19,698	(1,698)	18,000	18,000		18,000
C3082	Website Redesign	-	-	118,600	-	118,600	-	118,600	118,600	-	118,600	118,600
C3083	FOI System	-	-	20,000	-	20,000	-	20,000	20,000	-	20,000	20,000
C3084	Agresso Update	-	-	175,000	-	175,000	-	175,000	70,000	-	70,000	70,000
C3081	Capitalised ICT Projects	386,600	-	(115,000)	386,600	271,600	-	271,600	(115,000)	(115,000)	-	271,600
	Business Improvement Projects Total	1,054,705	113,068	57,170	1,094,943	1,224,943	329,258	895,685	(159,022)	(241,022)	82,000	935,921
	Financial Services Projects											
M5023	OxWED Loans	-	-	600,000	600,000	600,000	325,000	275,000	-	-	-	600,000
B0144	Salary Costs across the Council to be capitalised	480,000	-	-	480,000	480,000	-	480,000	(180,000)	(180,000)	-	300,000
C3067	Paris Payment System, Replacement / PCI DSS	-	98,304	-	143,564	98,304	143,564	(45,260)	-	-	-	143,564
C3078	Revs and Bens System Replacement	-	7,622	-	7,622	7,622	6,000	1,622	-	-	-	7,622
C3080	Telephony Contract Replacement	-	41,675	-	41,675	41,675	9,712	31,963	-	-	-	41,675



Cost Centre	Capital Scheme	2022/23 Original Budget	Carry Forwards	Adjustments Since Original Budget	Forecast @ Q2	Latest 2022/23 Budget	Spend to 31/12/2022	Budget Remaining	Forecast Variance	Variance due to Slippage	Over / Under Spend	2022/23 Outturn Forecast
		£	£	£		£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Financial Services Projects Total		480,000	147,601	600,000	1,272,861	1,227,601	484,276	743,325	(180,000)	(180,000)	-	1,092,861
Law & Governance												
L1000	Audio & Visual Equipment	-	110,000	-	110,000	110,000	93,323	16,677	-	-	-	110,000
Law & Governance Projects Total		-	110,000	-	110,000	110,000	93,323	16,677	-	-	-	110,000
Corporate Resources Directorate Total		1,534,705	370,669	657,170	2,477,804	2,562,544	906,857	1,655,687	(339,022)	(421,022)	82,000	2,138,782
Chief Executive												
Environmental Sustainability Projects												
E3558	Go Ultra Low Oxford - On Street	500,000	18,620	-	518,620	518,620	5,071	513,549	-	-	-	518,620
E3557	Oxford and Abingdon Flood Alleviation Scheme	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
E3560	Go Ultra Low Oxford - Taxis	-	137,491	(5,215)	127,000	132,276	70,692	61,584	5,276	5,276	-	132,276
E3563	Clean Bus Technology Grants	-	174,060	-	174,060	174,060	-	174,060	-	-	-	174,060
E3565	Decarbonisation Fund - OCC element	-	905,617	-	905,617	905,617	390,844	514,773	(111,000)	(111,000)	-	794,617
B0127	ZEZ Phase 1 Feasibility	-	141,000	(141,000)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
E3567	Town Hall Lighting Upgrade (SALIX)	-	-	-	-	-	(24,412)	24,412	-	-	-	0
E3568	Leisure Centre LED Lighting Feasibility	-	-	33,000	33,000	33,000	-	33,000	-	-	-	33,000
Environmental Sustainability Projects Total		500,000	1,376,788	(113,215)	1,758,297	1,763,573	442,195	1,321,378	(105,724)	(105,724)	-	1,652,573
Chief Executive Total		500,000	1,376,788	(113,215)	1,758,297	1,763,573	442,195	1,321,378	(105,724)	(105,724)	-	1,652,573
General Fund Total		98,523,554	22,567,893	(52,924,264)	77,797,517	68,585,970	22,248,469	42,684,759	(26,950,685)	(12,325,253)	(14,625,432)	50,846,832
Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme												
HRA - Property Services Schemes												
N6384	Tower Blocks	-	883,642	-	883,642	883,642	70,308	813,335	(353,642)	(353,642)	-	530,000
N6385	Adaptations for disabled	756,000	-	400,000	1,156,000	1,156,000	1,536,804	(380,804)	294,000	294,000	-	1,450,000
N6386	Structural	2,000,000	283,008	433,467	2,716,475	2,716,475	928,152	1,788,323	(1,216,475)	(1,216,475)	-	1,500,000
N6387	Controlled Entry	133,000	11,522	(124,522)	20,000	20,000	70,583	(50,583)	80,000	80,000	-	100,000
N6388	Major Voids	515,000	(72,350)	172,000	614,650	614,650	477,981	136,669	-	-	-	614,650
N6389	Damp-proof works (K&B)	75,000	3,883	44,000	122,883	122,883	59,601	63,282	-	-	-	122,883
N6390	Kitchens & Bathrooms	1,300,000	-	(1,300,000)	606,704	-	-	-	(606,704)	(606,704)	-	0
N7057	Kitchens	-	32,475	1,167,525	1,200,000	1,200,000	1,314,414	(114,414)	-	-	-	1,200,000
N7058	Bathrooms	-	(31,949)	537,949	506,000	506,000	402,003	103,997	-	-	-	506,000
N6391	Heating	2,352,000	-	(2,352,000)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
N7031	Homes at Barton	-	(238,332)	238,332	-	-	603,965	(603,965)	-	-	-	0
N7059	Boilers Only	-	(56,439)	816,087	759,648	759,648	603,965	155,683	-	-	-	759,648
N7060	Heating Systems	-	(458,325)	947,697	489,372	489,372	471,055	18,317	-	-	-	489,372
N6392	Roofing	700,000	(238,332)	263,521	725,189	725,189	1,188,470	(463,281)	-	-	-	725,189
N6395	Electrics	695,000	(21,701)	619,175	1,292,474	1,292,474	868,424	424,050	-	-	-	1,292,474
N6434	Doors and Windows	500,000	(105,913)	113,000	507,087	507,087	144,135	362,952	-	-	-	507,087
N7020	Extensions & Major Adaptions	735,000	370,892	(1,055,892)	50,000	50,000	96,841	(46,841)	-	-	-	50,000
N7026	Communal Areas	213,000	29,884	(92,884)	150,000	150,000	106,425	43,575	-	-	-	150,000
N7033	Energy Efficiency Initiatives	1,985,000	90,915	-	2,075,915	2,075,915	504,371	1,571,544	-	-	-	2,075,915
N7044	Lift Replacement Programme	125,000	123,713	(238,713)	10,000	10,000	2,822	7,178	-	-	-	10,000
N7048	Fire doors	1,500,000	228,615	(1,228,615)	500,000	500,000	380,488	119,512	310,000	310,000	-	810,000
N7067	Renewal Of Fire Alarm Panels	102,000	-	(52,000)	50,000	50,000	27,078	22,922	-	-	-	50,000
N7052	HRA Stock Condition Survey	195,000	138,753	-	333,753	333,753	7,828	325,925	(233,753)	(233,753)	-	100,000
N7032	Great Estates Programme	1,109,000	352,817	(561,817)	900,000	900,000	190,701	709,299	-	-	-	900,000
N7042	Barton Regeneration	-	18,150	11,850	30,000	30,000	29,418	582	-	-	-	30,000
N7070	Major Refurbishment Masons Road	750,000	-	(250,000)	500,000	500,000	67,309	432,691	-	-	-	500,000
HRA - Housing Supply Schemes												
N7047	Social Rented Housing Acquisitions	-	317,918	2,550,318	3,226,000	2,868,236	1,703,589	1,164,647	(726,000)	-	(726,000)	2,500,000
N7051	Acquisition of Additional Units	2,000,000	25,318	(2,025,318)	-	-	(953)	953	-	-	-	0
N7050	East Oxford development	2,813,000	607,060	(3,217,060)	3,420,060	203,000	490	202,510	(3,298,060)	(3,298,060)	-	122,000
N7055	Use Of Recycled Capital Grants	-	27,737	(737)	27,000	27,000	34,362	(7,362)	3,000	3,000	-	30,000
N7054	Properties Purchased From OCHL	74,698,000	(1,467,427)	(38,384,573)	41,731,891	34,846,000	17,754,940	17,091,060	(7,104,891)	(7,104,891)	-	34,627,000

Cost Centre	Capital Scheme	2022/23 Original Budget	Carry Forwards	Adjustments Since Original Budget	Forecast @ Q2	Latest 2022/23 Budget	Spend to 31/12/2022	Budget Remaining	Forecast Variance	Variance due to Slippage	Over / Under Spend	2022/23 Outturn Forecast
		£	£	£		£	£	£	£	£	£	£
N7061	Northfield Hostel	11,740,000	1,734,116	(11,167,116)	1,947,000	2,307,000	1,474,663	832,337	123,000	123,000	-	2,070,000
N7062	Lanham Way	3,555,000	813,030	(3,498,030)	4,368,030	870,000	23,496	846,504	(3,498,030)	(3,498,030)	-	870,000
N7068	Juniper	1,586,000	(51,170)	(1,534,830)	1,586,000	-	(51,170)	51,170	(1,586,000)	(1,586,000)	-	0
N7066	Next Steps Accommodation Programme	-	710,783	-	710,783	710,783	104,007	606,776	-	-	-	710,783
N7040	Blackbird Leys Regeneration (HRA)	325,000	(63,379)	(36,681)	257,286	224,940	81,771	143,169	(32,346)	(32,346)	-	224,940
Housing Revenue Account Total		112,457,000	3,998,914	(58,805,867)	73,473,842	57,650,047	31,278,336	26,371,711	(17,845,901)	(17,119,901)	(726,000)	55,627,941
Grand Total		210,980,554	26,566,807	(111,730,131)	151,271,359	126,236,017	53,526,805	69,056,470	(44,796,586)	(29,445,154)	(15,351,432)	106,474,773

# Appendix D

MeasureID	Short Name	Owner	Year End target	December Target	Actual	Comments
BIC018	% of BAME staff	Helen Bishop	15.5	15.5	14.52%	We are below target but have now recruited a Diversity and Inclusion Specialist who will be focused on building a more inclusive culture and improving attraction and recruitment to improve the diversity of the workforce. We have begun to advertise more broadly in the local community, and we are currently reviewing the recruitment process and considering how process change can support recruitment from a more diverse pool of candidates.
BIC022	Number of online forms completed and submitted as a proportion of total enquiries related to that service for top 10 services	Helen Bishop	Tracking	TBC	KPI under review	
BIC024	Reduction of call volume into Customer Contact Centre	Mark Chandler	5	5	1.8 +	In December we saw an additional 2038 calls received in comparison to last December, mainly due to a high number of repair calls received due to the cold weather and higher levels of Council tax calls due to 1988 reminders, 430 summons and 2800 single person discount e-mails being sent. The backlog in financial services is also increasing volumes as customers chase up their requests.
BIC025	Reduction of number of face to face enquiries	Helen Bishop	10	10	1.2	In comparison to last year, December saw 104 less customers face to face with 332 visits. Over the last 4 months (since September) the volumes of visits have been consistently lower each month in comparison to last year
CPC017	Oxford residents' satisfaction with City Council services	Mish Tullar	Tracking indicator	n/a	N/A	Oxford Residents Panel currently being refreshed. New survey planned for summer 2023
CSC004a	Number of people supported into work placements, apprenticeships, training, or back into employment leading to high growth jobs in the city	Carolyn Ploszynski, Ian Brooke	90	TBC	137	
CSC004b	The percentage who are from deprived areas or ethnic minority backgrounds	Carolyn Ploszynski, Ian Brooke	Tracking	TBC	n/a	
CSC009	Satisfaction with parks and green spaces	Ian Brooke	91	91	93	
CSC012	Physically active adults	Ian Brooke	76	76	76	Updated annually
ESC013	Reduction of greenhouse emissions linked to Oxford City Council's operations (where it pays the bill) consistent with achieving net zero carbon Council by 2030.	Mish Tullar	526 tonnes of CO2 equivalent	TBC	tbtc	Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) funded projects in leisure centres to reduce carbon emissions from heating systems approaching final commissioning after delays due to electrical infrastructure upgrades at Hinkley pool (installation of new substation at Hinkley) - and then final commissioning of the heat pump systems - pending final works at Hinkley Pool including completion of the pool cover installation and gaining full agreement with Fusion on operation of covers (Fusion currently will not operate covers until full independent H&S assessments and any required mitigations completed). Ongoing seasonal commissioning and maintenance visits in process for sites commissioned in May/June 22 to ensure plant is performing optimally. Assessment of energy/carbon reduction performance tbc estimated to achieve a ca 960tCO2 reduction in carbon emissions in leisure centre buildings.  Additional carbon reduction projects in business case development include LED lighting upgrades in leisure centres and installation of a low-emissivity ceiling at the Ice Rink (tbc).  Project to reduce water and heating consumption in showers approaching approvals for all leisure centre sites.  Deep dive energy audits of key buildings and assessment of controls strategies/techs to be developed as per aims of the Net Zero Carbon Plan.  Investigations underway to assess scope for purchase of locally produced electricity from local renewable energy installations - Power Purchase Agreements (PPA) - to seek greener energy supplies for carbon offsetting purposes.  Regarding pool cover commissioning, Commissioning of independent H&S assessment to be carried out to assess current safety of pool covers at Hinkley upon full completion of installation. Determine any additional mitigation measures that may be required to improve safety aspects if required (e.g., to further prevent out of hours entry to the pool and reduce risks of out of hours access with a pool cover in place).
ESC016	Total carbon emissions for the city	Mish Tullar	Tracking indicator	n/a	574.6 kt CO2e	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The data we use to track this comes from BEIS on an annual basis and is two years in arrears. So not granular enough to give a quarterly update.</li> <li>Recent updates in BEIS data collection methodology make it difficult to compare greenhouse gas emissions prior to 2018.</li> <li>If we use data for carbon dioxide alone (as opposed to all greenhouse gasses) the comparison becomes more straightforward. This should be a reasonable proxy as the vast majority of Oxford's greenhouse gas emissions will be carbon dioxide rather than other greenhouse gasses.</li> <li>The most recent data, released in summer 2022, was for 2020. It shows that the city had reduced its carbon dioxide emissions by 48.2% by 2020 (compared to a 2005 baseline). This is well in excess of the 40% by 2020 target that was set. Oxford had already reached the 40% threshold in 2019.</li> <li>The Carbon budgets and targets for the city, as agreed by the Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership, set a target to reduce emissions by 44.3% by 2025, compared to a 2018 baseline.</li> <li>From 2018 to 2020, carbon dioxide emissions reduced by 15.97%. This included a more than 10% reduction from 2019 to 2020. This figure alone would indicate that Oxford is on track for the 2025 target as well as subsequent targets through to 2040. However, disruption caused by the coronavirus pandemic will no doubt have affected the data for 2020. We cannot yet tell to what extent the gains made in 2020 will be maintained in subsequent years. Also, decarbonisation will likely get harder as time goes on and fewer 'carbon reduction quick wins' remain.</li> <li>We do not yet have enough data (from 2018 onwards) to make any long-term assumptions about future trends.</li> <li>Oxford's carbon reduction targets remain highly ambitious and will require sustained effort through to 2040 to achieve.</li> <li>Recent climate action in Oxford - following the declaration of a climate emergency by the City Council - is yet to be reflected in the available data. We cannot yet say what impacts carbon reduction activity since 2021 (ZCOP, LEO, ESO, PSDS, etc.) will have made.</li> </ul>
FSC002	% of Council spend with local businesses including SMEs (excluding ODS and OCHL)	Nigel Kennedy	46	45	32.80%	The Target is a yearly target. No actions to be taken at this point in time.
FSC003	% of Council spend with local businesses (excluding ODS and OCHL)	Nigel Kennedy	65	65	70.42	Above Target No action required.
FSC019a	Total income collection as % of plan (Council Tax)	Nigel Kennedy	96.5	83.5	80.82%	The profiled target should be 83.5%  The formal recovery process via the magistrate's court recommences on the 27th of January with fortnightly hearings, work continues to apply the student exemptions and to arrange payment from the housing team of the Council tax outstanding.
FSC019b	Total income collection as % of plan (Business Rates)	Nigel Kennedy	95	79.7	76.15%	the profiled target is 79.70%  Collection of NDR remains difficult in the cost of living crisis, this has been made more difficult as we have only recently been able to commence formal recovery action following the revenues system changes. Many accounts have CARF awards on the 21/22 accounts which could be moved onto the current year we have written to the customers asking permission to do so.
FSC020	Discretionary funding won by the Council	Anna Winship, Nigel Kennedy	Tracking indicator	n/a	£1.157 m	Grants received in year relating to Housing projects and Environmental Sustainability projects.
FSC021	Efficiencies delivered against plan	Anna Winship, Nigel Kennedy	2904100	1687000	£1,687,000	on target
HPC005	Total number of affordable homes in Oxford completed in year	Nerys Parry	NA	TBC	279	The Council has a corporate target of completing 1,600 affordable homes, across all tenures, for the next four financial years (22/23 - 25/26). There is a service level target of 850 for the number of Social Rent homes completed of those 1,600. The programme is currently forecast to achieve the four-year targets. To date, 279 affordable homes have been completed in Oxford, of which 127 are social rented homes.
HSC023	Number of rough sleepers without an offer of accommodation	Nerys Parry	30	30	26	The estimate for the number of rough sleepers without an offer of accommodation at the end of December was 26. The total number of rough sleepers was 31, 2 of whom were accommodated but sleeping out and 3 had refused an offer of the Somewhere Safe to Stay Service at Floyds Row. This is below the corporate KPI and is a reflection of the hard work being undertaken by all of partners over recent months. Allied to this we now have 13 people accommodated in our Housing First service, many of whom were previously some of our most entrenched rough sleepers. It should be noted that of the 26 people without an offer of accommodation; 11 were suspected to have 'No Recourse to Public Funds' meaning that we as a local authority are not permitted to offer accommodation. We can, and do, offer support that enables the individuals to regularise their immigration status and St Mungo's will lead on this work. Of the remaining 15 individuals the majority are working towards a planned offer of accommodation within supported accommodation but due to the pressures on the system most services are currently running a waiting list
PSC022	Provide a quarterly update on the five year housing delivery supply	Rachel Williams	567	284	250	This KPI depends upon us managing quarterly monitoring however we are always a quarter behind because of the way the team manage the monitoring process. Our latest data indicates 194 new build only completions between April - September 2022. We also have 56 anticipated windfall commitments (completions from minor applications) within the same period. Thus, the cumulative total is 250 to the end of Sept 2022.
REC001	Jobs in the city created or saved by OCC	Carolyn Ploszynski	1000	n/a	137	
REC002	Number of Oxford Living Wage employers and employees	Carolyn Ploszynski	90	TBC	103	
RSC006	% of privately rented homes improved	Ian Wright	60	57	75	175 visits with 131 compliant

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**To:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 15 March 2023  
**Report of:** Head of Law and Governance  
**Title of Report:** Flag Flying and Bell Ringing Arrangements

Summary and recommendations	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To agree the lists of annual flag flying and bell ringing commitments and approve a minor amendment to the Oxford City Council Protocol for Flag Flying and Bell Ringing
<b>Key decision:</b>	No
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Susan Brown, Leader and Cabinet Member for Inclusive Economy and Partnerships
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	Support Thriving Communities
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	Council Strategy 2020-24
<b>Recommendations:</b> That the Cabinet resolves to:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Agree</b> the List of Annual Flag Flying Commitments attached at Appendix A;</li> <li>2. <b>Agree</b> the List of Annual Bell Ringing Commitments attached at Appendix B; and</li> <li>3. <b>Approve</b> the minor amendment to the Oxford City Council Protocol for Flag Flying and Bell Ringing set out in Appendix C to this report.</li> </ol>	

Appendices	
Appendix A	List of Annual Flag Flying Commitments
Appendix B	List of Annual Bell Ringing Commitments
Appendix C	Oxford City Council Protocol for Flag Flying and Bell Ringing [with proposed minor amendment]

## Introduction and background

1. On 13 March 2019, City Executive Board (*now Cabinet*) adopted the Oxford City Council Protocol for Flag Flying and Bell Ringing and agreed the lists of annual flag flying and bell ringing commitments. The Protocol provides that decisions on annual or regular flag flying commitments must be considered by Cabinet. Decisions relating to one-off additional flag flying requests are delegated to the Head of Law and Governance in accordance with the Protocol. The Protocol provides that one-off

bell ringing requests will be considered by the Head of Law & Governance in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

2. Following the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, the list of annual flag flying and bell ringing commitments has been reviewed and it is proposed that a number of dates be amended to reflect the new Sovereign. The amendments have been taken from the guidance<sup>1</sup> issued by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS). The guidance includes the designation of two additional days for the Union Flag to be flown – His Majesty’s Wedding Day (09 April) and the Official Birthday of His Majesty the King (17 June). Other flag flying dates have been taken from the Flag Institute. The revised recommended lists of annual flag flying and bell ringing commitments are set out at Appendix A and Appendix B, respectively.

### **Governance framework**

3. The Council’s arrangements are governed by the Oxford City Council Protocol for Flag Flying and Bell Ringing.
4. A minor discrepancy has been identified within the Protocol, in that it does not currently specify that decisions on annual or regular bell ringing commitments must be considered by Cabinet. Oxford City Council’s Constitution Part 4.5 (39) sets out that ‘*agreeing annual or regular flag flying and bell ringing commitments*’ is a decision reserved to Cabinet. It is therefore recommended that the Protocol be amended to reflect the Constitution (see *Appendix C*).

### **Financial implications**

5. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

### **Legal issues**

6. There are no specific legal issues arising directly from this report. The responsibility for flag flying to mark events and occasions lies with Cabinet under the Local Government Act 2000 as it is not specifically reserved to Full Council. The flying of flags is not the subject of statute across Great Britain and advice is issued by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport on the flying of national flags from government buildings. The advice relates to government buildings only, but many local authorities, such as Oxford City Council, also follow the advice on a voluntary basis (either in full or in part).
7. Under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007, there is a requirement for the Council to obtain planning consent in order to display certain flags.

### **Level of risk**

8. Flag flying on civic buildings is a sensitive issue that can attract controversy and the attention of the press and public. The recommendations in this report do not seek to alter any annual flag flying or bell ringing commitments previously agreed by Cabinet – only the dates to reflect the passing of HM Queen Elizabeth II.

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<sup>1</sup> [Union Flag flying guidance for UK government buildings - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/union-flag-flying-guidance-for-uk-government-buildings) [accessed 09 February 2023]

## Equalities impact

9. Flags are emotive symbols that have the potential to cause controversy or create tensions between communities or interest groups whose views and interpretations may differ. The Council has a responsibility to carefully consider the potential impacts of flying flags on communities, equalities and protected characteristics.
10. The Protocol allows for the Council to fly flags on events or occasions that promote equality and diversity. The recommendations in this report do not propose changes that will adversely impact on equalities or serve to disadvantage any groups.

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<b>Background Papers:</b> None
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## APPENDIX A

### Oxford City Council List of Annual Flag Flying Commitments

Date	Event	Town Hall	1930s extension	Carfax Tower
At all times	At all times (sometimes lowered)	City flag		
09 January	Birthday of HRH Princess of Wales	City flag	Union Flag	Union Flag
27 January	Holocaust Memorial Day	City flag	Holocaust Memorial Day flag	
The month of February	LGBT History Month	City flag	Pride flag	
8 March	International Women's Day	City flag	Suffrage flag	
*Second Monday in March	Commonwealth Day	City flag	Flag of the Commonwealth of Nations	Union flag
31 March	International Transgender Day of Visibility	City flag	Transgender flag	
1-7 April	First week of the new financial year when the latest rate of the Oxford Living Wage takes effect	City flag	Oxford Living Wage flag	
9 April	His Majesty's Wedding Day	City flag	Union Flag	Union Flag
22 April	Earth Day	City flag	Earth Day flag	
23 April	St George's Day	City flag	Cross of St George	Cross of St George
3 May	Polish Constitution Day	City flag	Polish flag	
6 May	Coronation Day	City flag	Union flag	Union flag
8 May	VE day	City flag	Union flag	
9 May	Europe Day	City flag	European flag	Union Flag
*tbc usually mid-May	Election of new Lord Mayor	City flag		
*03 June	Oxford Pride	City flag	Pride flag	
**Last Saturday in June	Armed Forces Day	City flag	Armed Forces Day flag	
17 June	Official Birthday of His Majesty the King	City flag	Union Flag	Union Flag
20 June	World Refugee Day	City flag	City of Sanctuary flag	
21 June	Birthday of HRH Prince of Wales (the heir to the throne)	City flag	Union flag	Union flag
17 July	Birthday of HM The Queen Consort	City flag	Union flag	Union flag
15 August	VJ day	City flag	Union flag	
8 September	Accession of HM The King	City flag	Union flag	Union flag
24 October	United Nations Day	City flag	UN flag	
Week leading to 11 November	Week leading to Remembrance Day	City flag	RBL flag	
11 November	Remembrance Day	City flag	RBL flag	Union flag
*Remembrance Sunday	Remembrance Sunday	City flag	Union flag	Union flag
14 November	Birthday of HM The King	City flag	Union flag	Union flag
20 November	Transgender Day of Remembrance	City flag	Transgender flag	
1 December	West Papua Independence Day	City flag	Flag of West Papua	
3 December	International Day of Persons with	City flag	Purple flag	

## APPENDIX A

	Disabilities			
14 December	Anniversary of the passing of the Representation of the People Act 1918	City flag	Suffrage flag	
18 December	International Migrants' Day	City flag	City of Sanctuary flag	

\*Dates that change from year to year

\*\*Flag raised on the Monday prior to the Saturday

## Appendix B

### Oxford City Council List of Annual Bell Ringing Commitments

Date	Time	Event	Notes
23 April	18:00	St George's Day	
6 May	TBC	Coronation of HM The King	
tbc usually mid-May	17:45 Approx	Election of new Lord Mayor	
17 June	TBC	Official Birthday of His Majesty the King	
21 June	12:30	HRH Prince of Wales' Birthday	
8 September	TBC	HM The King's Accession Anniversary	
14 November	12:30	Birthday of HM The King	Time changed in 2017 to 13:30 as Merton and Lincoln colleges had exams scheduled at the times
If required, does not happen every year	TBC	Awarding of the Freedom of the City	Phone call to bell ringer when award is confirmed

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## **Appendix C**

### **Oxford City Council Protocol for Flag Flying and Bell Ringing**

1. Civic flag flying and bell ringing responsibilities are delegated to the Head of Law and Governance. This protocol guides the Head of Law and Governance in the exercise of those responsibilities.

#### **Flagpoles**

2. The Council has access to the following three flagpoles or masts:
  - a) The large mast above the main entrance to the Town Hall in St. Aldate's, known as the "main flagpole".
  - b) The mast above the 1930s extension to the Town Hall at Carfax above the premises occupied by the Edinburgh Woollen Mill.
  - c) The mast on Carfax Tower.
3. The mast at (a) is on Council occupied premises and is used exclusively to fly the City flag.
4. The mast at (b) is on premises owned by the Council. While it is not occupied by the Council it is still regarded as a civic building due to its position as an extension to the Town Hall. This mast can be used to fly flags marking a variety of events and occasions.
5. The mast at (c) is on premises owned but not occupied by the Council and is not generally regarded as being a civic building. The Council will not fly flags from this mast other than the Union Flag to mark certain national occasions and the Cross of St. George on St. George's Day.

#### **Flying of Flags**

6. All flag flying commitments are subject to the weather, safe access to the flagpoles and the availability of suitably trained staff.
7. Flags should not be flown in a worn, damaged or soiled condition and will be inspected when they are taken down and before they are due to be flown, with sufficient time allowed for a replacement to be obtained if necessary.
8. The List of Annual Flag Flying Commitments sets out the days when the City will fly flags. In addition the Council will also fly flags on certain irregular occasions as set out below:

#### **Delegations from twin towns**

9. The flags of Oxford's twin towns will be flown from the mast above the 1930s extension when an official delegation from a twin town visits Oxford for the duration of the visit. The twin towns are:
  - Bonn
  - Leiden
  - Grenoble
  - Perm
  - Leon
  - Wroclaw
  - Padua (pending formal twinning agreement)
  - Ramallah (pending formal twinning agreement)

### **Monarch's official visits**

10. The Union Flag will fly from the 1930s extension and from Carfax Tower whenever the Monarch pays an official visit to Oxford.

### **Royal births**

11. The Union Flag will be flown from the masts above the 1930s extension and the Carfax Tower following the announcement of a royal birth in accordance with any guidance issued by the government.

### **Flying flags at half mast**

12. Flags will usually be flown at half-mast on these occasions:
- When a serving or former Lord Mayor or councillor (including Honorary Aldermen and Honorary Alderwomen) dies the City Flag will be flown at half-mast on the day of the funeral.
  - When a person on whom the Council has conferred the Freedom of the City dies the City Flag will be flown at half-mast on the day of the funeral.
  - On the day of a State Funeral the City Flag will be flown at half-mast and the Union Flag will be flown at half-mast from both the 1930s extension and the Carfax Tower.
  - When the Monarch or a senior member of the royal family dies the City Flag will be flown at half-mast and the Union Flag will be flown at half-mast from both the 1930s extension and the Carfax Tower in accordance with the Oxford City Council Protocol for the Marking of the Death of the Sovereign or the Oxford City Council Protocol for Marking the Death of a Senior National Figure.
  - On a day of national mourning the City Flag will be flown at half-mast and the Union Flag will be flown at half-mast from both the 1930s extension and the Carfax Tower.

### **Managing additional one-off requests**

13. Consideration will be given to one-off additional requests by the Head of Law and Governance in line with the following procedures.
- The request must come from a serving City Councillor and be made at least 4 weeks before the event in writing to the Head of Law and Governance.
  - The request will only be considered if the relevant mast is available on the date(s) in question.
  - The request should reflect the values of the Council, be sensitive to the views of communities and be made in the spirit of displaying allegiance, support or respect or to celebrate or mark a significant international, national or local occasion.
  - Where planning consent is required by regulations, this must be obtained before the flag can be displayed (which can take 8-10 weeks).
  - The Head of Law and Governance will consult the Leader of the Council.
  - The decision of the Head of Law and Governance is final.
14. Decisions on annual or regular flag flying commitments must be considered by Cabinet.

### **Bell ringing**

15. Bells are rung by Oxford Society of Change Ringers on behalf of Oxford City Council on the occasions set out in the List of Annual Bell Ringing Commitments.
16. Bell ringing requests may be made by the Oxford Society of Change Ringers to mark one-off events. These requests will be considered by the Head of Law and Governance who will consult the Leader of the Council. The decision of the Head of Law and Governance will be final.
17. Decisions on annual or regular bell ringing commitments must be considered by Cabinet.

### **Hierarchy of commitments**

18. In the event that this protocol results in a clash of commitments on a particular date the Head of Law and Governance will be guided by the order of precedence of flags in the United Kingdom (as set out in the British Flag Protocol<sup>1</sup>) and the principles of the following hierarchy in determining which commitment will be honoured:
  1. State and royal occasions / visits
  2. National memorial or celebration days
  3. Twinning visits
  4. Other occasions the Council has chosen to recognise annually
  5. Other occasions the Council has chosen to recognise on a one-off basis

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<sup>1</sup> [British Flag Protocol, The Flag Institute \(accessed 1 February 2019\)](#)

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## **Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet on Wednesday 8 February 2023**



### **Committee members present:**

Councillor Brown	Councillor Turner
Councillor Aziz	Councillor Chapman
Councillor Hollingsworth	Councillor Munkonge
Councillor Railton	Councillor Linda Smith
Councillor Upton	Councillor Walcott

### **Officers present for all or part of the meeting:**

Tom Bridgman, Executive Director (Development)  
Stephen Gabriel, Executive Director (Communities and People)  
Emma Gubbins, Senior Estates Surveyor  
Sarah Harrison, Team Leader (Planning Policy)  
Tom Hook, Executive Director (Corporate Resources)  
Nigel Kennedy, Head of Financial Services  
Emma Lund, Committee and Member Services Officer  
Ted Maxwell, Regeneration Manager  
Nerys Parry, Head of Housing  
Susan Sale, Monitoring Officer and Head of Law & Governance  
Paul Wilding, Rough Sleeping & Single Homeless Manager  
Rachel Williams, Principal Planner

### **Also present:**

Councillor James Fry, Chair of the Budget Review Group  
Councillor Dr Christopher Smowton, Chair of Scrutiny

### **Apologies:**

None.

### **109.Addresses and Questions by Members of the Public**

None.

### **110.Councillor Addresses on any item for decision on the Cabinet agenda**

None.

### **111.Councillor Addresses on Neighbourhood Issues**

None.

## **112.Items raised by Cabinet Members**

None.

## **113.Scrutiny reports**

Councillor James Fry, Chair of the Budget Review Group, presented the report of the Group and summarised its recommendations, some of which had already been incorporated into the revised budget proposals.

The Group's recommendations had included that the Council should provide an up-to-date, confidential explanation for Members of the options available to achieve the savings that would arise from ODS depot consolidation.

The Covered Market was a substantial capital budget item; the Group had therefore recommended that the Council should update its estimates during the period of the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) to take account of slippage in plans to fill the empty units and to start evening openings with music.

The Group had discussed use of the windfall gains arising from the deferral of the Fairer Funding Review, and proposed that the Council should not commit these for spending which would be recurring. The Group had also recommended that the Council should mitigate the pressure on residents arising from the current financial and economic circumstances, and provide additional information on funding schemes available to help.

The Group had recommended that the Council should re-assess the assumptions being made about bad debt provision relating to commercial property; and considered that it should diversify its investment portfolio away from commercial property towards the regeneration of Council-owned properties which are eligible for Public Works Loan Board funding, and consider other types of investments and assets.

Finally, it was recommended that the Council should re-evaluate its assumptions around reduction in the use of the park and rides as a result of changes in charges, and that a sensitivity analysis of the net revenues to the Council from the operation of the current Zero Emission Zone and its proposed expansion during the period of the MTFP should be provided, in order to justify current assumptions.

Councillor Ed Turner, Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management, thanked the Review Group for its work and the timely production of its recommendations. Responding to some of the points raised, Councillor Turner reported that he intended to progress the recommendation relating to the ODS depot consolidation briefing through the Shareholder and Joint Venture Group, facilitating the involvement of scrutiny colleagues in that process. A newly-appointed officer was currently looking at commercial property income, and the tracking and pursuit of arrears. All of the recommendations of the Group were accepted, either in full or in part.

Councillor Chris Smowton, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, presented the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee arising from its meeting on 1 February.

One recommendation had been made in relation to Implementing the Covered Market Masterplan. This related to considering the provision of gender neutral lavatories, and had been accepted.

Scrutiny Committee had also considered the disciplinary policy. A recommendation had been made, and accepted, which related to improving clarity around the role of elected Members in appeals by officers against dismissal. The amendment recommended by scrutiny had been incorporated into the policy prior to its consideration and agreement by Council on 30 January.

Finally, Scrutiny Committee had also considered the Oxford Local Plan 2040 Focused Consultation on Housing Need. No formal recommendations had been made, but an informative and interesting discussion had taken place.

## **114. Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 to 2026/27 and 2023/24 Budget**

The Head of Financial Services had submitted a report to present the outcome of the budget consultation and agree the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2024-25 to 2026-27 and 2023-24 Budget for recommendation to Council.

Councillor Ed Turner, Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management introduced the report, and highlighted changes which had been made since the consultation budget. This included a one-off improvement in the Council's financial position arising from the local government finance settlement. However the decision to exclude leisure centres from the Government's energy support package was unhelpful to district councils. The settlement had also included Revenue Support Grant in replacement for the Housing Benefit Administration Grant. This was likely to be lost in next year's settlement, although the work of administering Housing Benefit would remain. However, the benefit provided by the Revenue Support Grant in this year was helpful in terms of reducing the need to draw down from reserves.

Other changes had related to measures to improve the recruitment and retention of staff through the payment of market supplements, which would help to avoid the need for locum staff at a higher cost. There were some new health and safety obligations which needed to be met, and funding had been extended for youth services.

More widely, the budget contained a focus on housing, with 942 new Council homes to be delivered over the next four years, representing a 10% increase in housing stock; significant support for homeless organisations; and a new Council Tax support fund. Councillor Turner noted that in the present financial and economic environment, contributions from the Finance and Performance Panel, the Audit and Governance Committee, and Cabinet in terms of ongoing monitoring of the budget would be important.

The Head of Financial Services highlighted that the Council's companies, which now contributed a substantial amount of income to the MTFP, were susceptible to volatility, and other areas such as commercial rents and other income streams may also be adversely affected in the current financial climate. Uncertainty around Fairer Funding also remained. However, the additional contribution of £600,000 back into reserves, as compared to the proposals contained in the consultation budget, was very welcome in order to maintain the financial resilience of the Council.

The Chair thanked officers and the Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management for delivering a balanced budget in a difficult financial environment which would enable continued delivery of the Council's priorities.

It was noted that there were some typographical errors in the report which required correction: in particular, the title of table 9 should read 'Oxford Direct Services Revenue 2021-22 to 2025-26'.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Approve** the 2023-24 General Fund and Housing Revenue Account budgets and the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account Medium Term Financial Strategy as set out in Appendices 1-9, noting:
  - a) the Council's General Fund Budget Requirement of £24.793 million for 2023/24 and an increase in the Band D Council Tax of 2.99% or £9.76 per annum representing a Band D Council Tax of £336.31 per annum;
  - b) the Housing Revenue Account budget for 2023/24 of £51.572 million and an increase of 7% (£7.51 per week) in social dwelling rents from 1 April 2023 giving a revised weekly average social rent of £114.73 as set out in Appendix 5;
  - c) shared ownership dwellings are increased in line with those of other social rents as discussed in paragraph 39;
  - d) the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme as shown in Appendix 6;
2. **Agree** the fees and charges shown in Appendix 7;
3. **Delegate** to the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Deputy Leader (Statutory) - Finance and Asset Management, the decision to determine whether it is financially advantageous for the Council to enter into a Business Rates Distribution Agreement as referred to in paragraphs 20-22 of the report;
4. **Approve** the payment into the County Council Pension Fund of £5 million in 2023-24 as referred to in paragraph 28 of the report;
5. **Implement** the changes to Council Tax charges in respect of second homes and properties empty for more than one year as referred to in paragraphs 23-25 from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 when the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill is enacted; and
6. **Note** the application of the Council Tax Support Fund allocation as referred to in paragraphs 11-14 of the report.

## **115.Capital Strategy 2023/24 to 2026/27**

The Head of Financial Services had submitted a report to present the Capital Strategy 2023-24 to 2026-27 for approval.

Councillor Ed Turner, Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management, introduced the report and strategy, which set out the processes which would govern the capital programme over the period in order to provide a robust framework for the delivery of capital projects.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Recommend to Council** the approval of the Capital Strategy attached at Appendix A.

## **116.Treasury Management Strategy 2023/24**

The Head of Financial Services had submitted a report to present the Council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2023-24 together with the Prudential Indicators for 2023-24 to 2026-27.

Councillor Ed Turner, Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management, introduced the report and strategy, and highlighted that the strategy involved a judgement as to how the Council's money was invested, and the balance between risk and reward. It also required choices to be made about the impact of the Council's investments on the wider world. The ethical investment policy was set out at paragraph 77; a new Environmental, Social and Governance policy had also been added (Appendix 3). In treasury matters the Council was obliged to deliver a financial return wherever possible; however, investing sustainably could often be the right choice financially, and so the Council also needed to be mindful of ESG indicators. This was an area which was expected to develop positively over time.

The Head of Financial Services drew attention to his duty under professional codes of practice to undertake investments on SLY principles (Security, Liquidity and Yield), as set out in the report.

It was noted that recommendation 2 of the report required correction to read 'The Borrowing Strategy 2023/24 at paragraphs 52 to 54 of this report'.

Cabinet resolved to:

**Recommend** that Council approves:

1. The Treasury Management Strategy 2023/24 as set out in paragraphs 29 to 78 of the report and the Prudential Indicators for 2023/24 – 2026/27 as set out in Appendix 2;
2. The Borrowing Strategy 2023/24 at paragraphs 52 to 54 of the report;
3. The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement at paragraphs 55 to 57 which sets out the Council's policy on charging borrowing to the revenue account;
4. The Investment Strategy for 2023/24 and the investment criteria as set out in paragraphs 58 to 77 of the report and in Appendix 1; and
5. The Treasury Management Scheme of Delegation at Appendix 4.

## **117.Implementing the Covered Market Masterplan**

The Executive Director (Development) had submitted a report to seek approval to fund and enter into contracts for the detailed design works, planning, and construction of major improvements to the Covered Market in line with the recently completed masterplan.

In presenting the report the Leader and Cabinet Member for Inclusive Economy and Partnerships, Councillor Susan Brown, thanked officers for developing the masterplan, highlighting that it offered an exciting opportunity to ensure that the Covered Market continued to flourish and be a lively place in which people could shop and spend their leisure time. The proposals had involved a wide consultation with traders, residents, key stakeholders, and experts in markets, and the result was a robust masterplan which would allow investment to be made in the market to support its development. Proposed improvements, as set out in the report, included a performance space and a

shared eating space. The masterplan also referenced the leasing strategy; improving the entrances to the market; and making it more accessible and visible.

The Regeneration Manager thanked all those who had taken part in the consultation, highlighting that their challenges and contributions had been very helpful in improving and refining the masterplan. Responses received since publication of the Cabinet report had been largely positive, with many supportive phone calls and emails received, including from tenants of the market and stakeholders. It was also noted that the Oxford Preservation Trust had written to Cabinet Members to encourage them to approve the officer recommendations.

It was noted that the Council was not the sole owner of the site, and partnership working would be required for delivery of the masterplan. In response to the potential for delays which might be caused due to the involvement of other parties, officers responded that this would be managed so that delay in one area of the project could be compensated by progress in another.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Approve** the Covered Market Masterplan and concept proposals;
2. **Delegate authority** to the Executive Director (Development), in consultation with the Council's Section 151 Officer, the Head of Law and Governance, and the Cabinet Members for Inclusive Economy and Partnerships, Finance and Asset Management, and Planning and Housing Delivery, to finalise the scope of works, undertake the necessary procurements, and enter into all contracts for the detailed design, construction works, and all associated professional services, for the regeneration of the Covered Market within the agreed budget;
3. **Subject to Council approval of the Budget, authorise** to spend a capital budget of £6.87m starting in 2023-2024, to deliver the project. (The recommendation to Council to create this budget is part of the Budget report, elsewhere on this agenda); and
4. **Approve** the payback of previously spent feasibility funding (£167,000) into the feasibility budget.

## **118. Allocation of Preventing Homelessness Grant 2023-24**

The Executive Director (Communities and People) had submitted a report to approve the allocation of Preventing Homelessness Funds to commission homelessness services in 2023-24.

Councillor Linda Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing, presented the annual report, which set out how £1.67m was to be spent in order to prevent homelessness. Since April last year most services were now being provided at a county-wide level, in partnership with the District Councils and the Integrated Care Service, in order to provide a more cost effective and joined up service. Most of the funds outlined in the report therefore comprised the Council's contribution towards this county-wide alliance, which provided 236 beds across Oxfordshire. A further 105 beds were still being commissioned directly by the City Council for use by city residents, meaning that a total of 341 beds in supported accommodation were available to Oxford residents.

Councillor Smith highlighted that funding for a number of key organisations was being maintained at the same level as last year. Access to leisure services for those in



supported accommodation was also included, which demonstrated different parts of the Council working together to achieve the Council's priorities.

Councillor Smith also highlighted the lack of Lead Member involvement in the countywide alliance, and it was agreed that ways in which this could be addressed should be investigated.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Approve** the allocation of Preventing Homelessness funds to commission homelessness services in 2023/24 as outlined in paragraphs 18 to 20 and in Appendix 2 of the report;
2. **Approve** the requested carry forward of the underspend in the 22/23 budget of £41,164; and
3. **Delegate** to the Executive Director (Communities and People), in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, the discretion to revise the intended programme within the overall budget if required.

## **119. Oxford Local Plan 2040 Focused Consultation on Housing Need**

The Executive Director (Development) had submitted a report to seek approval for the Oxford Local Plan 2040 Housing Need Consultation Document (Regulation 18 Part 2) for consultation.

Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery reported that the Housing Needs consultation was a critical piece of the Local Plan evidence base. The Housing and Economic Needs Assessment had been commissioned jointly with Cherwell District Council following the cessation of the Oxfordshire 2050 Plan workstream. It considered four scenarios for assessing housing need across the whole of Oxfordshire: the Standard Method, Census-adjusted Standard Method, Economic Development Led, and Cambridge Econometrics Baseline Trend. In consultation with Cherwell District Council it was proposed to use the Cambridge Econometrics Baseline Trend to assess housing need. Once the housing need figure for Oxfordshire had been established, a method to divide this amongst the districts would be needed, and the proposed method was to apportion the need based on the forecast distribution of jobs across Oxfordshire in 2040 (the end of the proposed local plan period). This formed the basis on which the consultation would be undertaken.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Approve** the Oxford Local Plan 2040 Housing Numbers Consultation Document (Regulation 18 part 2) for public consultation;
2. **Approve** the associated update to the Oxford Local Development Scheme 2023-28; and
3. **Delegate authority** to the Head of Planning Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery, to make any necessary editorial corrections to the documents and the supporting evidence base prior to going out to consultation.

## **120. Additional Loan Finance for Oxford West End Developments (OxWED LLP)**

The Executive Director (Development) had submitted a report to seek a budget to allow the City Council to lend OxWED up to £750,000 to support continuing work on the Oxpens project, and in particular preparing (and subject to LLP Member approval and planning permission) implementing the Delivery Strategy for the Oxpens development.

Councillor Ed Turner, Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management, clarified that OxWED was jointly financed by the Council and its partner, Nuffield College. The Council lent money to OxWED for a return which would be repaid from the development. The money was being lent in stages rather than all at once, and Cabinet was therefore asked to consider recommending that Council make provision within its capital budget of £750,000 to finance a loan to OxWED towards the delivery of the development. A proposal for a further £3.1m to be added to the capital programme from 2023/24 to cover the delivery of future enabling works and additional land assembly work was included in the budget: this would be the subject of a separate report to Cabinet later in the year.

Councillor Turner cautioned that failure to approve the budget provision for the loan would result either in an unbalanced partnership arrangement with its partner Nuffield College, or a need for the site to be delivered in a very different way.

In response to a point that the economic climate had changed significantly since OxWED was established in 2016, and a question as to whether the business case remained viable, it was noted that the planning application retained flexibility for a variety of different uses and delivery timescales. The mix of uses on the site which would have been most profitable in 2016 was not the same as it was today, nor the same as it would be in two years' time. The production of the delivery strategy would provide the most up to date information as to whether the business case remained sound, and would provide the shareholder with options in relation to the various risks and rewards of the project.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Recommend to Council** that it includes £750,000 in its capital budget to allow the City Council to loan these funds to OXWED to continue work on the Oxpens project in accordance with the LLP Members agreement, and in particular preparation and (if planning permission is granted) implementation of the Delivery Strategy; and
2. **Delegate authority** to the Head of Financial Services / S151 Officer in consultation with the Deputy Leader (Statutory) – Finance and Asset Management to agree terms and draw down the up to £750,000 loan to OxWED.

## **121. Minutes**

**Cabinet resolved to approve** the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 14 December 2022 as a true and accurate record.

## **122. Dates of Future Meetings**

15 March 2023

19 April 2023

14 June 2023



12 July 2023

9 August 2023

13 September 2023

All meetings start at 6pm.

**The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.18 pm**

**Chair .....**

**Date: Wednesday 15 March 2023**

*When decisions take effect:*

*Cabinet: after the call-in and review period has expired*

*Planning Committees: after the call-in and review period has expired and the formal  
decision notice is issued*

*All other committees: immediately.*

*Details are in the Council's Constitution.*

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