

# Agenda

# Council

## Annual Council

## Summons

A meeting of the City Council will be held to transact the business set out below on

Date: **Wednesday 17 May 2023**

Time: **5.00 pm**

Place: **Council Chamber - Oxford Town Hall**



**Proper Officer**

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

- may register in advance to speak to the meeting in accordance with the [public speaking rules](#)
- may record all or part of the meeting in accordance with the Council's [protocol](#)

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## Membership of Council

Councillors: Membership 48: Quorum 12.

**Lord Mayor** Councillor James Fry

**Deputy Lord Mayor** Councillor Mark Lygo

**Sheriff** Councillor Mike Rowley

<b>Members</b>	Councillor Mohammed Altaf-Khan	Councillor Dr Amar Latif
	Councillor Lubna Arshad	Councillor Sajjad Malik
	Councillor Shaista Aziz	Councillor Katherine Miles
	Councillor Susan Brown	Councillor Alistair Morris
	Councillor Nigel Chapman	Councillor Lois Muddiman
	Councillor Mary Clarkson	Councillor Edward Mundy
	Councillor Tiago Corais	Councillor Chewe Munkonge
	Councillor Barbara Coyne	Councillor Jabu Nala-Hartley
	Councillor Lizzy Diggins	Councillor Lucy Pegg
	Councillor Dr Hosnieh Djafari-Marbini	Councillor Susanna Pressel
	Councillor Dr Sandy Douglas	Councillor Anna Railton
	Councillor Paula Dunne	Councillor Rosie Rawle
	Councillor Laurence Fouweather	Councillor Ajaz Rehman
	Councillor Andrew Gant	Councillor Jo Sandelson
	Councillor Stephen Goddard	Councillor Linda Smith
	Councillor Duncan Hall	Councillor Roz Smith
	Councillor Tom Hayes	Councillor Dr Christopher Smowton
	Councillor Alex Hollingsworth	Councillor Imogen Thomas
	Councillor Rae Humberstone	Councillor Ed Turner
	Councillor Jemima Hunt	Councillor Louise Upton
	Councillor Chris Jarvis	Councillor Naomi Waite
	Councillor Emily Kerr	Councillor Diko Walcott
	Councillor Tom Landell Mills	

Apologies will be reported at the meeting.

# Agenda

The business to be transacted is set out below

Pages

- 1 **Election of Lord Mayor for the Council year 2023/24**
- 2 **Appointment of Deputy Lord Mayor for the Council year 2023/24**
- 3 **Appointment of Sheriff for the Council year 2023/24**
- 4 **Apologies for absence**
- 5 **Declarations of interest**

To make any declarations of disposable pecuniary interests relating to items on this agenda (see *guidance note attached to agenda frontsheet*).

## 6 **Announcements**

Announcements by:

1. The Lord Mayor
2. The Chief Executive

## 7 **Report of the Leader of the Council**

**Council will receive and note a report from the Leader on:**

1. the appointment of the deputy Leader of the Council;
2. the appointment of up to 8 additional members of the Cabinet;
3. the responsibilities of the Leader, Deputy Leader, and other Cabinet Members;
4. the Council's representative and their substitute on the Future Oxfordshire Partnership (both members of this Council's Cabinet);
5. the Council's representative (and their substitutes) on the Future Oxfordshire Partnership's four advisory sub-groups (drawn from members of this Council's Cabinet);
  - Housing
  - Infrastructure

- Environment
  - Planning (*in development*)
6. the appointment of Members of the Shareholder and Joint Venture Group which has responsibility for acting as shareholder of the Council's companies and for safeguarding and furthering the Council's interests and investments in its companies and joint ventures.
  7. the Executive Scheme of Delegation as set out in Section 4 of the Council's Constitution dated 17 May 2023 (and agreed by Council on 20 March 2023); and
  8. any other matters.

The Constitution is available on the [Council's website](#).

## OFFICER REPORTS

### 8 Appointments to Council Committees 2023/24

9 - 18

The Head of Law and Governance has submitted a report requesting Council appoint committees and the members serving on those for the Council year 2023-24 in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (Section 15) and other relevant legislation.

Appendix C will be circulated in the Briefing Note published before the meeting, and any outstanding nominations to committee seats may be announced, or agreed, as appropriate at the meeting.

#### **Recommendations: Council is recommended to:**

1. **Approve** the structure of the Council committees, as defined within the Council's Constitution and set out in *Appendix A: Committee structure 2023/24*;
2. **Approve** the methods, calculations and conventions used in determining political representation on committees as outlined in the report and shown in *Appendix B: Political proportionalities on Council committees 2023-24*;
3. **Appoint** to committee seats in accordance with the requirements of political proportionality and the nominations made by political groups, as shown in *Appendix C: Committee nominations 2023-24*;
4. **Agree** that all members of Council will form the pool of members able to observe on appeals and some grievances panels in accordance with the Council's policies;
5. **Appoint** three non-executive members to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership Scrutiny Panel (see *Appendix C: Committee nominations 2023-24*);
6. **Appoint** one non-executive member to the Joint Oxfordshire Health

## CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

### 9 Matters exempt or part exempt from publication and exclusion of the public

If Council wishes to exclude the press and the public from the meeting during consideration of any aspects of the preceding agenda items it will be necessary for Council to pass a resolution in accordance with the provisions of Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 specifying the grounds on which their presence could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in specific paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act 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.

(The Access to Information Procedure Rules – Section 15 of the Council's Constitution – sets out the conditions under which the public can be excluded from meetings of the Council)

#### 9a Local Authority Housing Fund

19 - 56

*Appendix 3 to this item includes exempt information pursuant to Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. If Council wishes to discuss matters relating to the information set out in Appendix 3 to the report, it will be necessary for the Council to pass a resolution to exclude the press and public from the meeting (as set out at agenda item 9).*

The Executive Director (Communities and People) submitted a report to Cabinet on 19 April 2023 seeking project approval and delegations to enable the Council to proceed with entering into the national Local Authority Housing Fund, and make available the required budget provision.

The draft Cabinet minutes are available [here](#).

Councillor Linda Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing, will present the report and propose Cabinet's recommendations.

**Recommendation: Cabinet recommends that Council resolves to:**

1. **Approve** the allocation of £2,330,320 capital budget from the Housing Revenue Account, for the Council's investment to purchase the properties as part of Local Authority Housing Fund.

**9b Approval of a bid to run the South and Vale Home Improvement Agency on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council and to provide assistance to deal with their Disabled Facilities Grant application backlog**

57 - 124

*Appendices 1-6 to this item include exempt information pursuant to Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. If Council wishes to discuss matters relating to the information set out in Appendices 1-6 to the report, it will be necessary for the Council to pass a resolution to exclude the press and public from the meeting (as set out at agenda item 9).*

The Executive Director (Communities and People) submitted a report to the Cabinet Member for Housing on 10 March 2023 seeking approval for the submission of a bid for the contract to deliver the South and Vale Home Improvement Agency and approve the provision of assistance to South and Vale to deal with a backlog of applications for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG).

Councillor Linda Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing will present the report and propose the recommendations.

**Recommendation: That the Council resolves to:**

- 1. Amend** the budget to take into account the provision of HIA service to deliver the contract.

**Updates and additional information to supplement this agenda are published in the Council Briefing Note.**

Additional information, councillors' questions, public addresses and amendments to motions are published in a supplementary briefing note. The agenda and briefing note should be read together.

The Briefing Note is published as a supplement to the agenda. It is available on the Friday before the meeting and can be accessed along with the agenda on the council's website.

## **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 and Member 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 Councillors and members of the press and public 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 recordings 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.



**To:** Annual Council  
**Date:** 17 May 2023  
**Report of:** Head of Law and Governance  
**Title of Report:** Appointment of Committees for the Council Year 2023/24

<b>Summary and recommendations</b>	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	For Council to appoint committees and the members serving on those committees for the Council year 2023-24
<b>Legislation:</b>	Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (Section 15)
<b>Recommendation(s): Council is recommended to:</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Approve</b> the structure of the Council committees, as defined within the Council's Constitution and set out in <i>Appendix A: Committee structure 2023/24</i>;</li> <li>2. <b>Approve</b> the methods, calculations and conventions used in determining political representation on committees as outlined in the report and shown in <i>Appendix B: Political proportionalities on Council committees 2023-24</i>;</li> <li>3. <b>Appoint</b> to committee seats in accordance with the requirements of political proportionality and the nominations made by political groups, as shown in <i>Appendix C: Committee nominations 2023-24</i>;</li> <li>4. <b>Agree</b> that all members of Council will form the pool of members able to observe on appeals and some grievances panels in accordance with the Council's policies;</li> <li>5. <b>Appoint</b> three non-executive members to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership Scrutiny Panel (see <i>Appendix C: Committee nominations 2023-24</i>);</li> <li>6. <b>Appoint</b> one non-executive member to the Joint Oxfordshire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (see <i>Appendix C: Committee nominations 2023-24</i>).</li> </ol>	

<b>Appendices</b>	
Appendix A	Committee structure 2023/24
Appendix B	Political proportionalities on committees 2023/24
Appendix C	Committee nominations 2023/24 ( <i>to be circulated separately in the Briefing Note and Supplementary Papers</i> )

## **Introduction and background**

1. This report invites Annual Council to appoint non-executive committees for the 2023/24 Council year in accordance with the Council procedures set out in the Constitution (Part 11.1 (i) and (j)).
2. The committee structure that Council is asked to approve is attached at Appendix A. There are no changes to the committee structure from last year. The programme of committee meeting dates was agreed by Council on 30 January 2023.
3. The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (Section 15) (“The Act”) provides a statutory basis for the allocation of committee seats to political groups based on principles of political proportionality. To enable this the Council has to provide for:
  - a. Political Groups to be formed and Group Leaders elected.
  - b. Seats on committees to be allocated to political groups in accordance with the requirements of the Act.
4. The political balance of the Council and its committees has been reviewed in accordance with the provisions of the Act. Appendix B shows the political proportionalities on the committees the Council is asked to appoint to.
5. Appendix C (*to be circulated in the Briefing Note and Supplementary Papers*) shows the nominations to the seats on committees.

## **Political Groups**

6. Individual members are required to indicate a wish to be a member of a particular political group (or cease to be a member of a political group). Political groups comprise two or more members who have indicated that they wish to be a member of that group by signing a notice to the proper officer, the Head of Law and Governance. The Group Secretaries of established groups will normally hold and co-ordinate these notices (*commonly known as political group forms*). The notice must include the name of the Group Leader and may include the name of the Deputy Group Leader.
7. Once political groups have been formed, changes to the membership and leadership of groups can be made by notice to the Head of Law and Governance. A change of group leader must be notified by a majority of group members.

## **Political balance calculations**

8. Council has a duty to appoint to most committees using the principles of political proportionality set out in the Act. These principles should be read hierarchically:
  - Where there is more than one political group, all seats must not be allocated to the same group.
  - The majority of seats must be allocated to the group with the majority on the Council.
  - When considering all seats available for allocation the total of those given to each group should match their representation on the Council overall.
  - The number of seats on each individual committee allocated to groups should match their representation on the Council overall.

9. Applying these principles may not result in a precise mathematical allocation of seats. In these cases the allocations will rounded up at 0.5 and above.
10. In the event that achieving political proportionality on all committees results in an overall over-allocation of seats to a particular group, the group with the over-allocation will be asked which seat(s) they wish to relinquish. Any such seats will then be reallocated to group(s) with an overall under-allocation of seats. This process may involve some discussion between political groups.
11. Non-grouped independent members are not treated as political groups but do affect overall proportionality. As such they should be offered any seats that remain unallocated once all groups have received their full proportional allocation of seats.
12. Appendix B shows the numbers of committee seats allocated to political groups for the 2023/24 Council year on the basis of the methods, calculations and conventions described in paragraphs 8-11 of this report. A total of 70 committee seats are included in political balance calculations.
13. The requirements of political proportionality do not apply to the Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee but the convention is that Council will apply the same principles when appointing to this committee. For simplicity, Council has agreed that political groups will be encouraged to nominate the same members to both licensing committees.

### **Appointments to Council Committees**

14. Appendix C shows the nominations to committee seats made by political groups, in accordance with the seat allocations shown in Appendix B. Council is recommended to appoint the nominated members to committees as set out in Appendix C.
15. There will be a standing item on Council agendas to enable political groups to propose any changes to their committee appointments, should they wish to do so.

### **Appeals and grievances**

16. The Council's HR policies require that should an appeal be received against a decision to dismiss an employee, then a hearing may be observed by an elected member. The same applies to certain appeals within the Council's grievance procedure. A pool of members is required and Council is recommended to agree, as in previous years, that this pool consists of all members of Council.

### **Future Oxfordshire Partnership appointments**

17. Appointments to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership (*previously Oxfordshire Growth Board*) and its advisory sub-groups are matters for the executive and will be announced separately by the Leader.
18. Council is invited and recommended to appoint three non-executive members to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership Scrutiny Panel, having regard to the political balance of Council. This is a non-statutory body that exists to scrutinise the work of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership. It comprises three members from each of the six constituent councils and the quorum is one member from each council. Meetings of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership Scrutiny Panel have been scheduled on the following dates (all 6.30pm):

06 June 2023

18 July 2023  
 14 September 2023  
 21 November 2023  
 22 January 2024  
 11 March 2024

19. The convention established when the Panel was formed in 2018 is to appoint one member from each of the three political groups.

**Appointment to the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

20. Oxfordshire County Council invites the Council to appoint one non-executive member to sit on the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which delivers the health scrutiny function for Oxfordshire. The member nominated by the controlling political group will be named in Appendix C. Meetings have been scheduled on the following dates (all 10.00am):

08 June 2023  
 21 September 2023  
 23 November 2023  
 08 February 2024  
 18 April 2024

**Appointments to Scrutiny Panels and Review Groups**

21. The Scrutiny Committee may establish informal standing panels or review groups (otherwise known as ‘task and finish’ groups) and appoint members to them in accordance with ‘operating principles’ agreed by the Committee. Membership of these bodies will be cross-party and can be drawn from all non-executive members but the principles of political proportionality do not strictly apply. Nominations to these bodies will be handled separately, once those bodies have been established by the Scrutiny Committee.

**Financial issues**

22. There are no financial issues to consider. The recommendations in this report do not have any financial impacts.

**Legal issues**

23. The legal issues including the Council’s duty to appoint to committees in accordance with the provisions of S15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 are contained within the report.

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**Background Papers:** None



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## Appendix A: Committee structure 2023/24

**Table 1: Committee structure**

<b>Body</b>	<b>Number of seats</b>	<b>In political balance calculation?</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Council	48	No	Formed by election.
Cabinet	10	No	Appointed by the Leader of the Council. Must have 3-10 members including the Leader and Deputy Leader(s).
Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee	15	No	<b>For appointment by Council</b> Political groups are invited to nominate the same members to the Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee and the General Purposes Licensing Committee.
General Purposes Licensing Committee	15	Yes	<b>For appointment by Council</b> Political groups are invited to nominate the same members to the Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee and the General Purposes Licensing Committee.
Appointments Committee	5	Yes	<b>For appointment by Council</b> Must include a member of Cabinet.
Audit and Governance Committee	7	Yes	<b>For appointment by Council</b> Chair must not be a member of Cabinet.
Investigation and Disciplinary Committee	4	Yes	<b>For appointment by Council</b> Must include a member of Cabinet.
Planning Committee	11	Yes	<b>For appointment by Council</b> Council may not appoint a member to more than one planning Committee.
Planning Review Committee	9	Yes	<b>For appointment by Council</b> Council may not appoint a member to more than one planning Committee.
Scrutiny Committee	12	Yes	<b>For appointment by Council</b> Cabinet members cannot be members of the Scrutiny Committee.
Standards Committee	7	Yes	<b>For appointment by Council</b>

**70 seats included in political balance calculation**

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## Appendix B: Political proportionalities on Council committees 2023-24

The allocation of seats to political groups has been reviewed based on the political composition of the Council. The allocations are shown in Table A below.

Labour: 32

Liberal Democrat: 9

Green: 6

Non-grouped independent: 1

**Table A: Committees subject to proportionality rules**

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Seats</b>	<b>Lab</b>	<b>Lib Dem</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>Ind</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Balance</b>
General Purposes Licensing Committee	15	10	3	2	0	15	0
Appointments Committee	5	3	1	1	0	5	0
Audit and Governance Committee	7	5	1	1	0	7	0
Investigation and Disciplinary Committee	4	3	1	0	0	4	0
Planning Committee	11	7	2	1	1	11	0
Planning Review Committee	9	6	2	1	0	9	0
Scrutiny Committee	12	8	2	2	0	12	0
Standards Committee	7	5	1	1	0	7	0
<b>Total seats allocated</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Rounded entitlement</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>-1</b>
<b>Real entitlement</b>	<b>68.54</b>	<b>46.67</b>	<b>13.13</b>	<b>8.75</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>-1</b>
<b>Percentage of seats allocated</b>		<b>(67.14)</b>	<b>(18.57)</b>	<b>(12.86)</b>	<b>(1.43)</b>	<b>(100)</b>	<b>0</b>

Notes on the allocation of seats to political groups:

- Initially all 70 seats were allocated to groups but the Green Group had an overall over-allocation of 1 seat, having been allocated 10 seats with a total proportional entitlement of 9 seats.
- Initially all committees had the correct number of councillors except for Planning Committee, which had an under-allocation of 1 councillor, and Investigations and Disciplinary Committee, which had an over-allocation of 1 councillor.
- To resolve these issues the following steps were followed (over-allocations are dealt with first):
  - The Green Group lost a seat that had been allocated to it on the Investigations and Disciplinary Committee. That left the Green Group with the correct number of seats (9) and the committee with the correct number of councillors (4).
  - The one seat that remained unallocated once all groups had been allocated their full proportional entitlement of seats, on Planning Committee, was offered to the independent member, who confirmed that they would take up the seat.

Some committees are not subject to political proportionality. The allocation of seats on these committees is explained in paragraphs 13, 17 and 20 of the report and is set out in Table B below.

**Table B: Committees not subject to proportionality rules**

<b><i>Committee</i></b>	<b><i>Labour</i></b>	<b><i>Lib Dem</i></b>	<b><i>Green</i></b>	<b><i>Total</i></b>
Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee	1	0	0	1
Future Oxfordshire Partnership Scrutiny Panel	1	1	1	3
Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee	10	3	2	15

**To:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 19 April 2023  
**Report of:** Executive Director (Communities and People)  
**Title of Report:** Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF)

<b>Summary and recommendations</b>	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	The report seeks project approval and delegations to enable the Council to proceed with entering into the national Local Authority Housing Fund, and make available the required budget provision.
<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 support thriving communities
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023 – 2028

<b>Recommendations:</b> That Cabinet resolves to:	
1.	<b>Approve</b> the Council becoming part of the Local Authority Housing Fund in order to deliver 6 new affordable homes;
2.	<b>Recommend</b> to Council, the allocation of £2,330,320 capital budget from the Housing Revenue Account, for the Council's investment to purchase the properties as part of Local Authority Housing Fund;
3.	<b>Delegate</b> authority to the Executive Director (Communities and People) in consultation with; the Cabinet Member for Housing; the Head of Financial Services/Section 151 Officer; and the Head of Law and Governance/Monitoring Officer, to enter into agreements and contracts to facilitate the purchase by the Council of housing (to be held in the HRA) within the identified budget and within the project approval.

<b>Appendices</b>	
Appendix 1	Local Housing Authority Fund Prospectus and Guidance
Appendix 2	Risk Register
Appendix 3 (Confidential)	Memorandum of Understanding

## **Introduction**

1. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing, and Communities (DLUHC) has launched a national £500m Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) to support local authorities in providing accommodation to Ukrainian and Afghan families settled in the UK legally under various government schemes following the respective conflicts that have occurred in their countries.
2. Oxford City Council has been identified as a Council in scope for this funding and was recently successful in a proposal to DLUHC to purchase 6 properties. As a condition of the fund, Local Authorities will need to meet part of the funding to purchase the properties, with the rest provided as grant from the fund.
3. The Local Authority Housing Fund will help the Council achieve its corporate priorities, to *deliver more affordable housing and support thriving communities*, and allow us to access funding to both address the immediate pressures of supporting refugee communities to find permanent accommodation, as well as adding to our stock of council housing for the future.
4. This report seeks Cabinet approval to join the LAHF and to recommend to Council approval of the necessary capital budget to purchase the homes, and the necessary delegated powers to complete the acquisitions.

## **Background to Local Authority Housing Fund**

5. The UK has welcomed over 150,000 people from Ukraine through the Ukraine Family Scheme and Homes for Ukraine Scheme since the start of the war. In Oxford City, under the Homes for Ukraine scheme alone, there are approximately 400 guests across approximately 210 addresses including a large number of children (numbers as of March 2023).
6. These efforts come after welcoming around 23,000 Afghans nationally, of whom c. 9,200 are living in bridging hotel accommodation. Locally, Oxford City Council has supported 45 families under other refugee resettlements from Syria, Afghanistan and other countries and in doing so successfully making Oxford their home.
7. As the war in Ukraine continues and households continue to settle, there is a growing need to increase the housing options available. There is also need to support larger Afghan families in the bridging hotels to find settled family homes to move to.
8. Ensuring housing options for refugees moving to the City is aligned to the Council's broader goals of increasing affordable housing options for all those in housing need in Oxford. Refugee households face the same challenges as the broader

population of the City, with an expensive private rented sector and high demand for social housing with long waits for offers. As outlined in the Council's new Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy the Council has plans to tackle these challenges, and as part of this tailored plans for housing refugees.

9. Access into the private rented sector will be the most important option for many refugee households. Work across Oxfordshire is underway to support access into the sector with support with deposits and rent in advance, but the opportunity from LAHF is that it will allow the Council to purchase 6 properties to offer as affordable social housing for Ukrainian and Afghan refugees.

### **Local Authority Housing Fund investment**

10. The Government announced the creation of the LAHF fund at the end of the last year. The objectives of the fund are to support areas with housing pressures which have welcomed substantial numbers of Ukrainian and Afghan refugees. This is so these areas are not disadvantaged by increased pressures from these arrivals on the existing housing and homelessness systems. It will also help to mitigate the expected increased pressures on local authority resources which arise from the eligible household's sponsorship/family placements/bridging accommodation arrangements come to an end, by increasing the provision of affordable housing available to support these groups.
11. Therefore the fund will help to reduce emergency, temporary and bridging accommodation costs. The fund also brings the benefit that once the household chooses to move on from the accommodation, the unit will return to the Council's housing stock for re-letting open to anyone in general need, so able to meet wider housing need into the future.
12. Following the invite to put forward a bid, the Council entered talks with DLUHC and drew up plans for what could be delivered. All properties delivered through the fund have to be exchanged on by 'best endeavours' November 2023 due to DLUHC funding conditions, and therefore officers have developed a plan that can be delivered by this pressing deadline. DLUHC is committed to funding any contract the Council enters into by November 2023, even if completion occurs after this date.
13. This has resulted in an agreed bid for 6 properties to be acquired from the local housing market. 5 of these properties will be 2-3 bedroom properties for Ukrainian households, and 1 property will be a 4+ bedroom and be used to house an Afghan family from a bridging hotel. All properties will be let on a social rent as a lifetime secure tenancy. DLUHC have approved this proposal and agreed to release funds, subject to the Council making the necessary part investment and meeting the terms of the fund.
14. As with other affordable housing provision, there is a requirement for Local Authorities or other registered provider to part finance a portion of the required capital. For the 'main element' housing (made up of the 5 units for our bid), government funding equates to 40% of total capital costs plus £20,000 per property. For 'bridging element' housing (the one property in our bid), government funding equates to 50% of total capital costs plus £20,000 per property. The Council's proposed investment will come from the Housing Revenue Account.

### **Options available**

15. Recommendation - Oxford City Council to agree to join the fund and make budget provision so it can purchase 6 properties. This is the number of properties that can be acquired based on modelling from previous HRA acquisition programmes, data around available stock on the open market, conveyancing & refurbishment timeframes and that can meet the DLUHC deadline to deliver the properties by November 2023. They will be used to support eligible Ukrainian and Afghan households, as well as delivering a long-term investment for Oxford City Council that will help realise its corporate objective to deliver more affordable housing and support thriving communities.
16. Do nothing – Under this option, the Council would not accept the grant funding that has been made available and therefore not be able to purchase additional properties for the eligible cohort with substantial contribution by the government. Therefore, under the ‘do nothing’ option, the potential benefits referenced in this report will not be realised. The Council will need to consider other accommodation offers to support refugee groups.

### **Environmental**

17. There are few environmental considerations arising directly from this report. Any property purchased into the HRA will comply with the Decent Homes Standard, Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS) and be of an EPC rating of C or above. If the EPC is not reached then it will result in an investment to ensure EPC C or above that would have a positive environmental impact.

### **Financial implications**

18. As a requirement of the fund the Council is required to part fund or finance some of the required capital. For the 5 “main element” homes, 40% of capital costs are covered by grant, plus £20,000 per property. For the single “Bridging element” property, 50% of capital costs are covered by grant, plus £20,000 per property. This means the Council is forecast to invest up to a total of £2,330,320 on the purchase of the 6 properties, with £1,221,700 being funded from HRA borrowing, and the rest covered by grant of £1,108,620.
19. Payments from our grant allocation are due to be transferred as per the DLUHC payment schedule, and while profiled over 22/23 and 23/24 financial year by DLUHC (see Table 1 which details the grant allocation), in practice all completions will be made in 23/24. See Table 2 for the borrowing required.
20. As a prerequisite to enter into the fund, Council Officers were required to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with DLUHC by the deadline of 15<sup>th</sup> March 2023, a copy of which can be found in appendix 3. This is a commercially sensitive document and as such is confidential and marked not for publication.
21. Financial modelling has been completed by the Council on the impact of schemes on the Individual Interest Cover Ratio and overall impact on the Housing Revenue Account. The impact of the bid on the HRA is positive due to the Council gaining more income from the rents from having these properties than lost in the interest charges on the debt to purchase them. They collectively achieve an initial ICR rating of the interim 1.10 minimum which will increase over time and has an overall negligible impact on the HRA.

22. All of the units purchased will need to meet decorative order standards confirmed by the property team. A budget has been set for all six properties to allow for identified refurbishment works contracted through ODS prior to the unit being ready to let in order to meet HRA standards. Whilst this may lead to increased voids work for ODS, we will seek to manage any operational impact. The Council will take steps to ensure all properties purchased are of a standard that would not require levels of investment beyond the budgeted envelope for the programme.

**Table 1**

	<b>Year 1 allocation (22/23)</b>	<b>Year 2 allocation (23/24)</b>	<b>Total allocation</b>
Properties for households that meet the eligibility criteria for this Programme	£231,000	£539,000	£770,000
4+ bed properties for households currently in bridging accommodation	£101,586	£237,034	£338,620
<b>Total grant funding</b>	<b>£332,586</b>	<b>£776,034</b>	<b>£1,108,620</b>

**Table 2**

<b>Bids</b>	<b>LA Housing Fund</b>		
	<b>Main</b>	<b>Bridging</b>	<b>Total</b>
No. of Units	5	1	6
Total Cost	1,711,080	619,240	2,330,320
Borrowing Required	930,300	291,400	1,221,700

**Legal issues**

23. The agreement with DLUHC is clear it does not create any legal or binding obligations on the Council. If we were to fail to acquire the properties by November 2023 for reasons such as market conditions, the only consequence we would face is to risk losing the grant funding.

24. Increased acquisitions from the open market will require conveyancing. If we are to continue to do this in-house at the Council additional burden will be placed on Legal Services, which has been made aware of this pressure.

**Level of risk**

25. See risk register at Appendix 2.

## Equalities impact

26. The LAHF and proposal to purchase 6 homes is aligned to and forms part of the effort to deliver the Council's Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy which has been subject to a full equality impact assessment. 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 housing to better meet client needs.

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**Background Papers:** None



## Appendix 1



# Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities

Local Authority Housing Fund

Prospectus and Guidance

December 2022  
Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

## **1. Introduction**

Earlier this year the United Kingdom took the historic decision to welcome tens of thousands of Ukrainians fleeing the invasion of their homeland. Since then, and thanks to the generosity of the British public, more than 150,000 Ukrainians have been welcomed into homes and communities under the Homes for Ukraine and Ukraine Family schemes. We have also welcomed around 23,000 Afghans who worked alongside the UK Government and risked their lives alongside our Armed Forces, as well as people who assisted UK efforts in Afghanistan.

Local authorities play a vital and integral role in welcoming and integrating recent visa-scheme arrivals to the UK. It is thanks to the hard work of so many in local government, and the wider public sector, across all parts of our country that we have been able to welcome so many people to safety. The Government is introducing further support to help our guests from Ukraine and those who arrived from Afghanistan to find their feet, including local help to find suitable private rented accommodation; assistance via the Department of Work and Pensions to access benefits, skills training and gain employment; and signposting and access to charities and mental health providers. This is backed up by the tariff that authorities receive for each Homes for Ukraine guest arriving in their area; the Afghan Resettlement Schemes to support integration; and additional funding specifically for education and healthcare in the first year of arrival on the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

To assist local authorities further, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) is introducing a £500 million capital fund – the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) – for local authorities in England to provide accommodation to families with housing needs who have arrived in the UK via Ukrainian and Afghan resettlement and relocation schemes. Local authorities who have welcomed arrivals are facing challenges in securing settled accommodation for these households, which unless alleviated will further impact existing housing pressures. LAHF will help them to address these immediate pressures as well as build a sustainable stock of affordable housing for the future.

This prospectus sets out the objectives for the fund, what local authorities can spend the grant on, defines the cohort eligible, and the process we will follow for allocating grants to local authorities.

## **2. Purpose of the fund**

The Local Authority Housing Fund is a £500m capital grant fund in financial years 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 to support selected local authorities in England to obtain and refurbish property in order to provide sustainable housing for those unable to secure their own accommodation who are here under the following schemes: Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme (ACRS), Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) (collectively referred to as the Afghan Schemes), Ukraine Family Scheme, the Homes for Ukraine and the Ukraine Extension Scheme (collectively referred to as Ukraine schemes ). A full definition of the eligible cohort is at section 3.2.

As well as helping to fulfil the UK's humanitarian duties to assist those fleeing war, this fund will reduce the impact of new arrivals on existing housing pressures and ultimately create a lasting legacy for domestic households by providing a new and permanent supply of accommodation for local authorities to help address local housing and homelessness pressures. We expect up to 4,000 properties would be provided through this fund.

Local authorities will be allocated capital funding under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003 on the basis of a formula. Delivery targets will be based upon this funding allocation, estimated by a blended grant per property model. Local authorities will determine the most effective means to deliver the fund objectives in their area.

The grants will be non-ringfenced and we will sign Memoranda of Understanding with all local authorities receiving funding to set out our shared expectations for how the fund should be delivered.

Local authorities in scope of the funding formula for this fund will be contacted with their indicative allocation and asked to return a proposal on how they would deliver this accommodation in line with fund objectives outlined below.

## **2.1 Fund Objectives**

The fund aims to alleviate housing pressures on local authorities arising from recent and unforeseen conflicts in Afghanistan and Ukraine. As part of this government's humanitarian response to these crises, we have welcomed over 170,000 people to the United Kingdom. This act of generosity has unavoidably created additional demand for housing at a time when local authorities are already under strain.

The objectives of the fund are to:

- Ensure recent humanitarian schemes (Afghan and Ukraine schemes) which offer sanctuary, via an organised safe and legal entry route, to those fleeing conflict, provide sufficient longer term accommodation to those they support.
- Support areas with housing pressures which have generously welcomed substantial numbers of Ukrainian refugees so that these areas are not disadvantaged by increased pressures from these arrivals on the existing housing and homelessness systems.
- Mitigate the expected increased pressures on local authority homelessness and social housing resources which arise from the eligible cohort (as defined at section 3.2 of the fund's prospectus) as sponsorship/family placements/bridging accommodation arrangements come to an end by increasing the provision of affordable housing available to local authorities to support those in the cohort who are homeless, at risk of homelessness, or in bridging accommodation;
- Reduce emergency, temporary and bridging accommodation costs;

- Deliver accommodation that as far as possible allows for the future conversion of housing units to support wider local authority housing and homelessness responsibilities to UK nationals (i.e. after usage by this cohort ends);
- Utilise accommodation solutions to enable effective resettlement and economic integration of the eligible cohort.
- Reduce impacts on the existing housing and homelessness systems and those waiting for social housing.

### **3. What the funding can be used for**

Within the framework of the purpose and objectives of the fund set out above, we want to provide local authorities with as much flexibility as possible to shape local delivery according to circumstances in each area. The guidance provided in this document is intended to support this. Local authorities will need to be satisfied that their specific plans are lawful and deliverable.

This fund will pay capital funding in two tranches, to be spent in financial years 2022/23 and 2023/24. Local authorities cannot combine this fund with the Affordable Homes Programme or Right to Buy receipts. There is no revenue funding available. Local authorities will have their own processes in place to determine the accounting treatment of revenue costs directly attributable to capital works. It is for local authorities to determine whether it is appropriate to capitalise any revenue costs and their accounting teams should ensure that the accounting treatment adopted is deemed compliant with the code of Practice for Local Authority Accounting.

The basic model assumes stock acquisition. In practice this could include, but is not limited to:

- Refurbishing and/or converting local authority-owned residential or non-residential buildings, including defunct sheltered accommodation;
- Acquiring, refurbishing and/or converting non-local authority owned residential or non-residential buildings, including bringing empty or dilapidated properties back into use;
- Acquiring new build properties 'off-the-shelf', including acquiring and converting shared ownership properties;
- Developing new properties, including developing modular housing on council-owned sites, and;
- Working with and supporting other organisations who want to offer accommodation for this cohort.

Ultimately, local authorities may choose the most appropriate delivery mechanism to achieve the fund's objectives, and to bring on stream the accommodation as quickly as possible.

While local authorities will take the lead in their areas, this does not mean the above activities must be all be undertaken by local authorities. We expect local authorities to work closely with their housing association partners who stand ready to assist and, in

some cases, may be the most appropriate delivery vehicle to achieve the fund objectives. Housing association stock, development, and disposals pipelines could be instrumental in assisting local authorities to deliver this fund, as could their expertise and capacity for stock purchase, management and wraparound support.

Local authorities may choose to acquire properties in their own area or work with neighbouring authorities to acquire properties in their region; it is left to each local authorities' discretion whether collaboration of this kind would be an appropriate route although we would encourage collaboration where possible.

Local authorities should consider the needs of the cohort in their area when determining the size of properties to acquire. Our expectation is that the vast majority of properties acquired will be family sized homes (2-4+ bedrooms).

There are 182 local authorities, plus the Greater London Authority (GLA), eligible for funding. Eligible local authorities will receive an allocation email, which will set out the funding amount and the minimum number of units the LA needs to deliver with this funding. Local authorities or their partners are expected to fund the remainder of the costs, examples include but are not limited to funding from capital receipts, revenue, borrowing or funding by a partner.

Local authorities will be expected to manage this fund within their normal budgetary guidelines, with confidence that any budgeting decisions can be justified to their auditors. We will ask Section 151 officers to agree this with the department via a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU); further details can be found at section 4.

It is expected that all homes delivered through this fund will be affordable/low-cost housing to support wider local authority housing and homelessness responsibilities for the remainder of their lifetime. If properties are disposed of, they will be subject to the Recycled Capital Grant regulations. Funding provided under this fund is for whole-life housing costs and local authorities are expected to use the funding in line with the fund objectives outlined in 2.1. It is up to local authorities to determine the precise rent level and tenure of homes in line with the fund objectives. This could include social rent, Affordable Rent, or a discounted private rent.

### **3.1 Ambition for housing those in bridging accommodation**

There are around 9,200 people currently living in Home Office bridging accommodation who are being resettled via the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy and the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme. This fund aims to support local authorities to help move more households out of bridging accommodation. Each of the 182 local authorities, plus the Greater London Authority on behalf of London boroughs, in scope for grant funding will be expected to increase their number of pledges to support people under the Afghan resettlement schemes through the usual process (by notifying their Strategic Migration Partnerships) and will be set an ambition for the number of homes to acquire specifically for housing those currently in bridging accommodation. This will be for larger homes (four or more bedrooms), given the average family size of those in bridging accommodation, and the number of properties will be determined by the population size of the local authority. The funding allocation

includes a specific element for the acquisition of larger properties for this cohort. However, local authorities can also use the main element of their funding allocation to move smaller families out of bridging accommodation into smaller homes with fewer than 4 bedrooms in addition to their allotted target for larger homes.

For this fund, we expect all local authorities in scope for funding to deliver their allocation of 4+ bedroom homes for those in bridging accommodation, and local authorities will be asked as part of the validation process whether they are able to deliver those additional units.

If local authorities do not increase their pledges and do not commit to provide sufficient larger homes to this cohort (or if the GLA commits to provide fewer than its targeted amount within London), then their provisional allocation (both the bridging and main element) will be reallocated.

### **3.2 Cohort Definition and Eligibility**

Given the objectives of the fund, those eligible for the housing are those who are homeless, at risk of homelessness or who live in unsuitable Temporary Accommodation (including bridging accommodation) and who also meet the below definition.

Those on the:

- Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme (including eligible British Nationals under this scheme) (ACRS),
- Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP)
- Ukraine Family Scheme (UFS),
- Homes for Ukraine (HFU),
- Ukraine Extension Scheme (UES)

For those not in bridging accommodation, the local authority does not have to have accepted a Housing Act 1996 Part 7 homelessness duty in respect of the household for the household to be eligible, but the local authority should satisfy themselves that the household is already or would otherwise be homeless or at risk of homelessness if this accommodation was not available.

### **3.3 Matching households with properties**

It will be up to local authorities to decide how to deliver and manage this fund locally. The accommodation funded through this fund should increase the housing available for the cohort outlined in section 3.2.

In addition to the eligibility criteria above, the local authority should make reasonable endeavours to prioritise households based on who is most in need when matching eligible households with properties. Beyond this, local authorities may use any lawful route that allows them to deliver this fund to cater for the needs of their area. They may wish to use their experience from the Rough Sleepers Accommodation Fund or use the same assessment and prioritisation process as for mainstream social housing stock.

Some examples of options for matching eligible households to properties include:

- Using, amending or putting in place a Local Lettings Policy to allow homes to be allocated by local authorities, or nominated to housing associations, to eligible applicants of a particular description. This is allowed under the Housing Act 1996 (section 166A(6)(b))
- Letting accommodation through a local authority owned housing company.

This is not exhaustive and depending on how local authorities are delivering the fund, they may identify other legal ways for matching households with properties.

For the larger homes acquired to enable households to move out of Home Office bridging accommodation, we would encourage local authorities to use their relationships with each other, their Strategic Migration Partnerships and with staff in bridging hotels to identify and match families to suitable properties. This is to increase the chances of successful matches, as we recognise that local resettlement leads are well-placed to use local intelligence on households in their regions to identify suitable matches and reduce the chances of refusals as much as possible. Local authorities can indicate a preference for a specific family to be matched to a property they have acquired on the ARAP/ACRS property offer form. Alternatively, if a local authority is unable to identify a specific family in a bridging hotel, the local authority can put forward properties (via their Strategic Migration Partnership) to be centrally matched by the Home Office. As mentioned above, we expect local authorities to increase their pledges for the Afghan resettlement schemes beyond their existing pledge amount to reflect the acquisition of these new properties.

### **3.4 Tenancy Duration and social housing legacy**

Given this fund aims to create a lasting supply of affordable housing for the general population (see fund objectives at section 2.1), we expect this stock to become available to support wider local authority general housing and homelessness responsibilities after the immediate needs of the eligible cohort have been addressed.

As the housing landscape in each area and the circumstances of eligible households vary, we will not mandate local authorities to apply a fixed tenancy duration for housing funded through the fund, though in many cases this may be appropriate.

## **4. Funding Allocations and Delivery**

### **4.1 Initial allocation of funding**

The initial funding offer will be determined and offered to the 182 local authorities and Greater London Authority in England, who are deemed to have the greatest need for this funding based on a formula. A formula will be used to identify the total allocation to those local authorities in scope for funding across the duration of the fund.

Local authorities are given an overall ranking based on several sets of data. This combines their relative ranking in terms of the number of Ukrainian arrivals per 1000 population and their relative ranking in terms of the level of housing pressure (which includes Private Rented Sector rents in relation to income, unemployment rate, number of households in Temporary Accommodation (TA) per 1000 households and

number of households on local authority waiting lists per 1000). This data is used because in the areas of highest housing pressure, it will be most difficult for refugees/arrivals to find housing, and therefore the risk of homelessness will be higher. The capacity of local authorities to respond in these areas will also be more limited because of the shortage of housing and associated higher housing costs. The Ukrainian arrivals data is used in this ranking to reflect the sudden and additional pressure from a rapid increase in the number of arrivals of people fleeing war, which is a different magnitude to the number of refugee arrivals in recent years. Numbers in bridging accommodation in each local authority is not used because of the policy objective to move Afghans out of bridging accommodation into local authorities across the country.

An initial indicative allocation will then be offered to each local authority, working from the most pressured local authority down, on the basis of:

- A fair share requirement to accommodate families in bridging accommodation, based on a per capita distribution for those local authorities in scope of funding and a grant per property set at 50% of the estimated average lower quartile 4+ bed property price plus an allocation of £20k per property (to allow for refurbishment/other costs)
- Distributing the remaining budget based on a ratio of 1 home per 20 Ukrainian arrivals, which is then costed at a grant per property of 40% of the estimated average lower quartile property price (plus £20k per property for refurbishment/other costs)
- The model distributes funding down the list of local authorities (ranked based on Ukrainian arrivals and housing pressure) until the budget is expended, resulting in 182 local authorities (plus the GLA) being in scope for funding.

In addition, several caps are put in place for the initial allocation to help support deliverability, to minimise inflationary impacts and to ensure all parts of the country receive some support. These are:

- a. constraining the initial London allocation to reflect an achievable delivery target in the capital's highly constrained housing market;
- b. capping the allocation per region at 25% of the total fund spend; and
- c. capping the allocation to any single local authority at 30 homes.

## **4.2 Funding split between financial years**

The local authorities who are identified by the formula as eligible for funding will be contacted directly with an indicative offer of their total allocation. Authorities will be asked whether they will be able to spend this allocation to deliver the outlined number of homes, in accordance with the details set out in this prospectus (and if not, what they could deliver). Local authorities will also be asked whether they can deliver more than the allocation using the same grant per property (detailed at 4.3).



Funding will be paid in two tranches representing 30% and 70% of the local authority's allocation agreed in the MOU. We expect that the first tranche of funding will be paid in February/March 2023 – depending on when the MoU is agreed.

The second tranche of funding will pay 'the balance' of the local authority's allocation. There will be two predetermined tranche payment dates; the first at three months and the second at five months from the tranche one payment. Dates will be confirmed as part of the MOU process. To receive the second tranche payment the local authority must have spent at least 60% of the tranche one payment delivering on the objectives of the fund, which we will ask the local authority to declare to us at progress 'checkpoints'. Local authorities do not need to wait until receiving the second tranche of payment before spending more than their tranche one payment given 'the balance' will be paid following the checkpoint when they have spent 60% of their tranche one payment.

We will also ask local authorities about the number of property purchase offers they have made, how many of those offers have been accepted, and how many contracts they have exchanged, for example. To monitor delivery, we will ask for these progress updates at each funding checkpoint, regardless of whether the local authority has reached the 60% spending threshold.

We anticipate that any additional funding agreed via the reallocations process will be paid at the same time as the second tranche payment, with an update to the MOU following the reallocations process to reflect this additional funding. Where there is no direct allocation already in place (eg London councils) new MoU arrangements may be created.

### **4.3 Grant Rate and Eligible Spend**

**Allocations to each council have been calculated as follows:**

- For the "main element", the amount of grant per property is calculated as 40% of the average lower quartile property price in the council area (or for London, 40% of the average lower quartile property price in Greater London). A further £20k per property is then added to account for other costs (including refurbishment).
- For the "bridging element" (i.e. 4+ bedroom houses) the amount of grant per property is calculated as 50% of the estimated lower quartile property price for a 4+ bedroom property in the council area (or for London, 50% of the estimated lower quartile property price for a 4+ bedroom property in Greater London). A further £20k per property is then added to account for other costs, including refurbishment.

### **Grant rates and Eligible Expenditure for Main and Bridging Elements**

It is expected that councils will use their best endeavours to acquire the target number of units and to achieve value for money. The average grant per property rate should not exceed the maximum described below but the grant per property for individual

purchases can be higher. It is recognised that the grant will not meet all of the acquisition costs and so there is an expectation that the council, or its partners, will provide the remainder of the funding required.

The maximum average grant per property rate (for the portfolio of properties, not individual purchases) for the “main element” is 40% of the costs the council charges to its capital budget plus £20k per property. Eligible costs funded by the 40% and the 20k per property could include the purchase price, stamp duty, surveying, legal and other fees, refurbishments, energy efficiency measures, decoration, furnishings, or otherwise preparing the property for rent and potentially irrecoverable VAT incurred on these items. Councils should ensure they comply with the Code of Practice for Local Authority Accounting when deciding eligible costs.

The maximum average grant per property rate (for the portfolio of properties, not individual purchases) for the “bridging element” is 50% of the costs the council charges to its capital budget plus £20k per property. Eligible costs funded by the 50% and the 20k per property could include the purchase price, stamp duty, surveying, legal and other fees, refurbishments, energy efficiency measures, decoration, furnishings, or otherwise preparing the property for rent and potentially irrecoverable VAT incurred on these items. Councils should ensure they comply with the Code of Practice for Local Authority Accounting.

In some cases, the amount of money provided by the grant per property may equate to an intervention rate higher than the maximum set out above - for example if the local authority is focussing on smaller homes, such as 2 bedrooms, because these better suit the needs of the eligible cohort in the area or constitute the majority of the available stock to purchase. If this means the grant rate equates to more than the maximum, the local authority is expected to acquire more units with this funding than the estimated minimum (or outline in the MOU process that less funding is needed to deliver the number of units outlined in their allocation) in order to ensure value for money and not exceed the maximum grant rate.

During the validation process, if local authorities ask to deliver fewer units than allocated, then their funding allocation will be reduced, maintaining the same grant per property rate.

### **Eligible Expenditure for Improvement Budget**

The costs of obtaining a property are not the only costs councils may incur. They may also need to fund things like refurbishments, energy efficiency measures, legal costs, decoration, furnishings, or otherwise preparing the property for rent. We have included an un-ringfenced capital budget of £20,000 per property to account for this. This is a notional amount for the purposes of allowing for these costs in our formula. Councils can choose how much of the grant is to be spent on each individual property. For instance, it may choose to spend £10,000 on one property and £30,000 on another.

#### **Example “main element” allocation**

A local authority is allocated £380,000 to deliver 5 main element units plus £20k per unit nominally for refurbishment costs. In total it receives £480,000.

The local authority identifies 5 properties and the costs of obtaining and preparing them for rent:  
Property 1: £220,000 capital cost  
Property 2: £220,000 capital cost  
Property 3: £240,000 capital cost  
Property 4: £190,000 capital cost  
Property 5: £230,000 capital cost  
Total price: £1,100,000  
The local authority uses the £100,000 it received nominally for refurbishment costs, leaving £1,000,000.  
The £380,000 main element allocation equates to 38% of the remaining capital cost and is therefore within the 40% maximum average grant rate.  
The council funds the remaining costs from other sources.

#### 4.4 Validation forms

Eligible local authorities will have been emailed an indicative allocation offer email, a draft MOU, and a validation form. This email outlines the local authority's indicative allocation. Receipt of the initial indicative allocation email and completion the validation form is not a commitment to providing funding or a commitment by a local authority to receive and spend funding. Final allocations will be confirmed in writing following the department's review of the form(s) as outlined in this section. This does not prejudice a local authorities' right to not sign a Memorandum of Understanding.

We will ask all local authorities to submit the validation form no later than 25 January 2023 to confirm if they are willing and able to participate. This helps us understand which local authorities do not wish to take up this funding, how many units local authorities are willing to deliver and allows us to begin reallocating funding.

The validation form will ask local authorities to cover the key details of their delivery proposal; this will then be assessed and validated by the department.

In the validation form we will ask for information on:

- The number of homes that the local authority plans to acquire as part of this fund including the number of 4+ bedroom homes for families in bridging accommodation
- Delivery approach
- Project milestones
- Risks and barriers to delivery

A copy of the validation form questions is attached at Annex A. Validation forms must be submitted via [this page](#) no later than midday 25 January 2023. These will be reviewed and responded to as they are received, and we intend to respond to all forms by 15 February 2023.

After submitting your validation form, please send your completed and signed Memorandum of Understanding by email to the Local Authority Housing Fund Team via LAHF@levellingup.gov.uk <mailto:LAHF@levellingup.gov.uk>. The template MOU is [here](#), which are the standard terms that will be agreed with every local authority, and

the text of which is non-negotiable. If you are delivering the full allocation, complete the MOU using the numbers from your allocation email. If you are agreeing to deliver a lower number of units than your allocation, to complete your MOU, calculate the funding amount for your specified number of units, using the grant per property rate set out in your allocation email – further detail is included in the blank MOU.

We encourage local authorities to return their validation form and MOU as soon as they can as we may be able to work faster with those who agree to the terms of the programme and return their validation forms and MOU earlier. Any reallocations will be calculated and communicated by the end of March 2023.

Given that this is not a bid-based fund, proposals will be assessed acknowledging that accountability for delivery rests with the local authority. The questions have been designed to identify local authorities who would be unwilling or unable to deliver the fund. The assessed section of the validation form will consider responses regarding:

- The proposed scale of delivery relative to the indicative allocation
- Whether delivery plans meet fund objectives
- Confirmation that the local authority is content with formal reporting requests every 2 months
- Confirmation that the Section 151 Officer or Deputy Section 151 Officer has signed off the proposal

We will confirm by end of March 2023 any additional funding available to the local authority following a reallocations process based on validation form data.

If we have any queries on the answers provided in the validation form, we will contact the local authority directly.

#### **4.5 Reallocation**

During the validation process, local authorities will be asked whether they can deliver more than their initial allocation.

If in the validation form stage local authorities state they are unable to deliver the units allocated to them across the duration of the fund, the funding for the units they say they will be unable to deliver will be reallocated to other local authorities (including directly to London councils). This reallocation will be based on a process aligned with the fund objectives in 2.1, taking into account need and deliverability. If additional funding is available for local authorities who have told us they can deliver more than their initial allocation, we will contact them to confirm any further funding offer and to agree an update to the MOU to reflect this additional funding.

If a local authority misses the deadline for submitting their validation forms, they are unlikely to receive funding at tranche one. Whether it is still possible to provide them with any funding will depend on when we receive the necessary details from them and the progress of the reallocations process (including the amount of money left to reallocate). We ask that local authorities who foresee a difficulty in working to the

communicated deadlines get in touch with the Local Authority Housing Fund Team as soon as possible.

If money remains after allocating additional funding to the local authorities that have said they can deliver more across the two years of the fund, then the list of local authorities may be expanded beyond those in receipt of initial allocations.

If a local authority is allocated additional funding as part of the reallocation process, this will be paid together with the baseline funding amount for year two (agreed as in the original signed Memorandum of Understanding). As with the tranche two payment, this additional funding will be subject to the local authority having spent at least 60% of their tranche one payment at the 'checkpoint' before the tranche two payment. Where there is no pre-existing direct agreement (as would be the case with individual London councils), new agreements would be made.

The allocations for the "main element" and "bridging element" will be treated separately for reallocations, and so "bridging element" funding will not be reallocated to deliver more 'main element' properties. This is to avoid undermining the number of properties delivered for those in bridging accommodation.

#### **4.6 How grants will be delivered**

This fund will operate only in England and funding will be allocated direct to local authorities under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003.

The funding will be allocated to the appropriate district council or unitary authority. Initial allocations for London will be made via the Greater London Authority. Further allocations may be made directly to London councils.

We will contact local authorities directly with their indicative allocation based on the formula outlined above.

#### **4.7 Payment process**

Payments will be made in the form of grants under Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003 and paid as two instalments, on agreement of an MOU between the local authority and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

Once we have contacted local authorities to confirm their final allocation, we expect local authorities to obtain any further necessary clearances to enter into a MOU with the Department based on the information they provided in the validation form. Funding will then be distributed to the local authority following the signing of the MOU.

For local authorities allocated any additional funding via the reallocations process, prior to payment of any additional funding there will be an update to the MOU agreed to reflect this additional amount, and this will be paid alongside the tranche two funding.

Tranche one payments will be made in February/March 2023 depending on the date the MOU is agreed. Payments for tranche two will be paid in May and July 2023 respectively, dependent on when the local authority's spending on this fund surpasses 60% of their tranche one payment.

Given the urgency of delivery we expect all local authorities to show flexibility in how they apply their approvals processes in order to participate in this fund. All MOUs should be signed ahead of the first tranche of payments. Local authorities will ultimately be responsible for delivery and ensuring value for money of the allocation they have received.

#### **4.8 Fraud Risk Assessments**

Local authorities shall be responsible for ensuring that fraud is a key consideration in all spend activity and that the following minimum standards are met:

- Follow the [Grants Functional Standards on Fraud Risk Assessment](#) (FRA) – pages 15-19;
- Undertake FRAs at an appropriate level to each individual project dependent on risk;
- Ensure that this spend is undertaken in accordance with effective authority fraud prevention policy and procedure, and via engagement with your organisations' specialists in this area;
- Ensure that relevant evidence and data to prevent fraud is gathered as part of due diligence undertaken ahead of releasing funds;
- Implement reporting and monitoring requirements that will identify irregularities or issues in use of funds which can be investigated further;
- Store and file all work undertaken on FRA in the event of any issues or audit requirements.

#### **4.9 Due Diligence**

Local authorities shall be responsible for ensuring that proportional due diligence is applied to all this fund spend and that the following minimum standards are met:

- Follow the [Grants Functional Standards on Due Diligence](#) – pages 20-24;
- Undertake due diligence at an appropriate level to each individual project dependent on risk;
- Ensure that due diligence is undertaken in accordance with effective authority rules and procedures through authorities' teams specialising in this area;
- Ensure that key areas of due diligence identified for projects in which local authorities invest are reported on and monitored throughout the term of delivery;
- Store and file all work undertaken on due diligence in the event of any issues or audit requirements.

#### **4.10 How we will monitor performance and delivery**

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be detailed in MOUs with local authorities and will be based on the fund objectives outlined at section 2.1.

Every two months, local authorities will provide a mix of quantitative and qualitative summary updates to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to track against agreed delivery milestones. The reports will be due every two months until delivery is completed, with the dates specified in the MOU.

We will ask for the following information either as part of ongoing monitoring and/or as part of evaluation of the fund:

- Offers accepted, including bedroom size and whether these are part of the “main” or “bridging” element of the funding;
- Number of properties where contracts exchanged, including bedroom size;
- Number of properties occupied, including bedroom size;
- Number of families housed, including which resettlement programme they belong to;
- Number of individuals housed, including which resettlement programme they belong to;
- Total expenditure (including grant and other funding);
- Total committed spend (including grant and other funding);
- Government grant used;
- Overall assessment (RAG rated) of whether delivery is on track.

#### Future evaluation requests

We will conduct an evaluation of the fund near the end of the monitoring period. To understand how the fund is being delivered in further detail, we will ask local authorities for the following information:

- How properties have been sourced (e.g. through stock acquisition or another delivery route);
- Breakdown of households housed by previous housing situation, e.g. emergency accommodation/temporary accommodation;
- Tenancy duration;
- Rent levels;
- Number of additional pledges made to provide housing for those in bridging accommodation;
- Number of properties obtained outside the local authority’s area, if applicable, and where these are located.

We expect that local authorities will respond to any reasonable additional requests from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to support any retrospective assessment or evaluation as to the impact or value for money of the fund. We will expect the authority to, at minimum, monitor spend, outputs and outcomes against agreed indicators and keep this information for at least 5 years.

We may also ask for details about how the acquired properties are being used, for example if they are still publicly owned and if they have become part of the social housing or affordable stock. This will require local authorities to maintain address-level data. This is for us to examine the legacy impacts of the fund.

#### 4.11 Next steps and important dates

- Local authorities who have been identified as eligible for funding will be sent a link to a validation form, to confirm their interest in participating, and to set out how they intend to deliver this fund. Submissions will be reviewed as they are received and therefore forms submitted earlier may receive an earlier response.
- Local authorities must submit their validation form by 25 January 2023 via this [link](#). Forms will only be accepted submitted by the link above. After submitting their validation forms, we encourage local authorities to email their signed MOU as soon as possible.
- In the event we have any clarification questions about the contents of a validation form, we will contact the local authority directly for further detail.
- If a validation form is accepted, we will make best endeavours to contact the local authority to confirm their allocation by 15 February 2023. We will be prepared to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with local authorities as soon as they have received the appropriate internal clearances. We expect local authorities to have signed this no later than 1 March 2023 but will work flexibly with local authorities.
- Tranche one of funding is due to happen in February/March 2023 (depending on the date the MOU is agreed), tranche two is due to happen in May or July 2023, dependent on when the local authority's spending on this fund surpasses 60% of their tranche one payment as reported during the monitoring and evaluation windows.
- Local authorities will be asked to complete a monitoring return every two months on the basis as set out in the Memorandum of Understanding and we will discuss any concerns about delivery with local authorities directly. The final monitoring return is scheduled to take place in November 2023, however we will expect monitoring returns to be completed until delivery is complete. We expect to carry out an evaluation from December 2023.
- For any questions about this fund please contact LAHF@levellingup.gov.uk.



## **Annex A – Validation Questions**

### Overview

The Local Authority Housing Fund will provide up to £500 million in capital grants to help councils obtain additional housing to accommodate the defined eligible cohort at risk of homelessness or living in bridging accommodation.

Councils' funding offer has been allocated on the basis of a formula, taking into account housing pressures and the number of recent Ukrainian arrivals.

This form applies to eligible councils in England only.

The validation form will be split into two parts, assessed and non assessed additional questions.

If you need to edit or revisit any sections of the validation form you will need to use the browser back button. Be aware that if you use the browser back button, the screen that you are currently viewing will not be saved.

Once you have submitted your validation form you will not be able to edit your response.

Please keep a copy of your answers for future reference.

After submitting your validation form, please send your completed and signed Memorandum of Understanding by email to the Local Authority Housing Fund Team via LAHF@levellingup.gov.uk.

### Validation Questions

1. Are you willing and able to participate in the Local Authority Housing Fund programme?
  - Yes (form proceeds to question 3)
  - No (form proceeds to question 2)
2. Please provide further details of why you are not willing or able to participate in the programme (form proceeds to end).
3. Does the proposal you outline in this form meet the fund objectives outlined below? (Please note this is requirement of the fund and if not agreed you will not be able to participate in the fund.)
4. For the "main element" of the fund, how many homes can you acquire by 30th November 2023 (this is a target date, payments will be honoured assuming delivery within financial years 2022/23 and 2023/24)?

Note: if you can deliver fewer than your initial allocation, your funding will be scaled down proportionally to reflect the number of homes, based on the grant per property outlined in your allocation email. If you state you can deliver more homes at this grant rate than your initial allocation, we will progress with the MoU using your initial allocation and following reallocation process, we will

confirm whether any additional funding is available to enable you to deliver more than your initial allocation.

All delivery proposals in this section should be based on the policy in section 2.1 of the prospectus and the grant per property set out in your allocation email.

5. For the "bridging element" of the fund, how many 4+ bedroom homes can you acquire by 30th November 2023 (this is a target date, payments will be honoured assuming delivery within financial years 2022/23 and 2023/24)?

Note: if you can deliver fewer than your initial allocation, your funding will be scaled down proportionally to reflect the number of homes, based on the grant per property outlined in your allocation email. If you state you can deliver more homes at this grant rate than your initial allocation, we will progress with the MoU using your initial allocation and following reallocation process, we will confirm whether any additional funding is available to enable you to deliver more than your initial allocation.

All delivery proposals in this section should be based on the policy in section 2.1 of the prospectus and the grant per property set out in your allocation email.

6. Do you agree to provide progress reports every 2 months until delivery is completed including Management Information (MI) and reporting against Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) as detailed in the prospectus?

(Please note this is requirement of the fund and if not agreed you will not be able to participate in the fund.)

7. Has your Section 151 Officer or Deputy S151 Officer approved this submission?

(Please note this is requirement of the fund and if not agreed you will not be able to participate in the fund.)

### **Additional non-assessed questions**

The next set of questions are not assessed and will be used by the department to aid policy development and evaluation design only.

1. If the number of "main element" properties you can deliver is fewer than your allocated number, please outline the reasons for this.
2. If the number of 4+ bedroom "bridging element" properties you can deliver is fewer than your allocated number, please outline the reasons for this.

3. How do you plan on delivering your proposed/target number of homes?  
Please provide details of the type of stock you plan to acquire, noting the non-exhaustive list of examples provided in section 3 of the programme prospectus.
4. If your chosen delivery plan will add to existing housing in your area, please provide an estimate of the number of new homes.
5. Please provide your key milestones for delivery, including decision making timelines.
6. Based on the indicative approach(es) identified in your delivery plan above, please provide a brief overview that shows a financial projection of how and when the budget will be spent versus the timescales / number of homes to be acquired.
7. How do you intend to fund your contributory share required to secure your proposed/target number of homes? (e.g. from capital receipts, revenue, borrowing or funded by a partner?)
8. What are the key risks for delivery and how do you intend to mitigate them?
9. If this programme continued into future years using the same or a similar approach, (e.g. assuming launch in late 2023 and running for the following 12 months), how many homes could you deliver in this time period?

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Risk Register

Local Authority Housing Fund

As at: 06.04.23

Ref	Title	Risk Description	Opp / Threat	Cause	Consequence	Risk Treatment	Date Raised	Owner	Gross		Current			Target		Comments	Control / Mitigation Description	Date Due	Action Status	% Progress	Action Owner
									P	I	P	I	Score	P	I						
	Under performance to specification	Under deliver of target of 6 properties and conversation to lettable dwellings	Threat	Inability to source and purchase suitable properties from open market by deadline	Not meeting the terms of the funding prospectus, as well as reputational damage.	Reduce	21/03/23	Stephen Cohen	3	3	2	3	6	2	2		Established team to deliver properties who have been involved in planning for fund application.	30/11/23	Not yet started	0%	
	Insufficient capital	Additional pressure on Housing Revenue Account (HRA)	Threat	Inability to fund capital element to purchase properties.	Inability to purchase properties, as well as reputational damage	Avoid	21/03/23	Stephen Cohen	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		Financial modelling completed in consultation with Council's financial services team and HRA provision planned for.	21/03/23	Ongoing	80%	
	Market fluctuations	Property market increases substantially	Threat	Property price rise	Local property prices increase beyond budgeted allowance	Accept	21/03/23	Stephen Cohen	3	3	3	2	6	3	2		Financial modelling builds in contingency allowances for market increases. Properties are to be delivered by November 2023	21/03/23	Not yet started	0%	
	Adverse public opinion/media intervention	Negative publicity generated from investing in properties	Threat	Negative publicity from OCC entering into Fund	Reputational damage	Avoid	21/03/23	Stephen Cohen	2	3	2	1	2	2	1		National awareness of Ukraine & Afghan issues & positive financial gain	21/03/23	Not yet started	0%	
	Not entering into fund	Decision to not enter into the fund	Opportunity	Deciding not enter fund	Not realising benefits of property acquisition & reputational damage	Avoid	21/03/23	Stephen Cohen	4	3	3	3	9	1	1		Report sets out rational for entering into fund	21/03/23	In Progress	50%	

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**To:** Cabinet Member for Housing  
**Date:** 10 March 2023  
**Report of:** Executive Director (Communities and People)  
**Title of Report:** Approval of a bid to run the South and Vale Home Improvement Agency on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council and to provide assistance to deal with their Disabled Facilities Grant application backlog

<b>Summary and recommendations</b>	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To approve the submission of a bid for the contract to deliver the South and Vale Home Improvement Agency and approve the provision of assistance to South and Vale to deal with a backlog of applications for Disabled Facilities Grants.(DFG)
<b>Key decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Linda Smith – Cabinet Member for Housing.
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	Foster an inclusive economy, Deliver more affordable housing, Support thriving communities & Pursue a zero carbon Oxford
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	None
<b>Recommendations: That the Cabinet Member resolves to:</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Approve the submission of the bid for a South &amp; Vale Home Improvement Agency.</li> <li>2. Delegate authority to the Director of Communities and People to submit the bid and enter into a contract up to a value of £1.8m in the event that the bid is successful.</li> <li>3. Recommend to Council that the budget is amended to take into account the provision of the HIA service to deliver the contract.</li> <li>4. Approve that the HIA assists South and Vale Council in reducing their backlog by carrying out 100 DFG cases and delegates approval to the Head of Regulatory Services &amp; Community Safety to enter into a contract up to a value of £200k.</li> </ol>	

<b>Appendices – (all commercially sensitive not to be published)</b>	
Appendix 1	Home Improvement Agency – ITT document
Appendix 2	Home Improvement Agency – Specification document
Appendix 3	

	Home Improvement Agency – Potential Staff Structure and draft Budget
Appendix 4	Risk register
Appendix 5	Equalities Impact Assessment
Appendix 6	Legal and Financial Implications

## Introduction and background

1. Oxford City Council has been running an in-house Home Improvement Agency (HIA) since the 1990's. Oxford City's HIA and our Housing Assistance and Disabled Adaptation Policy are held nationally as examples of good practice. The Home Improvement Agency is regularly asked by government and Foundations (the government approved HIA national body) to present at various events. We were again recognised by winning the Foundations Contractor of the year and Sustainability Adaptation service of the year in December 2022.
2. The Home Improvement Agency service in Oxford City is funded from pooled budget arrangements between top tier local authorities and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) via the Better Care Fund (BCF). The City Council has a contract with the County Council to deliver a range of services including a caseworker for advice, a handy person for small repairs and carrying out Disabled Facilities Grants.
3. The government allocates each district council a Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) budget as they have the statutory responsibility to provide eligible applicants with a DFG. The DFG budget forms part of the BCF and our Housing Assistance and Disabled Adaptation Policy reflects the BCF's aims of achieving better health and wellbeing outcomes and the reducing avoidable admissions to hospital agenda.
4. The HIA charges a 15% fee for handling DFG applications and the service is funded from the contract with the County Council and DFG fees. In 2022/23 the DFG allocation from the government is £1,421,433.

## South and Vale HIA

5. South and Vale Council's HIA has been run by an external provider for many years and on the 10<sup>th</sup> February 2023 the County Council released a tender for a new three plus two year HIA contract which is due to start on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2023. Bids have to be submitted by noon on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023. Oxford City Council previously submitted a bid in 2018 for the same contract in which we were unsuccessful, and the proposal is to put in a refreshed and renewed bid for the new contract.
6. The contract is effectively the same as our existing Oxford City's HIA, but covers the South and Vale Council area. The aims are to:
  - enable those Oxfordshire residents in need of support to maintain their independence, health, and well-being at home for the foreseeable future. This applies to individuals of any age.
  - This aim will be achieved through the repair, adaptation, and improvement of Residents' homes, so that the person is able to remain in their own home in a safe, secure, and accessible environment.
  - Activities provided under the Contract include: the facilitation of adaptation; repairs, maintenance services, preventative initiatives; providing information and

advice on accessing adaptations privately; as required including support for funding options; signpost or refer to appropriate community-based services.

7. The DFG allocations from the government are £1,550,448 to South Oxfordshire District Council and £1,638,973 to the Vale of White Horse District Council.

### **Backlog of DFG cases**

8. Due to a number of reasons a backlog of adaptation work has built up in the South and Vale Council area over the last year, which has left disabled and vulnerable clients waiting for their adaptation. The County Council and South and Vale Council have separately requested assistance from Oxford City Council to help out with 81 high priority DFG cases over the next few months to help alleviate this. They also estimate that up to 15 urgent cases (e.g. end of life care) may also need to be allocated to the HIA to deal with.
9. The proposal is that the HIA will charge DFG fees on each job to cover the costs of taking on this additional workload.

### **Other implications**

10. The work in South and Vale will positively support the hospitals, and health services in Oxford City as these all work with South and Vale clients. Preventing people from needing to enter the health system and enabling people to get home from hospital and stay there safely will help reduce backlogs and relieve pressure across the whole of the health system. The works carried out under this policy also often result in property improvements which contribute to the carbon reduction agenda.

### **Financial implications**

11. Please see Appendix 6.

### **Legal issues**

12. Please also see Appendix 6.

### **Level of risk**

13. A risk register is attached as Appendix 4.

### **Equalities impact**

14. An Equalities Impact assessment (EIA) has been completed and attached as Appendix 5. The impacts are positive as the policy directly relates to assisting vulnerable and disadvantaged members of the community.

<b>Report author</b>	Becky Walker
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Service area or department	Regulatory Services and Community Safety
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**Background Papers:** None

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