

Oxford City Council

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Housing Strategy 2015-2018 **(Summary)**

Building a world-class city for everyone
'The Housing Offer'



Foreword

Welcome to Oxford City Council's Housing Strategy covering the period 2015-2018. The strategy identifies what the key issues will be for housing over the next three years and what the Council and its partners can do to overcome them and help deliver the *'The Housing Offer'* to the people of Oxford.

Oxford is well known for its high average house prices, high rents in the private rented sector and affordability issues as a result. Recent reports have Oxford as the least affordable City in the Country with House price to income ratios of over 11.25.

However there are signs that the housing market is starting to pick up again, and with sites such as Barton Park coming through the supply chain within the period of this strategy, we are optimistic that the delivery of new homes and more importantly affordable homes will start to increase significantly.

To help towards improving the pace of house building, the City Council have recently signed the *'Oxford and Oxfordshire City Deal'*. This deal aims to accelerate the delivery of more than 7,500 homes across Oxfordshire, with over 55% of these being delivered within the *'knowledge spine'* that incorporates Oxford, Bicester and Didcot. Oxford is a global brand and, it is an important element of this strategy to match this with an excellent housing offer, one which can attract households as part of the delivery of innovation-led growth.

Despite the numbers within the City Deal, the enormity of the housing shortage cannot be underestimated. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) identifies that between 25,000 and 32,000 homes need building by 2031 to meet the housing need of the City, and this cannot be achieved solely within Oxford.

We want to ensure that our existing homes are looked after and appropriate investment is made to maintain standards across all tenures and the *'support sustainable communities'* priority will begin to address this.

The enormity of the problem we face to deliver new homes and meet housing needs in the City cannot be underestimated, and capacity to deliver the housing offer is not something the City Council can do alone. This strategy will therefore be facilitating the opportunities for increased partnership working amongst our key strategic partners, and also looking at innovative ways of how we can start to deliver new homes over the next 3 years.

I hope that you find this strategy informative and easy to understand. We welcome any comments or suggestions from our communities and stakeholders on how we can make improvements.

Councillor Scott Seamons
Board Member for Housing & Estate Regeneration
Oxford City Council

Priority 1 – Increase supply and improve access to affordable housing

KEY OBJECTIVES

In trying to address some of the issues of supply and access, the following key objectives have been identified;

1. Improve access to the Private Rented Sector to address homelessness;
2. Increase the supply of affordable housing; and
3. Improve access to housing

Term	Objective	Action	By When
Short Term (2015/2016)	Improve access to the PRS to address homelessness	Direct acquisition of properties by the Council for temporary accommodation	October 2015
	Increase the supply of affordable housing	Large family homes specifically included in development programmes	March 2016
		Assess options for the use of affordable housing planning contributions	October 2015
	Improve access to housing	Review the Tenancy Strategy & Allocations Policy	December 2015
Medium Term (2016/2017)	Improve access to the PRS to address homelessness	Investigate the options for developing market housing for rent in the social sector	June 2016
	Improve access to housing	Identify under occupation in the social housing sector, work with tenants who want to move, and discuss with older tenants their best long term housing options	August 2016
		Set up liaison process with RP partners for asset management and tenancy conversion	August 2016
		Investigate which groups access the	

Long Term (2017/2018)	Improve access to the PRS to address homelessness	private rented sector and how student housing provision has affected this	September 2017
	Increase the supply of affordable housing	Establish and implement option appraisal programme for Council stock	March 2018
		Deliver Barton Park Affordable Housing	March 2018

Priority 2 – Meet housing needs of vulnerable groups

KEY OBJECTIVES

The key objectives to help achieve the priority of ‘*Meet housing needs of vulnerable groups*’ are outlined below. There are more actions linked to this priority contained within the action plan in Appendix .

1. Provide a range of housing for older people
2. Prevent and respond to homelessness
3. Prevent and respond to Rough Sleeping
4. Improve the health & wellbeing of homeless households & other vulnerable groups

Term	Objective	Action	By When
Short Term (2015/2016)	Provide a range of housing for older people	Agree the number of extra care homes to be delivered in Oxford with Oxfordshire County Council	September 2015
	Improve the health & wellbeing of homeless households & other vulnerable groups	Promote health campaigns to homeless households in particular and other vulnerable groups	September 2015
		Maximise number of vulnerable people are immunised and health checked	November 2015
Medium Term (2016/2017)	Provide a range of housing for older people	Deliver the action plan from the elderly persons review	September 2016
	Prevent and respond	Increase access to private rented homes through partnership working and Capital funding available	December 2016
		Support Young People to	

	to homelessness	access some of the 500 apprenticeship opportunities through City Deal	March 2017
	Prevent and respond to Rough Sleeping	Ensure there is sufficient specialist accommodation and support to meet the needs of single homeless clients in the City	March 2017
Long Term (2017/2018)	Prevent and respond to homelessness	Ensure there is sufficient numbers of temporary accommodation for homelessness prevention	March 2018
		Review the Homelessness Strategy	March 2018

Priority 3 – Support growth of a balanced housing market

KEY OBJECTIVES

In order to support the growth of a balanced housing market, the following key objectives have been identified:

1. Improve housing market operation;
2. Increase the supply of public sector land to deliver new homes; and
3. Bring forward key strategic sites to support City Deal and meet housing need;

Term	Objective	Action	By When
Short Term (2015/2016)	Improve Housing Market Operation	Investigate alternative models as part of the tenure mix on S106 Schemes such as Rent to Buy	December 2015
		Investigate alternative models of delivering new schemes including the affordable housing delivery	January 2016
		Investigate partnership working with private sector organisations to manage PRS units and maintain rents under the LHA levels	February 2016

Medium Term (2016/2017)	Increase the supply of public sector land to deliver new homes	Develop partnership working with public sector landowners to identify sites to meet housing need	September 2016
Long Term (2017/2018)	Bring forward key strategic sites to support City Deal and meet housing need	Facilitate the delivery of Northern Gateway and Oxpens sites	March 2018
		Facilitate the regeneration of Blackbird Leys district centre	March 2018

Priority 4 – Support Sustainable Communities

KEY OBJECTIVES

The following are considered key objectives to help achieve the priority of 'Supporting Sustainable Communities'.

1. Improve partnerships between Housing, Health and Education providers
2. Address impact of poverty in deprived areas and improve outcomes for individuals through financial and social inclusion initiatives
3. Improve communications with hard to reach households particularly in the Private Rented Sector
4. Reduce health inequalities in the City through sustained investment in existing homes
5. Increase housing choice for households on average incomes.
6. Improve the Environments where people live

Term	Objective	Action	By When
Short Term (2015/2016)	Improve partnerships between housing, health and education providers	Work with health & education providers to identify individuals whose access to education is adversely affected by poor housing conditions	February 2016
	Reduce health inequalities in the City through sustained investment in existing homes	Develop a private sector housing strategy that tackles standards and options for maintaining stock in most deprived areas	January 2016
		Deliver 2015/16 Oxford Standard programme as part of the Housing Asset Management Strategy	Mar 2016
	Improve the environments where people live	Deliver the 2015/16 Great Estates Programme	Mar 2016
Medium Term (2016/2017)	Reduce health inequalities in the City through sustained investment in existing homes	Improve awareness and access to health services for families in HMOs.	January 2016
		Campaign to support HMO residents to register with healthcare services	March 2016
		Support health care providers to promote immunisation schemes, and mental health awareness to tenants in most deprived wards	July 2016
	Address impact of poverty in deprived areas and improve outcomes for individuals through social and financial inclusion initiatives	Provide study space and access to the internet in community owned spaces to limit the impact of overcrowding on educational achievement	February 2016
		Identify isolated elderly individuals and improve access to socially inclusive activities to combat isolation	February 2016
	Increase housing choice for households on average incomes	Improve standards in the private rented sector	January 2017
Long Term (2017/2018)	Improve communications with hard to reach households, particularly in the Private Rented Sector	Launch marketing campaign to encourage PRS tenants to register for updates on housing and health initiatives and support services available in the City	March 2017
	Improve the environments where people live	Review the Empty Homes Strategy	March 2018

For further information you should refer to the Housing Strategy and the Housing Strategy Action plan which are available from *insert download details, web address, consultation link, telephone number etc.*