

b) Making vacant buildings within Oxford available for the use as temporary homeless shelters (proposed by Councillor Thomas, seconded by Councillor Simmons)

Green member motion

Recognising:

- the growing number of individuals sleeping on our streets;
- the dangers of sleeping rough;
- the significant number of long and short-term vacant buildings within the city [1];
- the potential to move on with their lives and off the street (into permanent accommodation and employment) that a period of stable and safe accommodation could offer many of those current sleeping rough;

The Council requests the City Executive Board to commission and give consideration to an urgent report that would enable the City Council to:

- Make policy that allows for all vacant City Council owned buildings – including commercial premises - to be made freely available for use as temporary homeless shelters, to be run by community charity and voluntary organisations that are able and willing to do so [2];
- Encourage other parties with similarly vacant buildings – particularly Oxford University and Oxford Colleges – to make those buildings available to be utilised as part of this initiative;
- Publicises the availability of relevant vacant buildings to the voluntary and community sector, and calls for expressions of interest from the community to operate these spaces;
- Assist in the co-ordination of the provision of key “wrap-around” services to residents making use of the temporary accommodation;
- Make preparations for this at the earliest possible time, and offers clear guidance frameworks and assistance to all interested parties;
- Sets terms of reference for use of spaces, conditions of use, and clearly sets out the arrangements for reclaiming possession of the relevant premises when circumstances require it [3]

[1] As witnessed by the on-going, serial occupation of empty premises being organised by the 'Open House' project

[2] Recent experience of Iffley Open House that the willingness and capacity for such an undertaking exists within Oxford's voluntary community

[3] For example, Iffley Open House was vacated without issue on a date agreed between the free-holder and the homeless community.

Amendment 1 proposed by Councillor Rowley:

Delete all after '*Council requests*' in the middle emboldened part of the motion , and replace with : '*Council requests the CEB to commission a report from officers early in the new municipal year on the processes and procedures that could be used to make empty properties available for use as temporary homeless shelters.*'

Amendment 2 proposed by Councillor Wade, seconded by Councillor Gant:

Replace the first three bullet points after '*enable the City Council to:*' with

- Take legal advice as to whether registered charities could act as agents for the City Council in providing accommodation on licence in vacant City Council owned buildings for rough sleepers;
- Compile a list of charities willing to operate such licences as agents for the Council;
- Encourage other landowners in Oxford City with similarly vacant buildings to make their buildings available as part of this initiative;
- Publicise the list of available buildings to the charities which have expressed a willingness to consider providing accommodation on licence for rough sleepers;

And omit '*and capacity*' in Note [2] of the footnotes

Motion as amended by Councillor Rowley (1) reads:

Recognising:

- the growing number of individuals sleeping on our streets;
- the dangers of sleeping rough;
- the significant number of long and short-term vacant buildings within the city [1];
- the potential to move on with their lives and off the street (into permanent accommodation and employment) that a period of stable and safe accommodation could offer many of those current sleeping rough;

The Council requests the City Executive Board Council requests the CEB to commission a report from officers early in the new municipal year on the processes and procedures that could be used to make empty properties available for use as temporary homeless shelters.

Motion as amended by Councillor Wade (2) reads:

Recognising:

- The growing number of individuals sleeping on our streets;
- The dangers of sleeping rough;
- The significant number of long and short-term vacant buildings within the city [1];
- The potential to move on with their lives and off the street (into permanent accommodation and employment) that a period of stable and safe accommodation could offer many of those currently sleeping rough;

The Council requests the City Executive Board to commission and give consideration to an urgent report that would enable the City Council to:

- ~~Make policy that allows for all vacant City Council owned buildings—including commercial premises—to be made freely available for use as temporary homeless shelters, to be run by community charity and voluntary organisations that are able and willing to do so [2];~~
- ~~Encourage other parties with similarly vacant buildings—particularly oxford University and Oxford Colleges—to make those buildings available to be utilized as part of this initiative;~~

- ~~Publicises the availability of relevant vacant buildings to the voluntary and community sector, and calls for expressions of interest from the community to operate these spaces;~~
- *Take legal advice as to whether registered charities could act as agents for the City Council in providing accommodation on licence in vacant City Council owned buildings for rough sleepers;*
- *Compile a list of charities willing to operate such licences as agents for the Council;*
- *Encourage other landowners in Oxford City with similarly vacant buildings to make their buildings available as part of this initiative*
- *Publicise the list of available buildings to the charities which have expressed a willingness to consider operating temporary accommodation on licence for rough sleepers;*
- Assist in the co-ordination of the provision of key “wrap-around” services to residents making use of the temporary accommodation;
- Make preparations for this at the earliest possible time, and offer clear guidance frameworks and assistance to all interested parties;
- Set terms of reference for use of spaces, conditions of use, and clearly set out the arrangements for reclaiming possession of the relevant premises when circumstances require it [3]

This page is intentionally left blank