

To: Shareholder and Joint Venture Group Meeting
Date: 25 September 2019
Report of: Interim Managing Director OCHL
Title of Report: Furnished Tenancy Scheme

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	To seek approval for an amendment to the Rent and Lettings Policy to include a Furnished Tenancy Scheme.
Recommendation(s): That the Shareholder and Joint Venture Group resolves to:	
1. Approve an amendment to the Housing Group's Rent and Lettings Policy to include a Furnished Tenancy Scheme	
Appendices	
Appendix 1	Report to the Board of the Housing Group proposing the introduction of a Furnished Tenancy Scheme
Appendix 2	The Housing Group's Rent and Lettings Policy March 2018 (Reserved Final)

Introduction and Background

1. Oxford City Council operates a furnished tenancy scheme whereby new tenants who have not previously held a social housing tenancy in Oxford are offered the opportunity to hold a furnished tenancy.
2. The purpose of the Oxford City Council scheme is to provide new tenants with the best possible opportunity to succeed in their tenancy by removing much of the immediate financial demands that providing furniture for a first home can bring; thus reducing the risk of high levels of indebtedness.
3. The scheme operated by the Council provides certain furnishings and fittings which remain in the ownership of the Council. An additional service charge is levied depending on the furniture provided.
4. OCHL Housing Group does not currently operate a Furnished Tenancy Scheme and this places a financial burden on some new tenants on Barton Park, reducing the likelihood of a tenancy being sustainable.

5. The report at Appendix 1 sets out a proposal for a Housing Group Furnished Tenancy Scheme.
6. The report at Appendix 1 sets out that a new paragraph 4 should be inserted in the Housing Group’s Rent and Letting Policy to read, “OCHL will offer prospective starter tenants the opportunity to participate in OCHL’s Furnished Tenancy Scheme. OCHL will provide furniture to the tenant at the start of the tenancy and the furniture will remain in the ownership of OCHL at all times. A charge will be made for the furnishings within the total rental charge for the property.”

Financial implications

6. The cost of the scheme will be covered by universal credit/housing benefit and the OCHL business plan has been adjusted accordingly.

Legal issues

7. There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

Level of risk

8. There are no risks arising directly from this report.

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Housing Group Board clearance:	12 September 2019
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