

To: City Executive Board
Date: 14 November 2018
Report of: Scrutiny Committee
Title of Report: Report of the No Local Connection Review Group

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	To present the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee's No Local Connection Review Group
Key decision:	No
Scrutiny Lead Members:	Councillor Andrew Gant, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee Councillor Nadine Bely-Summers, Chair of the No Local Connection Review Group
Executive Board Member:	Councillor Linda Smith, Board Member for Leisure and Housing (Tackling Homelessness and Improving the Private Rented Sector)
Corporate Priority:	Meeting Housing Need
Policy Framework:	Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2018-21
Recommendation: That the City Executive Board states whether it agrees or disagrees with the 25 recommendations in the report of the No Local Connection Review Group (Appendix 1)	

Appendices	
Appendix 1: Supporting Rough Sleepers with No Local Connection – Report of the No Local Connection Review Group	
Appendix 2: Draft City Executive Board response to the recommendations of the No Local Connection Review Group tabled by the Board Member for Leisure and Housing <i>(to follow as a separate supplement)</i>	

1. The Scrutiny Committee established the No Local Connection Review Group in July 2018. The report of the No Local Connection Review Group was presented to the Scrutiny Committee at a meeting on 6 November 2018 for their agreement to submit the report to the City Executive Board. The Committee also received written advice and comments from the Housing Strategy and Needs Manager on behalf of

the Head of Housing Services, in relation to the recommendations made by the Review Group.

2. Before discussing the report the Scrutiny Committee heard contributions from the following speakers:
 - a. Cllr Nadine Bely-Summers, Chair of the No Local Connection Review Group;
 - b. Cllr Shaista Aziz, member of the No Local Connection Review Group;
 - c. Monica Gregory, a member of the public with experience of homelessness;
 - d. Cllr Richard Howlett, member of the No Local Connection Review Group;
 - e. Cllr Craig Simmons, member of the No Local Connection Review Group;
 - f. Nerys Parry, Housing Strategy and Needs Manager.
3. The Committee thanked all the speakers and in particular, Monica Gregory, for speaking about personally experiencing homelessness after fleeing domestic violence and being deemed to have no local connection to Oxford, despite having been born and raised in the City.
4. The Committee thanked the Review Group for their work, the quality of their report and for articulating the views of rough sleepers. The Committee discussed the report at length. The full record of the discussion can be found in the draft minutes of that meeting.
5. Some concern was expressed that certain points of law and fact presented in the officer advice did not appear to be addressed in the Review Group's report; specifically the advice from the Housing Strategy and Needs Manager on recommendation 13b that it is not possible under the law for time spent in prison, hospital or rehab to be discounted when calculating a person's residency connection in relation to the Housing Allocations Scheme. In response, the Committee heard from members of the Review Group that officers had been involved in several of the Review Group's meetings and that their advice had been properly considered. The officer advice on recommendation 13b was considered to be a matter of local interpretation and it did not align with advice provided by Shelter on the application of local connection criteria.
6. Some concern was also expressed that relaxing the local connection criteria without increasing capacity within the Adult Homelessness Pathway or improving opportunities for move on at the end of the Pathway could create false expectations amongst rough sleepers, and risk creating a 'magnet effect' which could serve to compound the issues of rough sleeping in Oxford.
7. The Committee heard from members of the Review Group that there was no robust evidence to suggest that a 'magnet effect' would occur as a result of the Review Group's recommendation. They suggested that the starting point should be to agree the principles of what the Council wants to achieve and understand the level of demand, and then to look at resourcing, drawing on national funding streams where possible. Views were also expressed by Committee members about the need for a paradigm shift from considering people who are homeless as a problem, to considering their potential to contribute to the City, in light of their skills and diversity. This culture change would accordingly limit any concerns of a 'magnet' effect.

8. In response to questions, the Committee also heard from the Review Group that there were significant savings to the public purse that could be experienced by broadening the local connection criteria, particularly for the most entrenched rough sleepers. Savings could be expected in the criminal justice system, healthcare and housing services, as set out in the report.
9. The Committee agreed a proposal to endorse the report and submit it to the City Executive Board on 14 November 2018.
10. The City Executive Board is asked to agree its response to the 25 recommendations in the Review Group’s report. A draft response submitted by the Board Member for Leisure and Housing will be circulated separately as Appendix 2. The implementation of any agreed recommendations will be monitored by the Scrutiny Committee in the normal way.

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